

TKMP Staff Profile: Opondo
Name: David Opondo Mango
Position: Safewater Projects Officer, TKMP Rural

Opondo is the kind of man you need to have in Africa. He is a born fixer, and has training in community development work in addition to his qualifications in building. Opondo is married to Caren and has five children. He and his family have recently moved from Kisumu to Siaya in order to be able to more efficiently travel to and support TKMP's 3 Safewater Projects. Opondo has a deep commitment to humanitarian work, which he has been undertaking for over 10 years. Opondo is inspired by his faith, and can be relied upon for his patience, tenacity, good humour and ability to solve practical problems.



Opondo during construction of SW3.

News from Urban Program: Kori Kinuthia and Godie Ooko

The first half of 2010 has been a big change for TKMP Kenya, with Olita studying in Australia and the day to day responsibility for operations transferred to Kori and Godie in the Nairobi Office. A major role for Kori was accompanying Sebastian in Safewater Project duties, but there has been continuing focus on the sport and environment initiatives with youth in the Urban Program.

Highlights include:

- Great Nairobi River Soccer Tournament 4th Edition Award ceremony
- Ladies 6-a-side soccer tournament activity carried out in partnership with City council of Nairobi and YCLEAN.
- Planning for TKMP to host the 5th Great Nairobi River Soccer Tournament, with the educational theme of 'Water and sanitation, rivers and human rights'.



Community meeting and planning at Ochillo.



Ochillo School - primary users of SW3.

How does TKMP Work?

The Tweed Kenya Mentoring Program is a voluntary initiative of the staff of Tweed Shire Council. The program is endorsed by Council, and Council is one of the program sponsors.

A number of TSC staff make a small contribution to the program each week. This is generally between \$2 and \$5 per week, (tax deductible) and now returns approximately \$18, 000 per year for the program.

The program also attracts support and funding from the Tweed community, including businesses, sporting and service clubs.

The program is managed by a committee comprised of TSC staff members who meet at lunchtime each month. New ideas and faces are welcome at these meetings, and presentations on the program can be made at club meetings, schools or to any interested parties.

- For more info contact Tom Alletson on (02) 6670 2577.



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Safewater 3

In April of this year TKMP was able to install its 3rd Safewater Project in the village of Ochillo, in the Siaya district of Nyanza Province, western Kenya.

The project was planned and delivered by Sebastian Garcia Cuenca, TSC's sustainable agriculture program leader, and has been warmly received by the community.

As with the two previous Safewater projects, Sebastian was faced with quite a few challenges in completing the project, but was able to overcome these with the essential support of our local TKMP staff and strong community input.

The Ochillo Safewater Project is installed on the grounds of Ochillo School, and uses Skyjuice membrane filters to purify water from the existing Ochillo Dam. The facility is accessible to the 500 students of Ochillo School, and is saving them much time in the collection of water, as well as immediately reducing their exposure to deadly diseases such as typhoid and cholera.

With lessons learnt from the first two Safewater projects, Sebastian was able to smoothly negotiate the technical aspects of the installation, but suffered some anxious moments as customs officers and unpleasant local politics seriously threatened project completion.

As well as completing the Safewater project Sebastian made great use of some of the goods donated to the TKMP program by local supporters. One of the highlights of his trip was visiting an Orphanage where uniforms from the

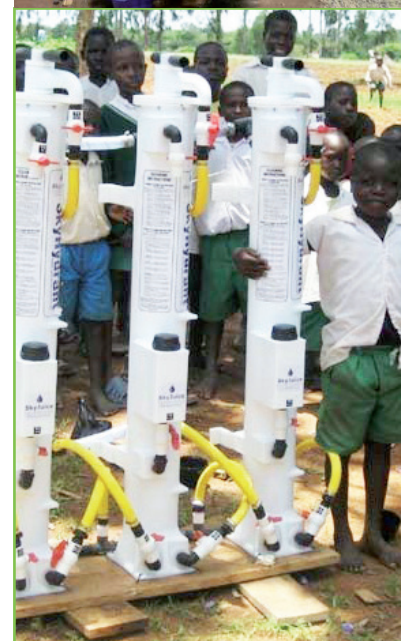


Sebastian presenting medallions.

Crystal Creek School (near Murwillumbah) were gratefully received by children and staff alike. In a presentation to students participating in the football and environmental activities run by TKMP's Urban program, Seb distributed several hundred medals donated by Twin Towns Trophies and collected through the Tweed community medallion muster. Soccer uniforms donated by the Murwillumbah Football Club were also distributed and now mean a lot to the urban and rural teams who wear them proudly.

Finally with morning tea fund raising, school basics such as exercise books and pencils were purchased for every children from Ochillo's primary school.

"The goodwill and gratitude inspired by these simple initiatives is a highlight of the program, and I just wish everyone back home could see the smiles," Sebastian said.



For more information go to www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/kenya/

Safewater sustainability - a problem of asset maintenance

Having now commissioned 3 Safewater Projects, TKMP has reached a coming of age moment. This is experienced by many organisations when maintenance of assets becomes as big an expense and challenge as undertaking new projects.

This issue has been anticipated, and as such a fundamental part of each SW project has been organising, encouraging, training and supporting the recipient community to manage their own infrastructure.

In September 2009, TKMP was also able to retain the part time services of David Opondo Mango to undertake maintenance, in both a social and technical sense, of the Safewater installations.

