



04 ENTRENCHING LOCAL GIVING

- 01 Fighting the Beads of Bondage
- 02 Solar Power: Let there be Light
- 03 Community Adapts Environmental Conservation
- 05 Rabuur Community Embracing Local Resource Mobilisation
- 06 Group Promotes Child Play in Malindi
- 07 Innovative farmers: set up biogas 'factories' in their homes

Fighting the Beads of Bondage

Visitors often marvel at the beauty of the colorful beads worn by women in the Samburu community. For Rampaini Letereuwa, however, the red beads that adorn her neck are a source of big trouble.

The 13-year-old is pregnant, and her relatives intend to kill the baby when it is born this month. "I know my baby will be thrown away into the forest to die or be killed like many others who have been subjected to a similar fate," said Letereuwa, through an interpreter at her parents' home near Ol Donyiro market in Isiolo district.

She has never been to school and, like some other girls her age or even younger, Letereuwa is a 'child bride,' having been temporarily married off to a Samburu warrior (morán) in a traditional practice known as aishontoyie saen (beading).

Bead Colors.

Once a girl is beaded, which literally means being adorned with necklaces by a morán, her parents build her a house where the morán, usually a relative, is allowed to engage in sexual activity with her.

Different beads carry different meanings. Engaged girls wear red beads. Girls who are not engaged and those who are married wear beads of mixed colors. White beads signify purity and health, black means hardship while orange plus yellow is a sign of hospitality.

When a girl is beaded, she is not supposed to become pregnant because she is not circumcised and the samburu community believes that an uncircumcised woman should not give birth. The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) remains prevalent within the Samburu community. The necklaces to bead the girls cost about Ksh.10,000 and are normally purchased in Nairobi shops.

Great Respect

"The morans normally conduct raids and steal animals from neighboring communities to enable them raise money to buy the beads," Peter Lekurtut, the Kipsing ward councilor, said.

An Ol Donyiro elder, Loitipitip Lemantile, 69, says a majority of parents in the area still consider the beading of their daughters by morans as a show of great respect.

"After successful raids, the morán could give his in-laws cattle and give the girl's mother nyiri nyiri (special meat boiled in fat)," explains Mr Lemantile. He added that the beaded girl is always free to get married to any other suitor because in all cases, the girl and the morán are from the same clan and marriage is prohibited.

Samburu Moran

In the beading ritual, Samburu morans identify little girls as brides by making them wear a beaded necklace. Child rights activists in Samburu say that beading can happen any time a moran meets a girl, irrespective of her age.

“If he meets the girl out in the field tending animals, and decides, ‘this one will be my bride’, all a moran has to do is put the necklace on her,” says Ms Josephine Kulea, a child rights activist and coordinator of The Samburu Girls Foundation, a local community based organization in Samburu.

“The morans do not even have to consult the girl’s parents,” Ms Kulea says. Once the girl wears the first bead, she is as good as married to the moran. Her parents, on noticing the necklace, immediately start making preparations to have her circumcised, in readiness for marriage.

During beading, morans are free to have sex with the innocent girls, many of whom are too young to recognise their supposed husbands, let alone attend to affairs of their matrimonial duties. And once the moran graduates to an age-group that allows him to marry, he simply pays 10 cattle to the girl’s father, before whisking the girl away to the marriage bed, no matter her age.

This tradition has ruined the lives of many girls in Samburu, where decision-making is vested in elders. Girls, unlike boys, do not attend school, despite free primary education. “He is free to do with her as he wills, she belongs to him, and him alone,” Ms Kulea says.

As a result, an unknown number of girls end up getting pregnant as early as 12 years. Many die in the process, Ms Kulea says. “Last year we lost a 12-year-old who was forced out of school to get married, but she was too young to deliver her baby. She died together with the baby.”

Although there are no official figures, officers in the region say the number of children being rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation is huge. This is mostly between November and January, the early marriage and FGM season among the Samburu, according to Children’s Department Officers. Children’s homes in Isiolo and Nanyuki, which serve Samburu and Maasai, are packed with fleeing children at this time.



