



LAUNCH OF ECO-SCHOOLS AND WORLD WATER DAY CELEBRATIONS IN KITUI COUNTY

REPORT



DATE AND VENUE: 23RD MARCH 2019 – MIGWANI SECONDARY SCHOOL

SPONSORS



Background

The Kenya Organization for Environmental Education (KOEE), in conjunction with the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC), organized an event to launch the Eco-schools Programme in Kitui County and celebrate World Water Day at Migwani Secondary School in Mwingi West Constituency on 23rd March 2019.

Eco-schools is an international programme for schools working on sustainability issues. Its mission is to empower students to be the change a sustainable world needs through fun and action-oriented activities. The Eco-schools programme is built on a seven step change process that promotes student involvement and leadership while incorporating learning in the school curriculum.

The event brought together students and teachers from 19 primary and secondary schools, community representatives, corporates, local leaders and government agencies from different sectors to mark World Water Day which is observed on 22nd March annually to highlight the importance of freshwater. The day is normally used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The 2019 theme was 'Leaving no one behind' which adapted the central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that as sustainable development progresses, everyone must benefit. The event also coincided with the International Day of Forests marked annually on 21st March, with the 2019 theme of 'Forests and Education' seeking to raise awareness on how sustainably managed forests contribute to environmental sustainability including water supply, poverty eradication, and food security.

The event was used to raise awareness on the need to conserve forests and water resources in Kitui County which has only 7% forest cover and characterized by a rapidly growing population, water scarcity, falling food production, deforestation and low resilience to climate change. There were calls to use the event as a platform to promote the conservation of 8 newly gazetted water towers in Kenya whose purpose is to prevent logging, encroachment and ensure that forests are protected.

Objectives of the event

The main objectives of the event were:

- To create awareness on the need to conserve water towers in Kitui County and promote sustainable natural resource management
- To sensitize schools in Mwingi West Constituency on the role of the Eco-schools Programme in promoting Sustainable Development
- To launch the Eco-schools programme and tree planting drive in Mwingi West Constituency

- To provide an opportunity for corporates, schools and other stakeholders to exhibit their work including Corporate Social Responsibility projects, network and partner for sustainable development

Event Sponsors

The main sponsor of the event was Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC). Other sponsors included: Jubilee Insurance, Agricultural Finance Corporation, Yatta Juice, Machines Technologies Limited, Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen), Kenya Forest Research Institute-Kitui and Office of the MP-Mwingi West.

Participants

The event was attended by pupils and teachers from 19 schools from Kitui County; local community group representatives; area chief, Ministry of Education; Kitui County Education office; National Environment Management Authority-Kitui County and representatives from ICDC, Jubilee Insurance, Agricultural Finance Corporation, Yatta Juice, Machines Technologies Limited and officers from the Office of MP-Mwingi West. The Chief Guest of the event was Hon. Charles Nguna, MP Mwingi West who was represented by his personal assistants Michael Katembu and Evans Kyalo.

In total, over 800 people attended the event with over 80% being students. The specific schools that attended include;

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| 1. Migwani Secondary School | 11. Mathuma Primary School |
| 2. Migwani AIC Primary School | 12. Kiio Secondary School |
| 3. Itumbi Primary School | 13. Thitani Girls Secondary School |
| 4. Kaliluni Primary School | 14. Kairungu Primary School |
| 5. Kalembwa Primary School | 15. Kang'uutheni Primary School |
| 6. Mumbuni Primary School | 16. Itoloni Primary School |
| 7. Kasanga Primary School | 17. Nguutani Primary School |
| 8. Itiliku Primary School | 18. Nguutani Secondary School |
| 9. Syomung'ele Primary School | 19. Katitu Girls High School |
| 10. Katalwa Primary School | |

Description of Event Activities

The main activities of the event included;

Tree planting: Over 500 tree seedlings were planted at Migwani Secondary School with another 2,000 seedlings distributed among the participating schools to be planted in their respective grounds. The tree planting activity was used as launch pad for a tree planting drive in Mwingi West Constituency and the larger Kitui County. The tree planting drive is a strategy to

contribute to the improvement of the Kitui County forest cover which stands at 7%. This would in the long run conserve water catchments in the area. The drive is also a mechanism to spread public awareness on the role forests play in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Exhibition: The event provided an opportunity for sponsors and KOEE to exhibit their respective work and materials with emphasis on how they enhance conservation work and sustainable development. Participants had a chance to take away some of the exhibited branded materials including brochures, posters, books, caps and bags among others.

