



Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife

Partnerships for Education and Wildlife Preservation

November 2008

A message from Samuel Muhungu the morning after the election...

Hallo Gwen and John,

I am very excited and Kenya is in celebration mood. Kibaki has declared tomorrow public holiday but for me and the people in Kisumu/Kogelo it starts today!!!! After the orphan children's home I don't do any other office work. I should go visit my mother and later have good time with friends. I am really happy with you American people because you have proved to the world the true meaning of democracy that is based on one's merit and not family, race, religion or lineage. This is a big lesson to the world and the youth the world over should "rise" and take their rightful positions in leadership. Women too should seize this opportunity and demand to play important role in society and politics. It is indeed a defining moment not just for America but for us all. More later and thank you for making the right decision. Kudos to all American people.

Regards, Samuel



Samuel and his mother Mary Mugure Muhungu

Kenya in August I arrived in Kenya on August 2nd for a 5 week visit accompanied by my good friend Rolly Thompson. When I left Kenya in March, 12,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) still lived in a dozen camps in Molo. The new government coalition had given birth to an uneasy peace and the recovery process had not yet begun. Samuel Muhungu, Coordinator of the Network for EcoFarming in Africa (NECOFA) and our colleague in Molo updated us regularly on developments as the camps closed and people returned to the places from which they had been driven by violence or simply by fear. Samuel remained in close contact with the returnees and he and his colleagues met with them frequently to help with the transition. In July, they held a meeting that brought together representatives from the Kikuyu, Kalenjin, Kisii, Kipsigis and Luo communities, all of whom had been seriously affected by the violence. This was the first of the continuing Consultative Peace Forum Meetings.

With the permission of the participants of the Peace Meetings, Samuel had invited us to attend 2 all day sessions scheduled for August and the members of the Molo Wool Project had asked us to do a felt making workshop for them. I also wanted to visit the Kirepari Community at Lake Baringo. We spent most of our time in Molo, with a trip to Baringo and 5 days at the coast to visit an orphanage and attend the Mombasa Agricultural Fair.

Visiting the Rural Communities Much of Molo District lies above 7,000 feet. Fertile, green and beautiful, it's an area of prime agricultural land. The communities are far apart and far from town. In the unseasonably wet and cold weather, the dirt roads had become muddy tracks which prevented any but 4 wheel drive vehicles from getting far from the main road. For 8 days, we squished along in the mud to visit as many of the former IDPs as possible.

Many people with no homes to return to lived in "satellite camps" which gave them access to their plots of land during the day and safety at night. Police posts had been constructed in several locations for added security. Most families still waited for the 10,000 Kenya Shillings (US \$153) promised by the government to help with resettlement. In spite of having lost homes, livestock, crops and a year's worth of stored food, people were determined to get on with their lives. Those who could afford seeds and tools had already begun planting cabbage, kale, potatoes and beans and were happy to be back at work and productive.



Woman in Keringet with her small store

One woman in Keringet, not waiting for handouts, set up a little market on a plastic feed sack by the roadside. In the cold and wet, she sold bath soap, tea, sugar, rice, laundry detergent, salt, matches and other small items to people who had no way of getting to town. Later, we drove through several communities where the people, men, women, children, young and old, worked together to put rocks in the deepest holes in the mud so that at least the roads would be passable and people could take their products to town or bring things back for their families.

Much of the violence in the Molo area last spring had been planned and carried out in the areas through which we traveled. It would have been unsafe to be there then, and it was quite an experience now to travel with Samuel and talk with the people whom many said were the perpetrators, remembering the fear and insecurity even I felt sometimes at night in our house at Michinda.

Peace Meetings Undeniably, the most unique and profound experience of our visit was attending two of the Consultative Forums, the peace talks led by Samuel and his colleague Karangathi Njoroge. Sixty people, between them representing the 5 communities in the district, traveled to Molo for the day-long meetings that are at times emotional and very moving. A translator sat with us all day so we could understand the proceedings which were conducted in Kiswahili to bridge the diversity of languages among the groups. With Karangathi's leadership, the participants spent time getting to know each other, talking about their experiences during the violence in the spring, and coming to understand that everyone had suffered as a result of the conflict, and that the loss of family, friends, homes and possessions had affected everyone deeply.



Peace Talk participants listen to the discussion

Everyone had been a victim in one way or another. Together, they worked to identify the roots of the violence, the facilitating factors that allowed or aided the violence to grow, and the fruits of the violence that had been so damaging to all. They spent a long time identifying how to address the issues they had raised. It was fascinating to watch the evolution of the discussion and see how strongly people desired to leave the fear, hate, rumors and tribalism behind and move on, together, to solve the real issues that affected them all equally. One woman said that before this meeting was convened, she'd had no idea that it was even possible for people from different communities to come together like this to talk. The meetings will continue.



