

Kenya Water Relief Project Achievements

“**Quest4Change** has been working with the **Kamba** people of **Kenya** since 2004 constructing small scale dams, providing thousands of people with **clean drinking water**. Working with our charity partner **Excellent Development** we aim to transform the local environment by improving water supplies, food production, health and incomes.”

Overview (updated April 2011)

- Constructed 27 sand dams (potentially supporting 20,000+ villagers)
- Extended or repaired 16 sand dams
- Built 3 water tanks
- Planted over 100 saplings in local schools
- Organised over 10 Education Days with local schools
- Provided ongoing funding for employment of extension workers to carry on work, to provide seeds for local communities and for other activities as required by local community
- Played hundreds of games of football and run sports days with local school kids.

Detailed Year by Year Report

2011

This year our thirteen volunteers worked with two community self-help groups, Malaika and Nzwey ("un-zwee") to build four sand dams over five weeks. Three dams were built from scratch, and the fourth was a heightening, thickening and widening task, greatly improving the effectiveness of the dam.

Staying in home-stays, the volunteers were able to glimpse Kenya, from the inside, and also had time to brush up on their language skills, speaking Kikamba with the locals. The sense of achievement was high by the time the team had completed their constructions, knowing that they have contributed to water security in those areas.

After all their hard work, some playtime with the local children and a football match, locals v Quest was well deserved.

2010

This summer, team Kenya built two large dams to aid water security amongst the KiKamba communities. They were helped in this task by the Wi Kwatua Ke Ambani Community Group. They embraced the work and really gelled as a team.

Aside from mixing cement and building dams, the team visited Kumbuni Primary School, where they taught classes and played games. They also decorated the walls of their shamba, played football with other workers from the dam sites and finished the trip with a safari in Tsavo.

2009

The **Kenya** summer team of volunteers have built **five sand dams** from start to finish and extended another with 55 members of the Munathi community **self help group**. They also helped extend a food store in the village that is currently being used for [Excellent Development's](#) food for work programme.

2008

In Kenya the team managed to build an incredible 6 dams and an extension on a previous one.

In the five weeks we managed to build 6 dams and an extension on a previous dam. This was an incredible achievement and everyone worked really hard. We did two dams with one group, Kwatuta, who were a lovely group and really appreciated the vols' help. We then did a small dam with a very small but hardworking group Mbondoni, this was very tough due to the small number of members but many of the volunteers said this was their favourite as it really felt like 'our dam'. We then went back to work with Kwatuta. We then did a 'big dam' at Mwala which is a new thing that ED are doing whereby all the ED staff go and work on a 'big dam' for two days, staying overnight on site. We left at 4am the first morning, camped overnight and then started work at 4am the next morning (!). It was actually a lot of fun and the atmosphere with so many people was fantastic although the rationale of starting so early wasn't really apparent! We then went back to Kwatuta to finish the second dam. We then worked with a very large group at Kitandi (Stella's dad was the chairman so we worked especially hard!) on a very big dam. As there were a lot more com members there was less to do but everyone still put their all in. We finished with another small com group, Kithito, and completed a dam (almost single-handedly!) and an extension. There was usually plenty of work to do and very little sitting around time. The volunteers seemed to get a lot out of the work and all said that it was nice to be able to see tangible effects of their work. They all felt the work was as tough as they had expected, if not less so. They also said that it was great to be able to work with the different community groups as it kept things fresh.

2007

Built 8 sand dams to provide over 9000 people in rural Kenya with clean drinking water

Team 1

Dams worked on - 4

The team spent five weeks building three dams with the community group Kithito Kya Kema. This community group is based twenty minutes from the Kola house and we worked on three different sights down the river bed. All the dams were being built in narrow parts of the river bed so the dams were small and there was limited sand/water/ rock resources. The team was involved collecting sand, rocks and water, mixing cement and Karai lines. Due to the limited resources at each site quite a lot of the time was spent collecting the required items. However the enthusiasm and dedication from the Kithito Kya Kema group meant that the team's morale was constantly high and they were able to form friendships with a lot of the community group. Despite the small size of this group GN/LB would strongly recommend that future Quest teams work with them.

Whilst we were waiting for Kithito to finish preparing the third dam sight we spent two days helping the Zia-Museo Group (a 45min drive from Kola towards Mbuani), unfortunately this did not go well. At the moment the group have a lot of internal politics, very few members of the group came to help the team and when they did arrive (usually around midday), they spent their time watching the volunteers do the work. This was very frustrating and bad for morale. After two days we had enough and went back to Kithito to help them with their preparations.