Mrs. Galdys Lesirma
Director of Samburu Girls Foundation

“Even as we speak, it (FGM and early marriages) is still going on,” says Mr Enock Manua, a children’s officer in Nanyuki. At one station alone, officers have been rescuing at least 10 girls a month since November. But rescuing them is one thing, and finding a place for them is quite another.

Cursed For Fighting Circumcision

Locals like Ms Josephine Kulea, who joined the war against underage marriage and female circumcision risk being cursed by conservative village elders, who view them as enemies of culture. For three years now, many villagers at Kipsing, have been waiting for Ms Kulea to drop dead any time, after elders invoked the Ldeketa, a terrible curse reserved for cultural outlaws.

“They told my mother to get ready to bury me, that after the curse I was as good as dead,” says the 28-year-old registered nurse. But the nurse says she does not mind being cursed. Not as long as she snatches as many little girls as possible from the tight grip of harmful traditions like FGM and early marriages.

In her Samburu community, elders wield enormous power over the lives of ordinary villagers — from deciding who marries who, to quietly settling life and death disputes like rape, defilement and incest. In their court, many young men get away with rape and defilement for as little as one cow.

“The biggest hurdle for us is fighting the culture of beading which is deeply rooted in Samburu and additionally, the morans are not willing to let go of this culture hence becoming a challenge changing this perception,” says Gladys Lesirma, Director of Samburu Girls Foundation.

Let there be Light

Solar Power jolts deprived pupils into becoming top performers

By Gardy Chacha

It is 6:02 in the morning and Gloria Kalisa, the top performing student in Mwingi's Itumbe Primary School, is making her way into her classroom. Dawn is fast unraveling but darkness still hangs over the school compound and inside the classrooms. Kalisa is in standard eight and needs to revise ahead of this year's Kenya Certificate Primary Examinations (KCPE). Luckily for her, solar powered electricity was recently installed to light up some classes in the school to facilitate learning. Itumbe Primary School is one of the few schools with electricity as Migwani District is yet to be connected to the country's power grid. The school's deputy head teacher, John Mwaniki, starts his mathematics class at 6:30 am under the luminescent bulb-powered by solar energy.



It has been reported that part of the reasons students in urban areas perform better than those in the country side is the disparity in power availability—those in towns have well illuminated electricity lighting to study well into the night.

The notion seems to be supported by the experiences at Itumbe Primary School as the school has shown steady improvement over the years since installation of solar panels.

"Just three years ago, this was the worst performing school in Migwani District," says John Mwaniki. "If you compare the performance today with previous years, you will be astonished to know that the same school now ranks among the best in the zone as well as in the District."

Later on we head to his office, a rumpled room with piles of books, papers and files; he shows me all the school's results since 2009. The transformation is astonishing. The school's class that sat KCPE in 2009 had a mean score of 154.70 marks

out of 500. In last year's exams, the mean score had steadily risen to 223.49. The whopping difference in the mean scores can only be explained in two words: solar energy.

A KCPE student from Itumbe primary, William Mumbu, describes the situation in their school before the solar lighting project, "It was really dark. By 5pm, all pupils would have gone home. As soon as darkness sets in the family sleeps and staying up to study was uncommon because most families were too poor to afford to leave on the paraffin lamps."

In 2010, a solar panel was installed in Itumbe Primary School to provide light for upper primary pupils and their teachers. Itumbe is one among 15 schools that have had the solar panels installed. This is part of a community initiative aimed at providing a better learning environment for pupils initiated by a joint partnership between a local NGO - Regional Institute for Social Enterprise (RISE) and KCDF.



what spurred him to develop his innovation, Mwangaza Bora, a solar lamp made of recycled scrap metal.

Patrick Nzuku, a teacher in Migwani District, thinks adequate light-hours for longer studies and revision helps pupils excel. He says that for the government's free laptop project to be successful, some source of energy has to be provided for each school.