Consultative Peace Forum
Karangathi Njoroge leads the discussion

Molo Wool Project We spent a day at the home of Beatrice Kamau, the chairwoman of the Karunga Women's Group, visiting with the women of the Molo Wool Project. They continue to produce their wonderful handspun and knitted animals, many of which we bring home with us to sell. A week later, Rolly and I taught a dozen women and one man the basics of making felt from raw wool during a two day workshop. The students were eager to learn and each created a beautiful felt bag. After a long delay because of the conflict earlier this year, the spinning wheels and looms for which we collected funds last year were shipped from New Zealand in August and have finally arrived in Mombasa. The 30 new wheels and 20 looms, the women will soon be producing larger numbers of products and finding markets will be a priority. They would also like business training to enable them to manage the operation themselves. So much accomplished in such a short time!

Michinda Primary School Chicken Project. Ninety chickens now live in the new chicken house that FKSU funded at Michinda Boys Primary Boarding School. The chicken "compound" was completed in early September. Samuel says it's working well and giving the students in the 4-K Club a lot of experience and knowledge about poultry raising. Five chickens are already brooding and the plan is to purchase more. The eggs will be used in the school kitchen to feed the boys. 4-K is similar to our 4H. The K's stand for Kuungana Kufanya Kusaidia Kenya (Working Together to Help Kenya).

School gardens We visited Mukinyai, Olenguruone, Michinda and Kiambiriria Primary schools to admire the school garden projects managed by the 4 K clubs and which FKSU supports. At Kiambiriria, the students picked a huge bag of *managu* (black nightshade greens) for us to take home for dinner. They're not poisonous and taste like spinach. The boys and girls are so proud of the work they're doing and of all that they're learning.

Water projects During our visit, FKSU supported an entirely new water project for members of the Kihoto Self Help Group. The project involved refitting four shallow wells (although one of them was 80 ft. deep!), including lining each of them with brick, installing a concrete cap with a flow away from the well to prevent contamination from ground water and installing a rope and washer pump system housed in PVC piping to bring water up from the bottom of the well. The new systems will provide clean, safe water for three families and for irrigating the community's garden. Each well retrofit cost approximately \$350. The project will serve as a demonstration for other communities. Thanks to Makindu Water Project for the success of this endeavor!



Newly refurbished well with rope and washer pump

Kokwa Island, Lake Baringo

Thomson Ole Tenges A 2006 graduate of the Rift Valley Institute of Science and Technology, Thomson ole Tenges, our Project Manager at Lake Baringo, has been of invaluable assistance. His degree is in Cooperative Management with a heavy emphasis on business, and he's also had training in reproductive health, basic counselling, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, human sexuality and legal rights and home based care and nutrition. A member of the Njemps community, he is well-respected by the Njemps people of Kokwa island with whom we have several projects. He has impressed upon them the importance of personal responsibility, community contribution to and ownership of projects, and taking pride in their accomplishments. On September 19th, he coordinated a meeting with elders, chiefs and the representatives of local government to talk about the FKSWS projects and to solicit their support and assistance. The elders were most appreciative of our efforts, particularly in the area of education. They will meet again in November to discuss priorities, invite others to participate in projects, and will invite women and youth to participate as members of the planning group.



Thomson talks with the Kirepari community

Thomson travels by bicycle and *matatu* (taxi) from his home to Kirepari. The matatus are often late and biking is difficult under the best of conditions. One evening in March, he called me on his cell phone just as it was beginning to get dark. He was standing under a tree in the midst of a downpour, both tires on his bike were flat and he couldn't get hold of anyone on the phone to come help him. He was still miles away from home. One of our priorities is to purchase a motorbike for him.

Gardens, Bees and Chickens For the first time ever, there are vegetable gardens at Kirepari! After FKSWSponsored a trip for community members from Kirepari to Thomson's village of Kailer to see the community gardens there, Kirepari residents returned home and started their own. We were surprised when we arrived in August to see a large community garden surrounded by a thorn *boma* to keep the goats and sheep from nibbling the crops. The gardeners had cleared hundreds of rocks from the area, planted cabbage, kale and beans with donated seeds, and started a small nursery for seedlings. Chebi, the treasurer of the school committee had created his own family garden, and built a bee hive and two chicken houses. The men in the community would like to attend bee keeping classes at Baraka Agricultural College in Molo to help them develop an income generating project. The chicken project that FKSWS helped to start in January is doing well.

Scholarships Because of a hearing impairment, Mulan Lekaranga, whom we first met in January, had never been to school. In May, the Roosevelt Middle School Active and Caring Teens class raised funds for hearing tests and school costs for Mulan. In July, Thomson took him to Kabarnet for tests and he is now a student at Ochi Primary Boarding School and Rehabilitation Center in Baringo District! Thomson accompanied him to school on the first day to help him settle in to his new environment and will pick him up at the end of this term to bring him home for the holidays. His teachers say that he's doing very well and is good in math. He's in a class with other deaf students as the teachers learn more about his capabilities, but he will eventually join classes with hearing students.