There was always plenty of work to be done on the dam site and if you were dedicated and hardworking there was no need to sit and take breaks during the day. Over time it also became very clear to the volunteers how important the building of sand dams is and the hugely positive impacts they have on the surrounding communities. Therefore volunteers' working with local community members to build the dams is without doubt the most important thing Quest could be doing in the area.

Due to the hardwork of both the community and the volunteers the dams at Kithito were all completed in time and on budget.

The dam building was most definitely a success but a great deal of this has to be attributed to Kithito Kya Kema, if we had spent five weeks with Zia-Museo it could have been a different story. GN and LB think it is important that Quest volunteers are put with community groups that are functioning effectively and are ready to work. The two days at Zia Museo demonstrated very quickly how a non-functioning group is bad for moral.

Tree Planting: We spent a morning the medicinal forest planting 50 trees. It was a nice relaxing day mid way through the project. Jennifer, one of the field officers took us around and told us about the medicinal purpose for each species of tree, very interesting – most of them cured malaria!!

School Day: We spent one day at Mikono Primary school. We put one of the vols in charge of organising the group, so she talked with Paul (the headmaster) and planned the events for the day. The vols taught English, maths, science and art to yr6-8 (GN and OB ended up teaching yr 4-5 for 3 hours with nothing prepared!!) We encouraged vols to be as prepared as possible and with a few extra suggestions we got some good interactive lessons. The vols found it tiring but really rewarding and the students kept asking if they would come back tomorrow. We did a cultural differences lesson with the whole school outside and then had a massive game of rounders.

Team 2

Dams worked on - 3

Kenya 2 worked with 3 different communities during their 3 week day in Kola. The first community was Chumbuni (spelling). Just down from Mbuani PS. Unfortunately the adult community turnout was pretty low as it was the school holidays so they tended to send the children in their place. It made a change from Kenya 1, where there were no children. The water was close to the dam site and the sand was about 100 metres away. So to begin with there was some sand collecting and rock collecting. The children were brilliant at doing the repetitive jobs, like replenishing the sand whilst we mixed up the cement. On average we mixed about 30 bags of cement a day. The mixing was slow going as there was a lack of teenage male youth to help us mix. The vols attempted the mixing but it is tough and it slowed us down a little bit. Fundi Manyao was extremely active and helped us a lot. We had Fundi Bernard too so we had their help. The lack of teenage youth definitely made the work a lot harder. Unfortunately the lack of involvement from the adult community did have an impact on the vols attitudes. Though we did have loads of kids so that was quite funny working with them instead. The kari lines were quite an effort with less community but we managed and got the kids involved and it ended up being hilarious!! We did have a few days where more community turned up and they made the work lighter. All credit goes to the 4 old men of the community (all of them must have been over 70) who turned up every day without fail. They were great. The vols definitely felt a real sense of achievement when they completed the dam as they did a lot of the hard graft. There was definitely loads to do and there was definitely no sitting around on this dam site!!! I think as the first dam is was really good to get people into the swing of things. And the kids did do their best. The next group was Zia Museo (caused us problems in Kenya 2), unfortunately the Utooni group had let Kyalo down and we had to work with Zia. ED have had lots of problems with the group and have been trying to up morale. We spent 2 very slow days here, Kyalo tried to send us for a third but we refused!! The community was present but tended to just sit around and watch the vols do the work. On the plus side the food was good. On the vols part there was much cement mixing again but not much intergration with the community unfortunately. We were then to work with Matundoni, a refreshing community in a very nice river channel!! The vols loved this communities involvement straight from the outset. The chairman was grateful straight away, and the whole community shook everyones hands and seem so happy that the vols were there. We had to collect sand on the first day as it was wet and we had to pile it up to make sure that it dried. The vols spirits were raised and there was much joking around. Although the community was older they worked very hard and by the second day they were ready to start the dam. We did 51 bags of cement that day which was the

most we had achieved. The vols really appreciated the communities efforts and to top it all the kids were helping out too.. There was a really nice active atmosphere and all the vols commented that it was the best day yet. It was a shame that we didn't have longer with the community as they were very active and were so grateful to the vols for all their efforts. There was lots of karis and mixing which was great. Pretty much the entire team carried a cement bag the short distance down the mountain. They gave us a lovely send off with goat and lots of speeches, it was nice especially since we had only spent 3 days with them. It helped to end the project on a positive note.

Compared to Kenya 1 it was much more difficult to form the bonds with the community, but the vols did work well and talked to any community that did show, and they definitely enjoyed the 1st and 3rd day (shame about zia)

Tree Planting: The vols planted a tree between each pair in the ED compound. They enjoyed having something to leave behind.

