

## **KINENGO INITIATIVE**

Kinengo Initiative is an educational, health/ sanitation and empowerment focused organization. It is relatively new established and is in the process of registration under the Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination Act as part of the larger efforts to provide alternative and tenable interventions for the plight of children, women and men in difficult circumstances. This is a requirement by the government of Kenya. The organization will have a board of five members.

The members will include:

Board chairman:

Vice-chair:

Secretary:

Treasurer:

Co-ordinator:

Although the effectiveness of Kinengo Initiative's work will be challenging, it hopes to give the people that it will be dealing with hope and willingness to endeavour in anything and everything they plan on doing. It will try and empower the people it deals with by sharing information and any resources which we think lacks in these areas. The initial area of operation will be Mbitini Village of Nzau Location, Makueni District. Depending on the needs and resources, it plans to extend its operations in areas that face the same challenges as our initial area of operations.

Kinengo Initiative believes that a society well informed can achieve a lot of success with any resources available no matter how small. We believe in community mobilization and empowerment of the family units. Our initial area of operation, Mbitini Village receives a small amount of rain and that hinders the successes of growing crops during the rainy season. Kinengo Trust plans to try and work out modalities on how people can reduce their dependency on rain for growing their crops. Most of the rain water is lost as there are no dams that have been constructed to trap this precious commodity. If constructed, the amount of water trapped could be enough to grow at least two crop growing seasons. The area has proved that it can produce high quality fruits and vegetables. Land already under irrigation, either through trapped rain water or piped water has proved that the local population can be self-sustaining if provided with water.

We have divided our projects in two folds:

### **WATER PROVISION**

#### 1) Water provision



Drawing water from a river bed



Water well



2) Education, sanitation, health and community empowerment.

### **EDUCATION**

On education, Kinengo Initiative continues to appreciate that poverty and cultural beliefs are major factors in the dropping off school for most. Uneducated girl-child gets it to be tough to compete for the already competitive job market. However, there are other informant variables to this question thus conflicts around cultural inhibitions, social stereotypes and economic paradigms that ingrain the practice of gender imparity are issues that Kinengo Kenya through many child focused networks has been addressing.

### **RATIONALE/ JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROJECT**

A key component of the welfare of children is the right to access quality and relevant education. These are services and programmes that can allow the development of a child's personality, talent, mental stability and physical ability as stated in Article 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of children (UNCRC). To this end Kenya did ratify and adopted the details of the convention and went ahead to enact the Children's Act Cap 586 of the laws of Kenya. This act espouses the individual rights of children, the role and responsibilities of the adult or authority that governs or keeps custodial mechanisms within and out of the Act but follows through the enshrinement of the same as granted in the wider country laws.

There is no doubt that Kenya faces myriad challenges in wanting to provide education opportunities to its young citizenry. In this regard free primary education (FPE) and free secondary education (FSE) policies have been put in place in 2003 and 2008 respectively. What these policies do not address are the challenges that come with increased number of students and non expansion of existing infrastructure. Quality of education has been greatly compromised as the student teacher ratio continues to overwhelm the strength of most teaching fraternity, sanitation facilities are overstretched and learning equipments thinly utilized far less effectively.

Recent survey and the international review held in New York confirm (MDGs 2008) that Kenya lags behind and may not achieve the minimum expectations of the Millennium Development Goals. It is in this context that Kinengo Kenya, a not for government - non profit making organization wishes to directly compliment the efforts of the government. Kinengo Kenya understands negative effects of extreme poverty, humiliating consequences of hardcore hunger and social ignominy that comes with lack of monetary employment. Most Kenyan communities are a replica of this description. Poverty levels stand at 63% nationwide and Makueni District of Lower Eastern province prescribes to this scenario. It is in this spirit that Trace Kenya calls for attention on the plight of bright Kenyan students of Makueni district whose vulnerability is magnified by extreme socio-economic challenges.

Kinengo Initiative seeks to institute a scholarship programme which will endeavour to identify needy students unable to transit to the secondary level. Kinengo Initiative aims at providing an environment that will improve the quality of learning for

these students. In this respect Kinengo Initiative whose overriding goal is to advocate for policies and programmes that improves the quality of life for young persons shall ensure that education rights are not only observed but practiced thus increasing the chances for positive secondary school engagement.

Small, congested classrooms, large unmanageable class sizes, few teachers, lack of enough schools, poor quality education, inadequate funding and the psychological pressure originating from the unavailable space of free education continues to frustrate poor communities. The inability of parents to sustain their children in schools, due to other socio-economic factors, has left behind a demoralized society. As the progress made from FPE and FSE bleeds from these challenges children continue suffering especially the girl child whose position is complicated further by certain detrimental cultural believes.

We intend to identify two well managed boarding schools (one for boys and the other for girls) with a history of result oriented management systems that will be able to accommodate the growing number of bright students who cannot access secondary education by end of 2009.

