



Newsletter
May 2009

KENYA MENTORING program



The latest from Olita in Kenya

Each quarter Olita reports on activities undertaken in Kenya by the Tweed Kenya Mentoring Program (TKMP), and gives a brief update on significant social and political events that are shaping the country. This report starts with the big stories affecting all of us in different ways.

The election of Obama: Many Kenyans celebrated the election and inauguration of Barack Obama as US President.

To many, and in particular the village of Nya'ngoma in Alego Kogelo (20km from Obambo Kadenge) considered Obama their kin and thus hope of better things to come.

The President was also an inspiration to many youths as leader, through his speeches and rise to power.

The village Nya'ngoma was thronged by tourist visitors from all over the world.

The government on its part made sure that Obama's granny's home had electricity connection and an access road for the first time.

Global financial crisis: The country is yet to recover fully from last year's post election violence, is now coping with drought and effects of the global financial crisis.

During the quarter not only did prices of basic commodities go up higher, but companies laid off hundreds of workers.

It was evident that Kenyans were



As always, Olita is on song when it comes to making water safe for the community.

changing their shopping, eating and living habits as a result of escalating prices of goods – there were less cars on the roads and more people on matatus and walking to and from work.

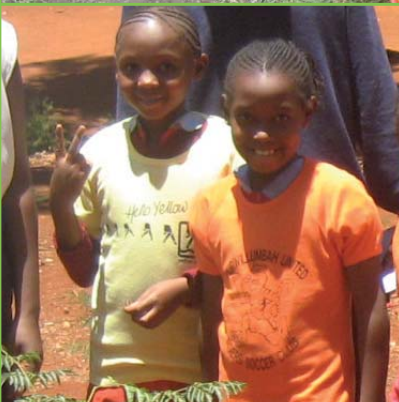
Tree and seedling nursery: The main challenge facing the TKMP tree nursery throughout the quarter was lack of water for the young tree seedlings.

In mid February we had purchased 300 more seedlings in hope it would soon rain but in vain.

The activity at the nursery was thus to fetch and water seedlings, shading, sort and label and separate the sick ones from the healthy ones.

As at end of the quarter the nursery had 522 seedlings, 32 different types of tree species with 18 being indigenous.

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

Olita's report continued

In-school environment project: In this quarter TKMP, pupils and teachers monitored the trees planted.

The in school project started in February 2008 and a year after a total 2400 trees were planted in three schools, following the poll violence as peace garden interventions in school.

The project had also assisted the schools to set up environmental clubs. In the quarter TKMP recognized the efforts of the schools and clubs by awarding some of the soccer shirts donated by Tweed Shire Community to the 12 best students in managing trees.

At Riruta H.G.M Primary School we visited the school peace garden where the 1200 seedlings were planted.

All but 30 were doing well.

The pupils had worked hard on that project by watering and maintaining the garden.

TKMP thus awarded the best 12 pupils and 2 teachers in environment club, this was to add to morale in the club.

We gave the 14 T-shirts (from the kit donated by Tweed Community) for the hard work



The children proudly wear their Murwillumbah soccer T-shirts.

Eco-shield award : The award was part of the Great Nairobi River Soccer Tournament and the quarter was used to select the best club out of the finalists that had managed its trees and community service. The selection process was conducted through YClean. Some updates are as follows:

- True Gunners Youth Club had planted 65 trees at Cornerstone Faith Assembly Church's compound, where 64 are doing well .
- Riruta Muslim Youth had planted 103 trees but only 39 survived. 64 died after the field they were planted in was burned by a fire which was lit by some youth who wanted to create a space for a volley ball pitch who did know there were trees planted.



Kori hard at work at the nursery.

- Young Peles youth at Kawangware primary school, planted 108 trees in the school compound. 40 trees are still surviving, the rest have been eaten by goats and sheep. The club coach Mr. James Atelia said that he had a hard time controlling fans, children and searching for water that was not available in the school.

Highlights and key insights and lessons:

- There is clear interest and excitement on the part of clubs and with school pupils as they plant and take care of trees. They want the opportunity and recognition for their conservation of the environment. There is however a need for more information, training and agitation for more youths and community to be involved, and to influence government to change its attitude and put more resources to environmental management. There is also a need for government to look at community, school and youth groups as key partners in environmental management.
- The urban TKMP program has recorded modest outcomes but significantly, highly practical ways of involving the youth community in environmental action.



True Gunners Youth Club boys do their bit planting trees.

School books and medals for Kenyan kids

One of the strengths of the Mentoring program operations is the community support which initiates opportunities to send items to Kenya which can assist youth benefiting from the program.

The Murwillumbah Seventh Day Adventist Church is currently collecting goods to send to Kenya for an Orphanage Project that they are supporting there, and they have offered TKMP the opportunity to fill some space in their container.

This space will be filled with soccer medallions collected by Sandy Zeitlow from the Murwillumbah Soccer Club and the broader community. Twin Towns Trophies donated 500 medals.

These are re-useable once the labels are removed and will make great awards for activities organized by



Soccer enthusiasts Pam O'Connor, Sandy Zietlow and Jason Dittmar are pictured with some of the medallions which were donated to the Tweed Kenya Mentoring Program.

TKMP in Nairobi.

Remaining room in the container will be filled with several boxes of school books destined for Kubar Primary School which is near the Tinga

Safewater Project.

This school is extremely poor and it is hope the books will assist teachers and students in their efforts to learn Maths, English and Science.

The project only survives thanks to our sponsors

We are proud to announce that the TKMP staff contributions scheme is now 66 strong, resulting in a yearly allocation of approximately \$16,000 to the program's projects.

To match the staff contributions dollar for dollar, Tweed Council recently resolved to increase current sponsorship from \$10,000 to \$16,000 per year.