School Day: We spent the day at Mbuani PS by the first day. As it was the school holidays only yr 6-8 were in school but that was still about 100 + students. We put two vols in charge of organising the day, the vols taught maths, English and social sciences. It was a tiring day as the students were shy in the morning, but after lunch (in a local hotel – which was a nice thing to do) we did a lesson in cultural comparisons outside with the who school then the boys played football whilst the girls got their hair knotted!! The vols really enjoyed doing it.

IOM Trip

Dams built - 1

The aim of this three week project was the completion of a sand dam in the Mtito Andei region, in the South East of Kenya. This is the first time that Quest has had a project in this particular region, but is somewhere that is very dry and in need of much help, and it appears that Excellent Development are keen to complete many more dams in this area. GJ and JD were extremely keen to show the volunteers as much as possible, particularly as the group only had a short time, so we were not only able to complete one dam from start to finish, but also work on three other dams during our time, as well as visiting existing dams- some as old as twenty years- which allowed the group to grasp what it was that they were doing and they were amazed by the difference the dams make in such a short amount of time. It was also good to work with different communities as they all have different ways of working, and there is also a new set of characters for the group to interact with! Another project that we helped out with one morning was the digging of a trench for a water pipe that is to be built connecting a couple of vilages to tapped water. This really was back breaking work, more so as we did it on the final work day!! However the group realised just how hard working and strong the community was, and could not comprehend that they had 12km to dig in total. We also played a game of football one Sunday against a local village team. Although this isn't physically helping the community groups, GJ strongly recommends it for any future QO groups as it helps to integrate into the community, with many people turning out to cheer and laugh at the 'Mzungu' and was definitely a highlight for the group, who couldn't fathom playing on a football pitch full of 2 inch thorns!!

2006

Constructed 4 large sand dams (potentially supporting 5,000 villagers) (Kenya WaterRelief Project)

Water tanks - 1

Summer Project 1

Dam work: The team were initially involved in the full construction of a sand dam with the Kymbuni community group. The dam took 8 working days to complete, it was approximately 30 metres wide and stood at its highest point at roughly 4 metres. The work on site was mixing large quantities of cement, passing rocks of various sizes, passing cement in lines, collecting sand, collecting water, and bringing cement down to the dam site. The largest percentage of time was spent on the mixing of cement, but there were many other activities the volunteers could get involved in if brave enough and with enough encouragement. Sometimes the foundations of the wings would need extending, usually a job left for the old men, but happy to teach the odd volunteer how it should be done. We also encouraged the volunteers to get the fundis (skilled workers) on site to teach them how to be a fundi; involving laying of barbed wire, lots of hammering nails to create the supports, and sawing metal posts in half.

Other dam work:

We also worked with community groups in Nziu, 2 hours to the South of Kola. Muella: next to Mbuani, and Mualla 1 hour North of Machakos. Seeing different regions gave the volunteers a fuller appreciation of different problems, and how different communities work to solve them. Also, each community has its own distinct personality and it is worth experiencing work with as many as possible.

Water Tank:

From Kymbuni dam we moved to Mbuani secondary school (only a short walk from the dam) to construct a water tank. The group split so that the two volunteers doing research could start their questionnaires. We also used the opportunity to talk to the headteachers of Mbuani Primary and secondary schools to organize lessons.

The water tank itself was very slow going and generally considered by the volunteers to be quite boring compared to the dam site, especially because there was no local community representation. JD and GJ would not recommend working on the water tanks for too long because of the slow nature of the work and the lack of community members. However, a couple of days is useful to get the volunteers acquainted with Africa students, and a good opportunity to reduce the intensity of the schedule if the group is wavering.

JD and GJ decided after the first day on the water tank to talk with Joshua and get us back on some more dam sites, and we also worked on the water tank for only half days, with afternoons spent teaching or playing sports with the school children.

Research Work:

Two students completed research for their dissertation. They worked closely within the excellent development 'logical framework' but managed with the assistance of GJ to push the boundaries quite considerably, asking difficult questions of excellent development itself. It took a total of 5 days and involved the two volunteers, GJ, Challo, and Carol (two people from excellent development to translate). The group walked around the shamba's of 30 community members, and a few community members, that for one reason or another, were no longer in the community group. The process took longer than originally intended but JD and GJ considered it acceptable because it made the group aware of the intricacies and complexities of the problems the area faces, as well as questioning the impact that the presence of Quest Overseas has on the project and the kamba culture.