"The major objective for this project was to increase the pupil-teacher contact hours with the ultimate goal of improving performance in schools. Targeted schools were those yet to be connected to the power grid. In total, 47 primary schools in Migwani District have been enlisted to have at least one solar panel installed." says Phillip Mwangagi, RISE Programme Coordinator.

In the last mock exams, Itumbe was ranked second in the district. The school's rise to the peak in the district is nothing short of a miracle to the parents. Susan Mwendu Kyalo is one such parent. She has six children at Itumbe. Mwendu says the future is quite bright if recent examination results are anything to go by.

A miracle from the areas most loathed enemy—the sun. Migwani is an arid area. The climate is harsh and the scorching sun can make life unbearable. But this is the energy source that has given Kalisa a fighting chance to make something of her life, At Kalisa's homestead, we find Kalisa's father, David Maloki, tending to goats. Kalisa joins her mother, Joyce Zandeji, who is in the kitchen preparing dinner. Maloki leans back and recounts his experience. "I had been told about the solar project when it began and never thought that it would foster such improvement in performance." Maloki says.

A 2010 winner of the CNN Heroes award, Evans Wadongo, says the absence of light in his village was his greatest motivator to study. This is also

Under the initiative, RISE was tasked with mobilizing local resources from parents of the 15 schools targeted and KCDF would match the funds raised. The concept of the programme is to empower communities to take a leading role in addressing their development challenges by inculcating the spirit of pulling resources together to address these challenges as opposed to relying on external resources.

When we shared this concept with the parents, the reaction was somewhat skeptical with many sighting lack of resources to give. But as the momentum from those willing to be part of it gained traction, the others joined in. We were able to raise the targeted Kshs 900,000 (USD 10,000) through school fundraisers where parents were encouraged to bring Kshs100 (approximately USD 1) as well as having trade fairs where parents sold their crafts in the local market and the proceeds given to the kitty" Adds Mwangangi.

"The element of empowering and building the confidence of communities to take up the challenge of addressing their development concerns underpins the objective of this (Pamoja4Change) programme. The case of the solar project is one of the many successful projects that demonstrate a paradigm shift in terms of communities taking ownership of their projects and using the resources that exist amongst themselves to address those very challenges," said Caesar Ngule, KCDF's lead person for the programme.

03

Community Adapts Environmental Conservation to check Effects of Adverse Climate Change in Narok



The wider Narok County has witnessed its fair share of drought and famine due to changes in the climatic patterns of the area caused by massive deforestation and environmental degradation of the Mau Forest. Narok, once considered a water tower with a forest cover of more than 76 percent 20 years ago, currently has a forest cover of less than 33 percent caused by a number of factors with the major ones being charcoal burning and large scale wheat planting as well as an upsurge in settlement schemes in the forest.

As one approaches the somewhat dusty terrain of Narok town, one can't help but notice the maasai women adorned in the famous maasai attires of wrap around (shukas) and beads dangling on their necks as they carry logs of firewood on their backs while precariously balancing their children on top of the logs. The spectacle is characteristic in the wider Narok County as most homesteads still rely on firewood energy for cooking.

Norparakwo Koriata has been a stern devotee of firewood energy which she has used for over 30 years in cooking for her seven member nuclear family as well as another eight members from her extended family. It's only recently that she adopted a cleaner and more efficient way for cooking and lighting at her makeshift home, made of soil and plastered with cow dung otherwise called manyattas.

"When it came to preparation of meals, it was a big challenge for me as the smoke that filled the room was not only uncomfortable for us, but also a health hazard to my family. Most of my children developed

respiratory problems as the kitchen which also doubles up as the bedroom is filled with soot. It was even worse when it rained as the logs were drenched making it difficult to burn," says Koriata as she carries her five year old baby.

"She was the most affected of my children by the smoke and I have had to make several trips to the local health center to seek medical attention due to her wheezing as well her eye irritations," adds Koriata.

KCDF, through a match grant dubbed Pamoja4Change, awarded Nguzo Africa, a Community Based Organization in Narok to provide clean energy for cooking and lighting to the residents of Narok as well improving the learning environment of children by planting 5000 trees in three schools with a secondary objective of influencing other schools to replicate the model.