Performances by schools: Some of the participating schools had an opportunity to do performances in form of poems, music, dance and spoken word with messages on water management, forest conservation, sustainable waste management and overall natural resource management.

Talks by guests: The guests in attendance gave speeches on a wide range of socio-economic and environmental development issues especially in Kitui County. Speeches were given by Migwani sub-county Curriculum Support Officer, Fred Kyambi; Ministry of Education Directorate of Policy and Partnerships representative Everlyn Omwenga; Jubilee Insurance Communications Manager Neema Mwende; Agricultural Finance Regional Manager Evans Muita; ICDC's Investment Manager Kennedy Wanderi and KOEE's Executive Director Dr. Dorcas Otieno.

The Chief Guest of the event Hon. Charles Nguna, MP Mwingi West addressed the participants via telephone through his personal assistants Michael Katembu and Evans Kyalo. He thanked the schools for turning up for the event as well as the support from the sponsors. He pointed out that one of the goals of his office is to make Mwingi West a model constituency in natural resource management, specifically through planting in schools and community.

In general, the emphasis of the remarks from the other guests was on the importance of environmental education both in schools and homes to enhance long term behaviour change among the youth a pathway to promote sustainable natural resource management. There were calls for partnerships especially between corporates and civil society in promoting sustainable development initiatives in schools and communities through corporate social investment programmes. Details of the Eco-schools programme covering its process and impact in Kenya and internationally was given. Reference was made to the need for schools and communities to be sensitized on existing local, national and international efforts to promote water and forest management including the National Education for Sustainable Development Policy for Education Sector; Kenya's Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan (GESIP) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among others.

Awarding of sponsors and Launch of Eco-schools: The sponsors present were given tokens of appreciation to recognize their support for the event i.e. ICDC, Jubilee Insurance, Agricultural

Finance Corporation, Machines Technologies Limited and Yatta Juice. The event culminated in the official launch of the Eco-schools Programme led by KOEE Executive Director, Dr. Dorcas Otieno. This entailed presentation of certificates and Eco-schools materials to schools. All the attending schools will be trained further on the Eco-schools process later in the year to facilitate their comprehensive implementation of the programme. Once fully operational, the Eco-schools activities in Kitui County will include:

- Further training of teachers on the concept of Education for Sustainable Development
- Setting up of green micro-projects in schools to act as teaching and learning demonstration projects and sources of income generation. The projects will be in areas of water conservation, sanitation/hygiene, waste management, energy conservation, tree planting, landscaping among others
- Learning tours/visits for the schools within and outside Kitui County
- Public awareness campaigns involving the schools and community on ESD
- Development of teaching and learning curriculum support materials to help mainstream ESD into the curriculum
- Inter-school ESD competitions (projects, artwork, music)

Conclusion

It is hoped that the event will go a long way in triggering conservation of the wider Mt. Kenya Water Catchment as well as setting a platform to promote Eco-schools in Kitui County. In the long run we will not be only be conserving the Mt. Kenya Water Tower, but also mitigating to climate change as it contributes to increased forest cover which is integral in moderating the climate. The bringing together of wide range of actors from the public sector, private sector and civil societies forms a strong base for addressing local development issues and thus providing an avenue for a more holistic and collaborative approach for sustainability.