In July this year TKMP will also be contracting a local Kenya firm called Pureflow to undertake a comprehensive technical audit of the state of repair of all components of each of the existing facilities.

Pureflow are a company recommended by Skyjuice Foundation and have the expertise to not only evaluate, but accurately communicate the complexities of maintenance requirements.

TKMP staff will accompany Pureflow technicians to the Safewater sites and it is anticipated that the exercise will provide valuable information on the durability of infrastructure, both for our maintenance planning, and for Skyjuice its research and development program.

Exposure to the process of system evaluation, maintenance planning and implementation will also be valuable training for our local staff.

It is anticipated that there will need to be some suction and supply pipes replaced on the second Safewater project at Yawo Tinga, as well as some minor replacements including some taps and 'O' rings.

The first Safewater project at Obambo is unfortunately currently inoperable due to extremely high levels of silt in the water supply dam.

TKMP has facilitated two years of negotiations between the village of Obambo and the Kenyan government in the hope that machinery can be secured to reconstruct the dam.

Despite TKMP holding a significant sum with which to part fund the project, no government support has been forthcoming.

Our options are to secure the equivalent of approximately \$20,000 to fully fund the dam reconstruction, or find an alternative water supply or Safewater technology. TKMP is fully committed to restoring a Safewater project at Obambo Kadenge.



Safewater 3 at Ochillo - operational.

Thanks for lap tops as communication is vital

A significant challenge for the management of TKMP, particularly while Olita Ojongo is studying in Australia, is maintaining effective communications with our two program officers; Kori in urban Nairobi, and Opondo in rural Siaya.

Email is the easiest option for us, and also for our Kenya staff, however their internet access has generally only ever been via net cafes.

This presents problems with physical access, travel time to and from the cafe, service speed and cost. Access to computers is essential not only for communications, but the basic work requirements of reporting, budget management and writing letters.

In an attempt to address this problem a call went out for spare or old lap top computers to be donated to the program, prior to Sebastians trip in March.

It was great to receive generous support in this regard from Ronelle Herbert, David Milligan and Tim Mackney, who all donated completely functional machines.

With the prevalence and affordability of mobile network communications in Kenya, it is now possible for the guys to dial up with a mobile modem at any time and from virtually any place.

It is our hope that this will ultimately lead to a more streamlined and collaborative working relationship between us and our Kenyan colleagues.

Olita studying in Australia - a big adjustment

Over the last four months Olita Ogonjo, Coordinator of the Tweed Kenya Mentoring Program has worked harder than ever while tackling his first semester of a Masters of Integrated Water Management, living in Brisbane and attending classes run by the International Water Centre at the University of Queensland.

With a background in Political Science, Olita did not originally anticipate the role that water management would play in his career, but five years with TKMP and close collaboration with the International River Foundation convinced him of the value in further specialist water studies.

Olita is the inaugural recipient of the Ken Thiess memorial scholarship to study with International water centre, and so far is enjoying the challenge of this highly regarded Masters program.

Q: Olita, you've been to Australia quite a few times on short visits, are there any surprises now that you're a longer term resident?

Yep! This has been a big change in many ways. It is my first time living out of Kenya for a longer time, and as a student.

It has not been at all easy to adjust to this new. There were challenges like finding a suitable accommodation, finding my way around and fitting into the rhythm of campus life.

The program has also been hardwork with a lot of reading, assignments and classwork.

I felt very vulnerable without the people am used to around me.

I missed my family and friends a lot, the food...ugali, sukuma wiki and othoro/ githeri.

But I must say am luckier



compared to other students who are coming for the first time, in that my earlier short trips to Tweed

staying with friends gave me a head start and as a result I have adjusted to life here.

Kenya and Australia are similar in some ways, but very different too.

Australia is relatively clean and I don't have to worry when am drinking water from the taps...but I have to worry not to litter!

There is more order and rules compared to Kenya, and people are very serious also about the rules.

I am getting used to living here, and I just hope I will be able to adjust back again once I get back home.

Q: What has been the hardest part about going back to school full time?

“Australia is relatively clean and I don't have to worry when am drinking water from the taps...but I have to worry not to litter! There is more order and rules compared to Kenya, and people are very serious also about the rules.”

where I really hope to get with my work in the community.

Q: Are there any insights gained through your studies so far that you feel are really applicable to your TKMP work?

There are a lot of insights that have emerged but the following clearly stands out. TKMP is already way ahead

in implementing some of the key principles in Integrated Water Resource Management.

For instance the program has carried out continuous community engagement, even journeying with community after the project commissioning with the involvement of women and youth in project design and community asset management approaches.

Q: What would you like to teach the lecturers, based on your experience with water management in the townships of Nairobi and villages of Siaya?

The lecturers are very experienced, and professional in their work. I have learnt so much.

One subject that stands out for me is the science of water.

As a non-science person I had a lot of difficulties in the beginning that I even asked the Zietlow brothers (Sam, Brian and Kurt) for help!

But now am comfy reading the scientific journals.

I no longer say water is polluted, I explain the contaminants and how they are impairing the waters!

My classmates and are very rich with cultures and experiences as well as backgrounds and I have learnt a lot from them too.

The lesson for me is to listen and learn, but in doing so, also trust what you have as knowledge and experience.

But don't be afraid to change.

Again it is good to do the entire academic verbal, thinking and writing stuff.

But also the water socio-political and economical issues, as well as the biophysical ones are practical, and as such rooted right within the community.