"As an organisation working in the expansive Narok County for slightly over a decade, we have witnessed the adverse effects of climate change as a result of environmental degradation. We had consultative forums with the residents who largely practice pastoralism and there was a concern that their mainstay may be eroded due to deforestation in the area resulting to poor rainfall. We decided to embark on environmental conservation at the household level," said Nguzo Africa Director Elizaphan Ogechi.

Under the match grant, Nguzo Africa was tasked with raising Kshs 1 Million. This being a new concept of funding to the community, Nguzo Africa fundraised from members of the group and community members as well as proceeds from income generating ventures that the group runs.

"The initial cost of setting up the project is relatively high (Kshs 70,000 – Kshs 120,000) for most homesteads, but through the Pamoja4Change grant, we have been able to subsidize the cost as well as offer credit facility for the members to take up the project while offsetting the debt over time through savings made from buying paraffin." added Mr. Ogechi.

Through the project, four demonstration household biogas systems were installed with Koriata

being one of the beneficiaries of the project. The success of the project has attracted more residents to take up the innovation despite the relatively significant cost of installing.

"The benefits of the biogas digester transcends just the physical exhaustion we face as women, with the bio gas project, our families are healthier as the gas produces no smoke. Another benefit is that there is absolutely no waste as we use cow dung from our three cows as biomass for the digester and the sludge harvested thereafter the cow dung that has been utilized is used as manure for our small garden." says Koriata.

Other than the biogas project, Nguzo also pioneered a solar lighting project for the residents of Narok South with the same concept of getting the lanterns on credit. Under the arrangement, one pays a deposit of Kshs. 2,500 (USD 28) and pays a daily installment of Kshs.40 (less than half a dollar) for a period of one year through the M-Pesa mobile payment platform. The comparative cost of the solar lantern which also comes with a transistor radio and a mobile charging unit is much cheaper than what residents use to pay for paraffin for their kerosene lamp and paying to charge for their mobile phones daily.

"The uptake of the solar lanterns has been phenomenal and we have been able to reach some 500 households within this first phase of the project. We hope to reach as many residents as possible in the next phase," said Mr. Ogechi.

Nguzo Africa and the residents of Narok South are a perfect example of how local philanthropy works. They have come together with a common need; environmental conservation and have gone ahead to raise resources locally to address the issue at the very level where it affects them most.

The role of KCDF has been largely to facilitate this process while entrench the sense of dignity in addressing the communities development needs by the community members themselves," remarked Caesar Ngule, the lead programme person for the Local Resource Mobilization Programme (Pamoja4Change Programme).

Entrenching Local Giving in Nkoilale

As one traverses the expansive wildlife migratory corridor of Kenya's famous Maasai Mara, one can't help but marvel at the scenic beauty inter-laced with the wild game roaming freely. Maasai Mara Game Reserve is perhaps the most visited park in East and Central Africa and has been in contention to be named as the eighth wonder world of the world during the infamous wildebeest migration.

This national treasure has been somewhat a resource curse at times for the Maa community of Nkoilale living only 10 kilometers away from the park. Human wild life conflict is common place in the area hindering access to education for the children in the area. Lack of adequate schools has further compounded the education levels in the area. In the entire location, there is only one primary school serving close to 3000 pupils, with the next school being 16 kilometers away.

Informed by the dire education situation prevalent in the area, Nkoilale Community Development Organization (NCDO) approached KCDF in com-



ing up with a feeder school to reduce the distances covered by school going children as well as mitigate deaths caused by roaming wild animals.

“Most parents decide not to send their young children to school owing to the intense human wildlife conflict. Incidences of people being trampled to death by elephants or attacked by lions are all too common here. The need to come up with a feeder school to promote education in this largely pastoral community was of utmost importance” said Jacob Losikany, the Coordinator of NCDO and Headmaster of Nkoilale Primary School.

The project, through a match grant from KCDF under the Pamoja4Change programme, which was completed in April, is expected to serve more than 150 children under the age of eight years in the environs where the school is being built. The group has already identified volunteer teachers as well as furniture for the classes. The children attending the school will be required to pay a highly subsidized fee, less than USD 1 every quarter for maintenance cost of the school as well as educational supplies such as chalk.

