

On the 28th February, 1st, 2nd and 3rd of March, HAK coaches and dressage judges were enrolled in the FEI Dressage Equestrian Sports Educative Event (ESEE in short) at Jamhuri Park.

As many of you know, the FEI, has, for many years, sponsored the World Dressage Challenge whereby 2 FEI judges traveled to several developing countries to judge tests locally with athletes riding their own horses, but competing against other countries in their groups. Kenya participated in this challenge for many years. One of the reasons why the FEI thought that these competitions were worth holding and sponsoring is that they wanted to encourage the improvement of disciplines in developing countries.

After evaluating the results of the World Dressage Challenge (WDC), the FEI felt it was time to increase the level asked of those entering the WDC. Since they also realised that this would challenge quite a few of the participating National Federations, they developed a new training setup called ESEE.

ESEE is a tool, used by the FEI to educate national judges and coaches to grow and develop the disciplines at National level in a sustainable manner. In order to achieve this, the FEI sent one coaching expert and one judging expert to Kenya, who jointly facilitated a 4 day course, which was built up of theory sessions in the morning, and practical sessions in the afternoon. For the practical sessions we used demonstration riders who were being coached and judged at the same time. Luisa Vittone, Saga Hernander, Sabina Hutchison, Claudia and Emma Bojer very bravely offered to do this, for which our thanks.

I think that I am not exaggerating by saying that all of our coaches, dressage judges and demonstration riders who participated, have hugely benefitted from these 4 intense days of immersion into dressage. Subjects were covered from the training scale all the way up to canter pirouettes and flying changes with legyield, halfpass and shoulder-in, in between. Some of the material was, for most of us, a confirmation of earlier training and quite a lot of it was new and exciting stuff.

The course was topped off by a competition on the last day, where the demonstration riders were coached in their warm up by our coaches and were judged in their test by our HAK judges, most of whom judged a Prix St George test for the first time ever and made a good job of it.

Since the ESEE training is a two-year commitment, we are eagerly looking forward to next year's training and hope that even more of our coaches and judges, especially those who could not join us this time, will make use of this exciting opportunity!

A huge thank you to the FEI for making this all possible and a thank you to Anja Du Toit and the dressage working group members for organising this here in Kenya.