Event Pictorial



Photo 1: Participants receiving instructions for tree planting



Photo 2: Students during the tree planting exercise



Photo 3: The tree planting exercise



Photo 4: ICDC's Investment Manager, Kennedy Wanderi (left) and Ministry of Education's Evelyn Omwenga (right) making their mark



Photo 5: Mwingi West MP's Personal Assistant, Evans Kyalo handing over certificate and Eco-schools materials to schools



Photo 6: ICDC's Investment Manager, Kennedy Wanderi addressing the participants



Photo 7: Jubilee Insurance Communications Manager, Neema Mwende giving her remarks



Photo 8: Agricultural Finance Corporation Regional Manager, Evans Muita addressing participants



Photo 9: Ministry of Education's Evelyn Omwenga and ICDC's Kennedy Wanderi presenting certificates and Eco-schools materials to schools



Photo 10: AFC's Mr. Muita and colleague receiving a token of appreciation from Machines Technology Limited's Managing Director Mr. Sanjiv Mukherjee



Photo 11: KOEE's Executive Director Dr. Dorcas Otieno and Jubilee Insurance's Neema Mwende presenting certificates and Eco-schools materials to schools



Photo 12: ICDC's Ann Ooko and Mwingi West MP Personal Assistant Evans Kyalo presenting certificates and Eco-schools materials to one of the schools

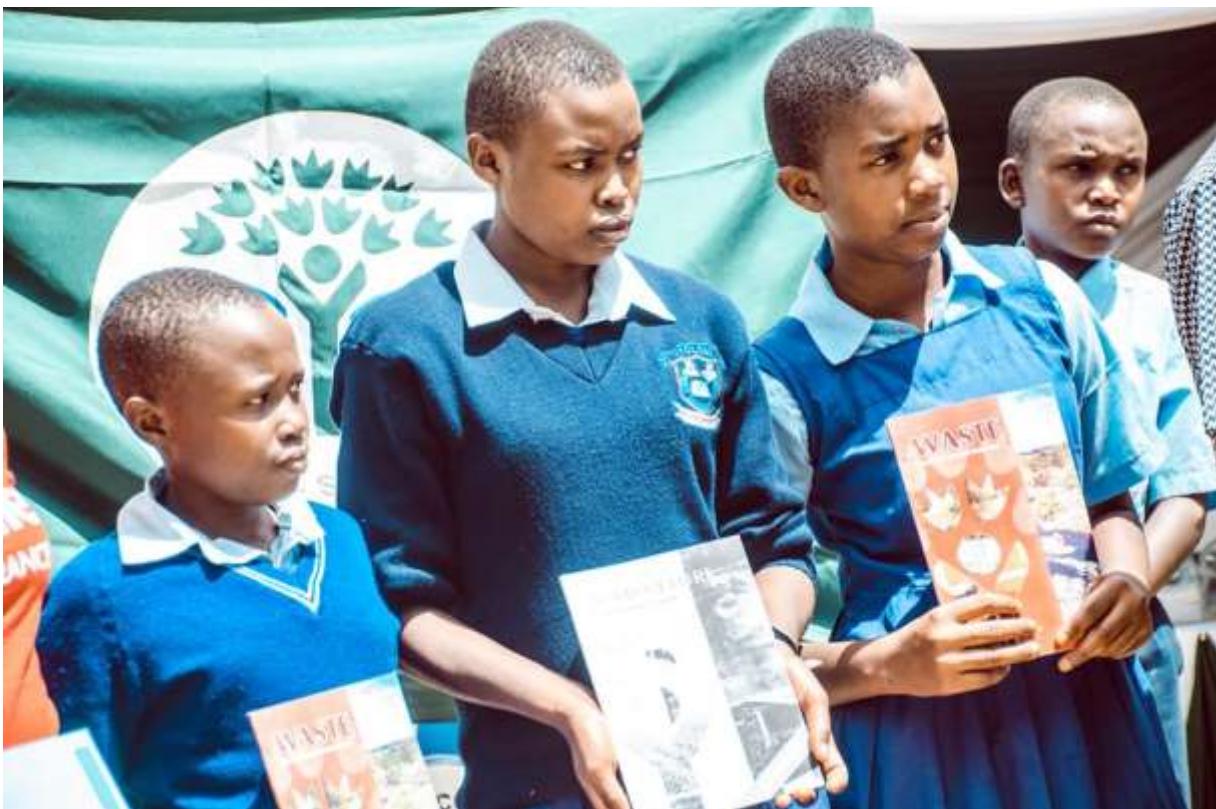


Photo 13: Pupils posing with Eco-schools theme packs



Photo 14: Mr. Fred Kyambi from the Migwani Sub-county education office presenting certificate and Eco-school materials to schools