Under the match grant, the community was tasked with raising Kshs 700,000 (USD 8200). This being a new concept of funding to the community, NCDO opted to adopt an ingenious way of raising funds which would be easily accepted and adopted by the community. With the Maasai being a predominantly pastoral community, NCDO appealed to the community members by convincing them to contribute either in monetary terms or in kind by donating at least one head of cattle which would later be auctioned and the money used to match the grant.

“This matching concept was fairly new to us, most pastoralists have wealth but in form of cattle. After we tried raising hard cash with minimal success, we adopted the in-kind support from the community through donation of goats, sheep or cows to our group. This was an instant hit since this is the language our people understand best”, said Jacob Losikany.

The concept of in kind donations was also readily accepted because of the transparency element of it. The heads of cattle was confined in one of the schools compound which was accessible to all, where the heads of cattle was fattened so as to

fetch a good price when selling. The heads of cattle was then auctioned in the local market and the funds rose declared to all. The group was able to raise Kshs 600,000 after the auction which attracted more than 300 community members.

The group also complemented the funds raised from conservation money they receive from the nearby Maasai Mara Game Reserve, as most of the land surrounding the park has been converted to conservancy land to promote tourism while mitigating human wildlife conflict. Camps and lodges within the park also gave a donation of Kshs. 200,000.

“We are very excited as a community to have the feeder school so close to our homes. I had sworn never to let my young children go to school as I was not ready to loose them to the wild animals. They also have to cross a river which can be extremely dangerous since the area is prone to flash flooding”, said Charity Nkoitoi, a community member who resides close to the new school.

The school has been recognized by the Government through the Ministry of Education and will be a feeder school to Nkoilale Primary School, the only fully fledged school in the area. The group has also identified another area where they plan to construct another feeder school to reduce the distances covered by the young children.

The project hopes to improve Early Childhood Education in the region which has largely been non-existent by using the feeder school as a center of excellence through adoption of child friendly concepts.



Rabuor Community

Embracing Local Resource Mobilisation



As you enter Rabuor primary school situated in Kisumu County, you cannot help but notice the sorry state the classrooms in the school. Most are old and condemned making them unfit for learning forcing students from the lower classrooms to learn under trees and makeshift classrooms. This scenario presents its own challenges for teachers and students alike.

“The dilapidated state of the classrooms is beyond what we as a public school can attempt to salvage due to limitations of resources. We have a high enrollment compared to the available infrastructure to meet that demand which has affected the quality of education in the school.” quips the school headmaster, Mr. Charles Odida.

Upon this realization in 2011, the school management began an education awareness campaign for parents and rallied them on the importance of giving and mobilizing resources towards building new classrooms to improve the welfare of their children in the school. The school also developed

a partnership with a community organisation who addressed issues of education in the area called Kidi Luanda.

The project is aimed at accelerating school development and encourages people to give. Kidi Luanda organization through its project coordinator, Maline Orero, shared with the school community on KCDF’s matching ‘shilling for a shilling’ grant program- Pamoja for Change (P4C) and how the school was in a position to benefit from their fundraising efforts.

“When Maline talked to the school committee regarding KCDF’s matching grant program, we were doubtful because of past experiences where people came and made promises but never honored them,” adds the head teacher. However, they were convinced to visit the KCDF website and get the information first hand for themselves. After witnessing what the program is about and how it has benefitted other communities across Kenya, the committee was able to convince Rabuor community



to fundraise aggressively towards the classroom's project.

The school committee together with the parent body organized the community to hold a day for fundraising in the school compound. Parents, teachers, pupils, various alumni and other guests attended the fundraiser and managed to raise Kshs. 300,000 in that one sitting. The school project has taught the school a valuable lesson in regards to resource mobilization and addressing their community needs. They realize that they have the power to make a change if they are willing to work together in addressing issues that affect them as a community.