We must also acknowledge the important ongoing support from the International River Foundation, JH Williams, Skyjuice Foundation and the Tweed Rotary and Lions clubs that have made yearly donations to the program.

Without this sponsorship the project could not continue.

This year we also received great support from the following local

businesses who made the completion of our second Safewater Project possible.

- **Ian Heanes & Heanesbuilt**
- **Scandinavian Cone Company**
- **Pottsville Forge**
- **Dickensons Earth Moving**
- **Len and Kay Ball**
- **Australian Wetlands**



The True Gunners Soccer team training on their dusty playing surface.

Safewater projects making water safe to drink

A major event for TKMP in November 2008 was completing the second safewater project at Tinga dam.

This is a water purification system for approximately 1000 people who walk to the dam to collect water for all their daily needs.

The dam's water is now safe to drink, and according to the latest news from Olita – everything is going well, despite the areas ongoing challenges.

Safewater 2 - Yawo tinga

Komieno project – The dam survived the drought period that lasted to the end of March, ensuring that the community was supplied with clean water from the Safewater 2 Project.

The project's performance has been impressive since it was commissioned in November 2008.

The following are key highlights in the quarter:

Election and Bank account - On 26 February 2009 the committee opened a bank account.

This followed a successful election of office bearers in late January where for the first time women took the top positions.

Revenue - In the month of February the project began to apply a charge of 20/- (Kenyan Shillings) per household per month and registration fee of 50/-.

The charge at water point for those who haven't paid monthly is kshs. 2/- per 20 litres.

As at end of quarter 303 houses had registered so far.

Use of water from the filters has unfortunately declined since the charge was implemented.

The committee is working with local chiefs and village elders to educate the benefits of not drawing water from the dam directly.

The low revenue collection has been a challenge for the committee and the community education is premised on "a little payment will keep the project running and the community healthy".



Collecting water from the new Safewater kiosk.



Carrying the water home.

Victor, Mercelin and William...

Remember Mercelin the unforgettable face of the Safe Water I project?

Olita has stayed in touch with Mercelin and her family. They are very poor and continue to struggle with the basics of life.

TKMP has been able to provide some ongoing support to the family and cover the cost of her education.

Unfortunately Mercelin has not always been able to attend school regularly due to illness and the need to help her family.



Left: Mercelin with clean and dirty water and; Right: Victor outside his house.



TKMP has also provided ongoing support for William, an orphan who is cared for by his uncle who is also the community leader of our Safewater 1 project.

While his uncle is very good to him he can not afford his school's fees. Thanks to TKMP support-

ers William's fees have been covered for 2009.

Victor is a nine-year-old boy who was identified during the Safeater 2 project as needing urgent medical attention to try and heal a bone infection in his forearm.

Despite a stay in hospital and several follow

ups at the large hospital in Kisumu, the progress of Victor's recovery is slow.

His medical expenses are being met by supporters of the TKMP and Olita hopes to be on hand at his next hospital appointment to provide some detailed feedback on the treatment and prognosis.

Thanks from a local Kenyan Councillor – Mr Oriaro

Dear Olita C. Ogonjo,

I humbly write to express to you Mr Olita in your capacity as the Desk Coordinator of the Tweed Community Kenya Mentoring Program.

On the behalf of the residents of the Boro West electoral area that I represent at the Siaya County Council as Councillor.

So you may pass our heart-felt gratitude and appreciation to the safewater project well-wishers and sponsors, the Tweed Shire Council and community and the International Riverfoundation whose personal toils and efforts have now seen our poor communities in the Kadenge and Obambo sub locations have direct and reliable access to clean and easily drinkable domestic and livestock water sources right in the middle of the villages: the Tinga/Gona Dams.

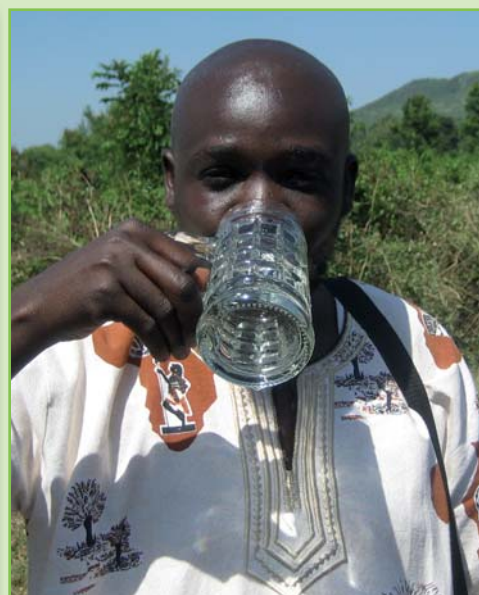
Due to the Skyjuice water purification systems I can honestly say that over 3000 villagers of these provincial areas can now say 'bye-bye' to water borne diseases; including myself who has had chronic problems to do with infections related to typhi and para typhi pathogens.

May these empathetic philanthropic institutions and individual volunteers know that their humanitarian gestures have become positively imprinted in the hearts of us the beneficiaries forever.

yours sincerely,

Leonard Otieno Oriaro
Councillor, Boro West Ward; Siaya County Council; Kenya

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Mr Oriaro tastes some clean drinking water at the Safewater 2 opening day.

Tweed soccer day

Planning has commenced for the TKMP's next big fundraising event for 2009. This year we will host a one day six-a-side soccer teams' challenge. The day will include food and drink, raffles and should be great fun and a good experience for all involved. The event will be publicised well in advanced so have a think about friends, work mates or family you can form a team with. Anyone interested in assisting to plan and run this event should advise Tom Alletson or Sandy Zeitlow.

A picture says a thousand words...



Kori at his desk in the TKMP office.



T-shirts awarded to tree-planting pupils.