The Kirepari school committee has requested primary school scholarships (\$50 per year) for 15 children who currently are not enrolled because of lack of family resources. The scholarship provides uniforms, shoes, books and fees. Once these students are enrolled, FKSWS, with the help of many of you, will be supporting 58 students in this community to attend primary school!



Mulan Lekaranga

Kokwa Primary School FKSWS is providing funding for 15 girls at the Kokwa Primary School to become boarders rather than day students. The school requested this assistance so that the girls would have time to study rather than walking an hour to and from school each day and having to do chores at home that keep them from their schoolwork. The cost per girl is \$100 per year for room and board. There is dormitory space for the 15 new boarders, but the space is in need of some repair before it can be used. Head Teacher Joel Lolkuti has asked for help to purchase glass for the windows, new doors, paint for the roof and doors and to build a new toilet to accommodate the growing number of students.

Water projects NurseStella Lenguris on Kokwa Island says that since the large fluoride and bacteria water filter was installed in April, she's seen no cases of intestinal problems that she would attribute to unclean water. The community also received individual household filters, one for each family.

The 3000 liter water tank donated by FKSWS as part of a rain water catchment system at the Kirpari Nursery school was installed in September and is now full of water! The tank provides water directly to the school, eliminating the need to carry water up the hill from the large filter, and is used for drinking and for preparing the school lunch. The cost of this project was \$535.

FKSW purchased two Moneymaker Pumps in September; one will provide water for the community garden at Kirepari and one will do the same for the school garden at Kokwa Primary. Both pumps will eliminate the need to carry water uphill by hand from the lake. The Money Maker Pumps look a bit like the step machines you see at gyms...a person manipulates the foot pedals to pump water from a water source, and it's a great workout! I tried one at the Agricultural Fair in Mombasa and activated 5 sprinklers at once! Each pump cost 10,000 Ksh, (\$142) including the pipes and hoses.

FKSW also purchased a diesel pump for the women in the El Dume Women's Group in Thomson's community. They will use the pump to draw water from the Perkerra River to water their gardens. This pump cost \$480 and when the pump is not in use, the women will rent it out to earn income for their group and to buy the fuel for the pump. Funding for these projects was made available by the Makindu Water Project.

Teacher Training Nursery teacher Grace Koinale has been teaching for at least 6 years without a teaching certificate. The Kenyan government requires completion of nursery school before a student may enroll in primary school and yet, nursery teachers and programs rarely receive support. In August, Thomson took Grace to Kabarnet for her first term at the teacher training school there. Classes are held during the breaks between school terms, and so she left, with her weeks old baby and Thomson as her escort, just days after she finished teaching at Kirepari. She enjoyed the 4 weeks of classes and is so grateful to finally have the opportunity to get more education. Thanks to Janice and Aaron Kaufman for supporting her education.



Matatu in Molo

FKSW Safari January 2009 John and I return to Kenya on Jan 3. Two couples from Eugene will join us and we'll spend 2 weeks in Molo with 4 or 5 days at Lake Baringo visiting the Kokwa communities. Among our adventures will be an excursion with the women from the Molo Wool Project to Lake Nakuru National Park. They've asked to go so they can see the giraffe, rhinos, hippos, zebras, monkeys and other wild animals that they've been knitting for a year and a half but have never seen in person!

Thank you so much for your continuing support!

Since the summer of 2003, FKSWS has received \$103,000 in donations, about \$80,000 of it in the last 2 years. We have a broad base of support from many individual donors. No amount is too small...one couple has donated \$760 over the past 5 years, most of it with \$25 contributions. On the other hand, we greatly appreciate larger gifts like the following: \$10,000 from the family of Edson and Ginny Harris, \$10,000 from the Makindu Water Project, \$4,000 from Thrums LLC for the Molo Wool Project, and a \$2,500 general donation from the Banky LaRoque Foundation. Bryson Distributing in Eugene has been of enormous help in fundraising for the Molo Wool Project and for humanitarian relief, and the St. Mary's Episcopal Church Youth Group in Eugene is currently fundraising for scholarships and selling the Molo Wool Project animals. Your generosity has made a huge difference for many children and adults in Kenya. We hope you will continue to support FKSWS projects.

We spend no more than 10% of donations on administrative costs. Our Board requests unrestricted donations to fund new and ongoing projects in the coming year, including the following:

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| \$500 Construct a kitchen for Kirepari Nursery School | \$2,000 Peace Efforts and rebuilding in Molo |
| \$500 Refurbish the Kokwa Primary School Dormitory | \$1,200 Motorcycle for Thomson |
| \$600 Laptop for Thomson | \$4,500 Primary School Scholarships (\$50 per yr) |
| \$350 Construct 2 toilets at Kokwa Primary School | \$1,500 Boarding Scholarships for girls (\$100 per yr) |

We have other ongoing projects that also need support like the Molo Wool Project and the 4-K Club School Garden Project.

Asante Sanai



Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife

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