### **PROJECT GOAL**

The overarching goal of the project is to provide quality learning opportunities for bright students of Makueni District and improve their chances for gainful engagement socio-economically. The project foresees 200 students fully assisted by school fees to finish their high school education by end of four years.

### **VILLAGE SCHOOL LIBRARY**

We have initiated a library services at one of the local primary school with intentions of enlarging it to serve the local community. Our belief is an informed society is an empowered society and through education we believe we can inform it! Although through a partnership with the locals, we have managed to make enough bricks to build a library block, funds are still needed to purchase building materials. We need to get roofing materials, cement, timber, doors, windows, electrify and furnish the building/ library. Some of the other amenities like internet would be something to consider in the future. If we could get the internet connection sorted out as we construct the building the better we would feel. The current "school library" that is in use is small and does not have any space for expansion thus the need for a new building that will be bigger and will take care of any future needs for expansion. The necessity to enlarging the library will not only benefit the local school going kids and their teachers but also the whole community. With donation of books meant for the older members of the society that also necessitated the need to look for ways to accommodate the whole neighbourhood. Courtesy of family friends of mine, Paul and Jan Indman, they have been so kind to allow us to share the pictures they took during their trip to the village, you can see the school below, [http://www.mypublisher.com/bookstore/book\\_viewer.py?book\\_id=807647&sp=x](http://www.mypublisher.com/bookstore/book_viewer.py?book_id=807647&sp=x). Paul and Jan Indman have also donated US\$ 500 towards the women project.

### **WATER, SANITATION, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

The amount of rain that this area received is not enough for agricultural activities. Although during the rainy season most of the rivers burst their banks and the lands next to rivers are flooded, the aftermath is bare lands with all the crops destroyed. Whatever remains are bare sand banks that expose the sand that is exploited by "foreigners". Most of the sand harvested is sold to the major towns for construction. Most of Kenya's quality sand comes from this region and if properly handled, it could help the locals and the council with revenue that could be used to improve their lives. But because it is abused by the "foreigners", most of the rivers tend to dry and make it tough for the locals during the drought. Most of these locals walk long distances to access clean water. Most of them end up fetching dirty water as that is their only option and through the consumption of dirty water, most of them end up contracting water borne diseases i.e. typhoid, cholera, e.t.c. That said, Kinengo Kenya plans to empower the locals so that they can build sand/ ordinary dams. Some of the distractions and problems that dirty water causes are that most of the children are made fetch water before going to school and thus affecting their learning, the women get to lose so much time that could otherwise be used somewhere else, a rise in water borne diseases and lose of resources both time-wise and money in terms of hospital bills etc etc.

With the capacity building work being undertaken by the organization in the villages of Mbitini, we will be focusing on providing practical and homemade solutions to these problems with a view to giving the locals a reason to maximizing their potential by providing the basics needed. These are provision for water, proper sanitation and health facilities.

Poverty remains an enormous challenge for Kenya and current trends indicate significant growth rather than reduction in the number of people consigned to the margins of economic obscurity. The government has defined the poverty line as \$17 per month in rural areas and \$36 per month in urban areas. In 1994, 47 percent of Kenyans fell below this line; today that figure has grown to 56%. Presently, 22.8% of the population lives on less than \$1 a day and 58.3 percent live on less than \$2 per day. We believe if empowered, the locals would be able to have a year round crop growing season through irrigation, reduce the time the children have to sacrifice before going to school and also reduce the amount of money spent on medical bills due to water borne diseases. The locals would also have enough time to do other chores as time initially used to look for water would have been saved.

To accelerate the empowerment for the locals, Kinengo Initiative plans to initiate a "milk goat", and chicken project for the already set up groups and any groups that organizes themselves and meet the requirements. The goat project has been very successful in Tala where we work with Mama Darlene Home. There are some groups that have also leased out land where they grow fruits and vegetables for sale. This project helps them get extra money that they use to uplift their lifestyle and also take care of their monetary needs. This is though hampered by the fact that most of these farms use rain water and as such when the rivers dry, most of these farms are left idle. The other area that Kinengo Initiative would like to address is the rain water harvesting techniques where we will show the villagers how to harvest and use rain water that ends up wasted if not trapped.

## **FUNDS**

Through donations from some of my friends, I managed to get some money that was used to buy some farming tools. The funds were collected by friends from London, Ohio who had came on one of my trips. I would like to thanks Barbara and James Bailey, Ten and Anne Slanker, Anita and Dennis Waler. Once back in the USA, Anne Slanker managed to convince her women group to donate some money and books that were donated to one of the women group and the books given to Kyumbe Academy. Due to uncertainty in the weather pattern, it has been tough for the women groups that I work with grow crops all year round. Towards that ends, one of the short term remedies, Kinengo Kenya hopes to buy water pumps that would be shared for a small by the groups on a rotational basis to irrigate their farms. The money collected from these groups as payment for water delivery, would be used to buy fuel/ gas and service the pumps whenever and if needed. On a lasting solution, plans are at an advanced stage to get a borehole sank to take care of the water shortfall. This project is being in done in conjunction with Rotary Club of Emerald City, Seattle Washington State and the Rotary Club of Hurlingham, Kenya. To set the project going, the initial money was donated by Tula Turner and her friends from Kansas City.

