



# KIANGURE SPRINGS ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

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## *Saving the Environment through Art*

### **REPORT FROM KIANGURE SPRINGS ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE DURING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY CELEBRATION 22MAY 2011**

The UN general assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of forests to raise awareness on suitable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

22<sup>ND</sup> May 2011 was the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY and Kiangure Springs Environment Initiative (KSEI) celebrated this international day with three main activities.

#### **ACTIVITY 1**

The first activity to mark this international day was mural painting. We have a programme where we use mural art to create awareness on the need to conserve our Biodiversity. This year as we are focusing among others the Conservation of the Biodiversity in **The ABERDARE FOREST**, one of Kenyas Water towers which is greatly threatened REFER: -

[http://www.unep.org/expeditions/Expeditions/EA\\_Montane\\_Forests/Aberdares.asp](http://www.unep.org/expeditions/Expeditions/EA_Montane_Forests/Aberdares.asp)

KSEI had received a grant from **PAINTING A NEW**

**WORLD**<http://www.paintinganewworld.com/> to paint three murals during the International day of biological diversity and the World environment day. We are also working in Partnership with the **UNEP BILLION TREE CAMPAIGN**.

The mural painting is in progress. We have been able to paint one mural so far with the Theme '**ABERDARE ECOSYSTEM, OUR FUTURE**' to create awareness to the communities neighbouring the Aberdare forest. The mural highlights some of the benefits the local people will gain from conserving the forest. These include:

- a) ecotourism
- b) fish farming
- c) beekeeping

It encourages tree planting in schools and farms and establishment of indigenous tree nurseries. The idea is to ensure availability of seedlings from sources that are accessible to members of the community wherever and whenever they are needed for planting in the forest and the area surrounding the forest.

The mural was painted in **WAMAGANA PRIMARY SCHOOL** in Tetu District in Nyeri County. Wamagana is the head quarter of the newly created Tetu District. The school is part of the **TETU SCHOOLS AFFORESTATION PROGRAMME** initiated last year 2010 where over 10 schools received 1000 indigenous trees and planted them in their compounds. Tetu came into international limelight as the home and political constituency of the Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai.

KSEI targets over 200 primary and secondary schools in the eastern side of the ABERDARE FOREST where we will paint conservation murals to educate school children and the community on the importance of conservation.

We will also paint murals in shopping centres and tea buying centres to create awareness to the catchment community on the benefits of conserving and rehabilitating the Aberdare Forest.

KSEI has already established partnerships with local schools, Community forest associations (CFAs) and plot owners in local shopping centres where these murals will be painted.

The First mural was painted to mark this DAY

### **THE MURAL PROCESS**



*Artist Maina preparing the wall with undercoat paint*



*Artist Joram and Kamau starts on the painting*



*Artist Githinji working on the mural*



*Working on the details*



*Joram working on the details.*





*Working on the PLANT FOR THE PLANET logo*



## **ACTIVITY 2**

The third activity done during this period of celebrating the international year of Biological diversity is to launch **KIUNYU DAM REHABILITATION PROJECT**. This dam is a natural water source which was once a paradise with migratory birds gracing the area. Human activity over the years has negatively affected the Biodiversity leading to death of fish and birds.



The farming community has encroached on the dam where they do the following:

- 1) Use the water for irrigation,
- 2) Illegal fishing,
- 3) Clay soil harvesting,
- 4) Deforestation
- 5) Car wash

**This has caused the following environmental problems,**

- 1) Dam drying up due to diversion of streams draining into the dam for agricultural use.

Farmers dig trenches to draw water from the springs thus affecting the breeding grounds of the fish and other organisms.

This has resulted to reduced water levels which in turn is affecting the organisms depending on the dam especially the birdlife and fish.



*A section of the dam where water is drying up at an Alarming rate.*



*Dwindling bird population in the dam*

2) Pollution arising from the use of Agro chemicals in the farms adjacent to the dam. This is affecting the aquatic life and we have witnessed cases of fish dying.

3) Reduced tree cover due to illegal cutting of the trees for firewood.



*A cabbage farm right next to the dam.*



*A section of the forest  
cleared illegally  
Our intervention*

*Already we have planted trees around the dam to rehabilitate the water body and the conservation work still continues.*

### **SPECIES OF TREES PLANTED**

- 1) Mugumo - (Ficus natalensis),
- 2) Muiri - (Prunus Africana),  
Medicinal tree
- 3) Muringa - (Cordia Africana  
Food, timber
- 4) muu- (Markhamia hildebrandtii)
- 5) Mukuhakuha - (Macaranga kilimandscharica
- 6) mukuyu- (Ficus sycomoru
- 7) Mukinduri-Croton megalocarpus
- 8) Mukima-Grivellia
- 9) Jacaranda
- 10) Mubondo-Podocarpus
- 11) Bottle brush
- 12) Mukurwe-
- 13) Mutundu-croton
- 14) Muhuru -Vitex Keniensis-Meru oak
- 15) Mubera Guava – (fruit)
- 16)-Nandi Flame -spathodea campanulata

KSEI is working together with farmers neighboring the dam in order to educate them on the benefits of conserving the dam .We have provided them with materials to start tree nurseries in preparation for the afforestation exercise .They have prepared the nurseries and planted indigenous tree seeds .

When the trees are ready for planting they will plant them in their farms and the Areas next to the dam. We plan to plant the trees during the next rain season in October/November.



*Women prepare fill polythene bags with soil as part of nursery preparation*



*KSEI tree nurseries in Tetu*

KSEI will continue with the mural project up to create awareness around the Aberdare ecosystem.

We look forward to continue partnership with UNEP billion tree campaign ,Painting a new world, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in fighting climate change and conservation of our water towers.

**Report prepared by:-**

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**For**

**KIANGURE SPRINGS ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE (KSEI)**

**Regards,**

**Joram Mathenge**

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**[www.kiangurespringsenvironment.org](http://www.kiangurespringsenvironment.org)**