The project has brought on new partnerships for the school, one of them being OGRA Foundation, a Kenyan NGO whose one of the founder's was taught by Mr. Charles Odida. This partnership has brought a great reward to the school's feeding program. Rabuor primary will benefit from a three year pilot feeding program that will see the whole

school, from ECD to class eight pupils incorporated. The Ministry of Agriculture has also committed to setting up two greenhouses to sustain the school feeding program.

The two classrooms built will benefit 40 students from the lower primary school.



Mr. Charles Odida stands in front of the classrooms constructed.

Group Promotes Child Play in Malindi



Malindi is well known as a tourist destination characterized by sandy beaches while enjoying a rich heritage from the cultural groups that reside in the area. Due to the lure of money in the booming tourism industry, many children drop out of school before the ages of 12 to join the hospitality industry.

Most of these young children end up as tour guides, drivers or casual laborers in the industry. But the majority of the uneducated youths end up in the illegal sex and human trafficking business, many of them attracted by the false promise that one day, a rich 'Mzungu' (white man) will marry them and take them away to a faraway land where there is no poverty, and where all their dreams will come true. Nationally, Malindi ranks amongst the poorest performing regions academically.

It is against this backdrop that the Malindi Education & Development Association (MEDA), a local community based organization has its operations. MEDA has since 1997, worked to promote education in Malindi by providing scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as improving the standards of education by providing support for learning materials and the training of teachers in the region.

"We realized that for our children to take full advantage of the value of education to transition to higher levels, we needed to focus on education from the elementary level. Through research, MEDA established that one of the reasons the children from the region performed poorly was because they lacked a strong foundation in basic education at the early childhood development stage of between 0 -8 years.

Although they attended Islamic classes known as madrasa, aspects on childhood development were not very strong," says Tsuma Barua, the Executive Director of MEDA. MEDA thus saw the need to find a solution by working with the Government as well as the Muslim faithful to improve the education standards in the region with considerable success. Over the years, MEDA has managed to facilitate the transition of more than 10,000 children from ECD level to secondary level and beyond. But as this was happening, there was an aspect of learning that was not being addressed -PLAY.

Due to the limited spaces available in the town as a result of massive construction of tourist hotels and villas, there was no recreational facility in the entire Malindi area to cater for the children's extra- curricular development. MEDA came up with a comprehensive plan of developing a public



playing ground to cater for the over 11,000 children in the area. From their projections, the proposed playground would require Kshs. 4 Million. The group approached different stakeholders and was finally allocated a piece of land belonging to a renowned philanthropist and business magnate, Mr. Naushad Merali.

After we got the piece of land, we had a good challenge, the challenge of raising resources to buy playing materials such as carousels, jumping castles and the like. We approached our long standing partner KCDF to partner with us in this project which they gladly accepted.

“However, we needed to raise half of the money (Kshs. 2 Million) for KCDF to match,” says Mr. Barua. The organization embarked on a fundraising initiative by raising money from their existing income generating activities as well as targeting corporates and individuals from the expansive town.

One of the strategies that MEDA has continually used with much success was to raise resources during the holy month of Ramadhan. MEDA organized a fundraiser in form of a dinner, bringing together community leaders and other Muslim faithful.

MEDA was able to raise a total of Kshs. 4.1 Million, exceeding their target and able to embark on the project. With completion of the project, the playground offers a safe space for the children to play with approximately 7,000 accessing the playground monthly at a subsidized fee.





07 Innovative farmers in Murang'a set up biogas 'factories' in their homes and boost their annual produce

It is wet, cold, and foggy as we make our way into Murang'a. There is a continuous drizzle in Gakoeini village, located a few kilometers from Murang'a Town Centre. Most households don't have the luxury of being connected to electricity. However, at one woman's home, beams of light can barely be seen through the fog. We find Lydia Muthoni Kamau in her domestic work-clothes. She is among eight farmers in her village who are running mini biogas plants to supplement their

energy needs.