To maximize on rain water harvesting, Kinengo Initiative will be working with developers of energy saving equipment. The two currently sort are Aquasun Technology and Makiga for their tanks making, kitchen improvement packages. Their packages offers complete facilities for efficient rainwater harvesting techniques that would be used to reduce the lose of water trapped, amount of time spent looking for water and also offer clean water that would help reduce water borne diseases. Their kitchen package helps in fuel used as they are energy saving and the fuel used to cook is also used to heat water and also acts as incinerator. The packages come with water tanks of varied sizes and literage, from 500-10, 000 litres. Besides the over the ground water tanks, there are also techniques for underground tanks. Makiga Engineering have also come up with a brick making machine that reduces the amount of time and resources used to build bricks for tanks and walls for the classroom. The machines can make bricks that make circular tanks and also straight bricks for building the classrooms. Although there is some information below, the company will have to custom design that would suit the needs of the project area. With the resources/ finances saved, the locals would enhance their lifestyle by directing their time and energy in growing crops. The clinics will be able to save resources and focus on other diseases other than diseases that are caused by poor water and sanitation.

## **CHALLENGES**

Due to the scarcity in the funds and resources, some of these projects might take some time to implement. At the moment, most of the funds are through past clients who have visited Kenya through Wilderness Zones Safaris. For every client who books a trip through Wilderness Zones Safaris, the company donates US\$ 150 for projects that are run by Kinengo Kenya. It is through these trips that we managed to get funds to run these projects. The initial funds for the well and the initial books for the library were donated by Tula Thompson, Kelsey Turner and their friends from Kansas City, Kansas. During my August

2008 trip, I got talking to Jim Beley who was one of the participants on the trip about the challenges that villages in Africa encountered. We both noted that the main concerns were the provision for clean and accessible water, health, sanitation and education. I shared with him my vision for the village and that is when he told me he was the past President of Emerald City Rotary Club, Seattle, USA. He agreed to help with the project and that is where the Mbitini, Water, Sanitation, Health and Literacy Project was muted. With the funds that I had secured from Tula Thompson and her friends from Kansas, Jim agreed to ask his local Rotary club to assist in the implementation of the project. We have partnered with the Rotary Club of Hurlingham as per the conditions of Rotary Club assistants worldwide that all projects run by Rotaries have to be implemented by a local chapter. In the meantime, I have managed to interest some of my friends, both in Kenya and overseas and Rotary Clubs in the USA and Kenya to assist in this project.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Kinengo Initiative intends to work very closely with community members, leaders, District Education/ Development office, Schools heads and other stakeholders in the education, agricultural and health sector in the district. The aim is to avoid any conflicts that may arise. The project is bound to set up standards as pre-requisites to qualify for scholarship or sponsorship of the students if any and also any future project assistance which will be followed to the letter.

## **PARTNERS**

Kinengo Initiative has partnered with other development minded organizations and individuals to achieve these goals. On their parts, the locals have agreed to volunteer their time and manual labour to help with these projects. Some of the help would come in the form of building water tanks, trenching for the pipes laying and building bricks for the library.

As WE look forward to fulfilling this project, I would like to thank the following for their support, advice and encouragement.

- 1) Tula Thompson and Kelsey Turner of Kansas City, Kansas.
- 2) Jim Beley, Kay Knapton and Jordan Carlson from Seattle, Wa
- 3) Ted & Anne Slanker, James & Barbara Bailey, Dennis & Anita Waler from London Ohio.
- 4) Jim Dykeman and Dan Madigan from Mercer Island, Washington.
- 5) Paul and Jan Indman from
- 6) Jillian Robinson from Arizona.
- 7) Bettina Ng'weno from California and Kenya.
- 8) Paul & Linda Holland from California.
- 9) Erin Colins from California

I would also like to thank the local Rotary Club of Hurlingham for agreeing to be the local partner in this worthy project. To my village mates, I look forward to working with you all to help alleviate the perennial water project, quality education, medical and sanitation facilities and give us hope to succeed in being self reliant.

## **Estimates**

- 1) Borehole drilling et all US\$ 28, 570 (estimates given by Groundwater Kenya)
- 2) Brick making machine US\$ 3, 000 (Makiga Engineering Services LTD)
- 3) Water Filtering machine US\$ 170 (Makiga Engineering Services LTD)
- 4) Hot water incinerator US\$ 1, 800 (Makiga Engineering Services LTD)
- 5) 2 Energy Saving stoves US\$ 2, 800 (Makiga Engineering Services LTD)
- 6) Water tank building