

KENYA

Water Without Borders 2012



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-INWEH

Institute for Water,
Environment and Health



McMaster
University





KARIBU



*Many reasons to be proud
and to celebrate!*

The West Kagan community has many reasons to be proud and to celebrate, having achieved substantial gains in affordable access to water in a geographical area devoid of surface water resources.

Community leaders hope to continue to inspire the community to strive for improvements in access to water and sanitation and high quality health care.



TABIA

Access, equity, and sustainability

Singing and dancing, a little girl eagerly opened the bottle of murky, translucent brown water that had been her percussion-maker only moments before, and prepared to take a sip. Alarmed by the potential health risk this posed, several members of our group scrambled to find a bottle of clean water for my companion to drink from instead.

Ironically, this happened as we were standing next to a borehole that could have easily produced clean water for this little dancer. But the hand pump was securely chained and locked, preventing access.

Having technology in place is only part of the solution; delicate and complex issues relating to access, equity, and sustainability must also be considered. And sometimes, the key to resolving these quandaries is difficult to find.





TURAHHA

Happiness is by no means proportional to one's wealth.





AFYA



Ability of a hospital to function

The consequences of scarce access to water are entrenched in every facet of village life. However, the most pronounced area of impact is the local hospital. Nothing can undermine the ability of a hospital to function more dramatically than lack of water.

Poverty and environmental degradation are partners,
as each works to reinforce, and in many cases
exacerbate, the negative effects of the other.

MAZINGIRA





JUMUIYA

Working to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities

There are many ways in which people are working to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities.

The leaders of the Wandiege Water Project proudly shared their work to carry out a sustainable and community-based initiative; the Abala Women's Group showed its success in providing water pumping solutions to address its community's high HIV/AIDS prevalence; members of KIWASCO demonstrated a forward-thinking approach to improving an insufficient municipal water and sanitation system. Each of these efforts involves unique and complex challenges as well as a dedication to community development and health.





We have to remind ourselves, that people will usually refrain from doing wrong. We have to remind ourselves of our humility. We have to approach problems with an open-mind and willingness to understand. Problem-solving is rarely as straight forward as it may seem upon first examination. Problems must be carefully defined and contexts explored. Trust is achieved through active listening and empathy.

IMANI





WACHUUZI

Private water vendors

The village people keep private water vendors in business, even though prices are high, because they cannot conveniently access potable water another way.





MAJI NA UZIMA



*The lack of something as
innocuous as a clean water tap*

It is disheartening to think that so much suffering is caused by the lack of something as innocuous as a clean water tap. Subsistence farmers require water for irrigation but have none due to a regional drought; rural clinics require water for women in labor but have none and request patients to bring their own; and children are contracting schistosomiasis from contaminated lake-water.



POSHO

Lake Victoria: vast economic power and challenges of developing lake and lake basin resources in a more sustainable manner. Here, fishermen work harder and harder, often spending entire nights on the lake, to realize smaller and smaller yields in what was once a thriving fishery.



PAMOJA



Sustainable, meaningful projects

It is easy to propose solutions to assumed problems. Implementing sustainable, meaningful projects requires work. Taking the time to conduct a thorough needs assessment and building community partnerships is quintessential or we will formulate ideas with no basis in reality.



WALISOMA

The Water Without Borders Field Trip was an eye-opening experience for me. Lessons do not become clear until combined with experience. Citizens of Kenya are experienced in solving their water management issues. What is always needed is the imparting of knowledge. Knowledge is a far more powerful tool than money or technology. Being a researcher in this area is not solely about finding a solution, it is about finding the right solution that is both environmentally and culturally sustainable.

~ rami

This field course was a humbling and eye-opening experience that made me appreciate many things I take for granted. It was inspiring to see how resourceful communities can be in solving difficult problems, and I was challenged in considering how we can best support their initiatives.

~ naomi

There is a phenomenal amount of beauty and untapped potential in Kenya. The youth are talented, smart and capable, with strong family and religious values, a strong commitment to serve and a profound appreciation and gratitude for life.

~ madiba

Despite our different backgrounds, personalities and interests we all grew tremendously close to one another; we learnt from one another, and encouraged one other. It truly is amazing how such close friendships can be forged over the span of a single week!

~ saif

The interplay between political, social, economic and physical factors, provides a unique backdrop for experiencing the realities of our theoretical frameworks. For me this experience forced me to engage with, and realize, the scope, magnitude and complexity of issues surrounding water in the real world. Often we, as researchers, view policies as prescriptive measures for addressing social ailments and interventions for social improvement. In doing so we can lose sight of the people; the agents and actors responsible for imposing these policies and those most impacted.

~ syed

Learning about the manifold diverse challenges facing Kenyans in different geographical, economic, and social circumstances, as well as from government figures tasked with municipal, national, and international problem-solving, gave me a deeper understanding and tangible appreciation for the complexity of water, sanitation and water resources issues.

~ kristin

I would have never fully understood the challenge that the absence of roads poses to development, unless I had experienced firsthand the two-hour trip into West Kagan on partly eroded, dirt roads. Similarly, I would have had difficulty conceptualizing the sheer distance between homesteads and villages (and the challenge that such large distances pose to water access), unless I had personally experienced the space between. The information and insight pertinent to successful (applied) research in international development can, in the majority of cases, only be accessed through travel to the relevant region.

~ zuzanna





KWAHERI



**United Nations University
Institute for Water, Environment and Health**

175 Longwood Road South, Suite 204
Hamilton, ON Canada L8P 0A1
1-905-667-5511 www.inweh.unu.edu

Contact: Corinne.SchusterWallace@unu.edu



[HTTP://WWW.INWEH.UNU.EDU/WATERWITHOUTBORDERS.HTM](http://www.inweh.unu.edu/waterwithoutborders.htm)