"Yes, the light you are seeing comes from the gas produced from my small biogas plant," says Muthoni as she inches closer to the light source dangling from the ceiling of her house "I don't pay for it; it's all free. I chose to use it rather than tap power from the national grid system which requires that I pay bills every month." She quips and goes on to add. "The gas that is produced from the bio-digester meets all my lighting and

cooking needs. Days of roaming through thicket in search of firewood are over.”

A full time farmer, the mother of four is not only saved from paying electricity but she is also reaping other benefits such as enriched manure which is a by-product of the biogas digester. It is only after she takes us to her backyard that we realize the full benefits she enjoys. All we see is a cylindrical snout of concrete emerging from beneath the ground. It is filled to the brim with a homogenous mixture of water and cow dung. A few feet from the protrusion, beneath the ground, is an installed tank where biological processes occur to produce the gas. The foul smell is unavoidable.

“This is where I get gas to cook with and light up my home. It saves me a great deal of money- so I am okay dealing with this muck and the pungent smell.” Says Lydia.

A ten-minute drive away from Lydia’s farm we find Mzee David Kimani, a septuagenarian who raises cattle and grows tea. He too heard about the biogas project and was attracted to it. Before installing the biogas plant, Kimani had been spending quite a bit of money buying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from commercial outlets in the town. Every three months, he would spend close to Kshs.3000 (USD 34) to refill a 13kg gas cylinder. Today he considers himself freed and unshackled from this expense.

“Bringing this project home has saved me from buying gas or using firewood or paraffin. After carefully researching on the project, I jumped on board and I have never looked back as the project has been a blessing to me and my family” Says Kimani.

Muthoni and Mzee Kimani are among eight beneficiaries of the biogas project that is a joint venture between BYE (Boosting Young Entrepreneurs Programme) and KCDF ; which began with a simple idea of enhancing community togetherness around Murang’a in an effort to reverse the poverty cycle and provide new opportunities for growth for residents of the area.

BYE’s energy programme has become part of the Kigumo Green Development Project (KiGDep) that seeks to promote the use of sustainable energy by community members through replacing

firewood with cleaner energy sources such as biogas as the main source of energy.

Murang’a is often wet contributing to frequent power outages. The biogas project, has provided residents like Muthoni with alternative options of lighting up their households during these outages. The installation of Muthoni’s biogas ‘factory’ cost Kshs. 75,000 through a pay forward model where the money is advanced to the beneficiaries and upon completion of the project, the recipients pays a monthly installment of Kshs 5,000 per month within a period of 18 months. This arrangement facilitates more beneficiaries to be part of the project as the installment comes from savings accrued from not buying paraffin or firewood.

“The health of the beneficiaries has greatly improved since installation of the biogas digesters. Biogas has no soot hence is a healthier option compared to the use of firewood for cooking or lighting.” says Tabitha Muthoni Njuguna, BYE’s Assistant Administration Officer.

When BYE CBO was introduced to the project (Pamoja4Change), they were hesitant that the matching fund approach would not get buy in from the members as the community they serve was not financially endowed.

“We shared the concept in our regular meeting and we were surprised with the reaction from most of the members. Members took up the challenge and gave various suggestions on how the funds would be raised,” quips Tabitha.

BYE CBO was tasked to raise Kshs. 450,000 with KCDF matching the fund to initiate the pilot project which would act as a demonstration plot for more members to learn and take up the project. The group was able to approach tea factories in the area, held football matches as well as getting contributions from members and the set target was reached.

“The interest from members in the project has increased tremendously after the pilot and members are now coming together to support each other to construct their bio- plant and we hope to see a cleaner environment as well as improved living standard from the community,” concluded Tabitha.

Pamoja4Change Programme

The programme seeks to promote, through local giving, sustainable community driven projects which build communities' confidence to take charge of their development processes. The programme is informed by the fact that communities inherently have unlimited resources amongst themselves that can be harnessed to promote development.

The programme, courtesy of a unique partnership with a Dutch Non-Governmental Organization Wilde Ganzen, is administered through a competitive grant scheme for community groups who show unique and innovative project ideas for improving the development and general welfare of a community. Communities groups are required to raise 50% of the total project costs with KCDF matching the amount raised.



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