Education: The group did an environmental afternoon in Mbuani primary school for standard 7 and 8; and two afternoons in Mbuani secondary school teaching English, Maths, and English culture (daily life, education, welfare state, history, industrial revolution, and politics). Lesson plans were created in the evenings and the students were expected to remain in close contact with the headmaster to ensure that what we provided was actually helpful. The maths and English lessons were given from the school textbooks on the subjects that would next be covered by the curriculum. The lessons were made as interactive and fun as possible.

Sports: We organized two football matches - one against the primary school, one against the secondary school, and in the evenings we played volleyball with the girls from the sewing school. We beat them all!

Summer project 2**Dams worked on - 4****Water Tanks - 1****Dam work:**

The team was initially involved in the construction of a full sand dam with Matondoni community group in the Mbuani area about 30 minutes drive from the MHC. The dam was equal with the largest we have worked on, spanning 30 metres and standing 5 metres tall at the wings. The work at the site was the usual mixing of cement, moving sand, bringing water, and so on. The site had adequate space for the mixing of cement close to the shuttering and so the work progressed quickly. The wings were being cut away for the first few days but it was decided that the work was too dangerous for the volunteers due to the height of the river bank (and the fact that the local guys were digging away the very earth they were standing on!).

The atmosphere on the dam site was energetic and enthusiastic as the dams were built with the help of two other community groups – Zia-Muesio and Kymbuni. However, as JD and GJ had expected the SHG's enthusiasm waned as the days passed by and white volunteers became less of a draw for the crowds. Nonetheless, the core members of the community

groups remained, worked hard, and it was an excellent introduction to dam work for the volunteers. We were working on the dam for only 5 days with the biggest day at sixty bags.

Other Dam Work:

Having finished earlier than expected we were lucky to find another dam in progress in Mavia 'meu by the Kithito Kya Kema (active people) community group. It only 10 minutes drive from the MHC. Kithito Kya Kema is a very small group comprising of only 10-15 members but they work very very hard. They had already dug foundations down to 9 feet for a distance of roughly 20 metres, foundations much larger than ED had initially planned for, they decided to use a 4:1 ratio sand: cement for the first hundred in order to save on costs with little danger of weakening the integrity of the dam. For the first few days shuttering and korai lines were not necessary so the limiting factor to our progress was simply the amount of cement we could mix. Spurred on by the enthusiasm of the community group we managed 60 bags on the first day, 70 bags on the second, and with plans to do 80 bags on the third day the volunteers became very grumpy so we decided to give them a half day, the news received with howls of delight. We worked for a total of 5 days with Kithito Kya Kema.

For a few days we went to Zeu, about 1 hour north of Machakos, to work with the Kilili SHG. It was a beautiful site in an area that, despite the obvious environmental degradation, produces a surprising amount of fruit. The community group repeatedly bribed the volunteers to work with promises of sandals and papaya and we were all very happy to comply. The Kilili group were a bit too enthusiastic about the work and managed to break almost every single pile of cement and have half wash down the hill. Every time this happened the volunteers were not impressed and the community group roared with laughter.

We also worked with the Meka SHG in Kivani (off the Nairobi-Mombasa road at Imali) for two days. They were also a fantastic group and it was a great chance for the volunteers to see a geographically very different area (very hot and flat!). However, it was almost three hours drive from the MHC so the days were long and tiring. The only reason that we went to Meka is because it was the only sand dam still being built at the time.

The volunteers were very lucky to be involved with each of the community groups for a longer period of time than KWP1 where we seemed to move all over the place. Despite the enthusiasm of the community groups and the opportunities for interaction the volunteers, with the exception of two, put a disappointing amount of energy into interacting.

Water Tank:

Initially the plan was to work on the Ucala water tank immediately after the Matondoni dam but the plans changed because the fundis were still working on another tank. We moved to the Kithito Kya Kema dam and then the school in the third week. We worked for a couple of days on the water tank and encouraged the volunteers to head into the classes to talk to the students because there was very little work to be done on the tank itself. Unfortunately, the second trip perfectly matched the school holidays so the scope for working in the schools was dramatically reduced. However, there were still a few students around doing summer school lessons and bible study so we could still interact.

The water tank itself was very slow going and generally considered by the volunteers to be quite boring compared to the dam site, especially because there was no local community representation. However, we took the opportunity to give the volunteers a good rest and did a couple of half days to give them time to wash their clothes, buy some things in the market, etc.

JD and GJ would not recommend working on the water tanks for too long because of the slow nature of the work and the lack of community members. However, a couple of days is useful to get the volunteers acquainted with Africa students, and a good opportunity to reduce the intensity of the schedule if the group is wavering.

Education: After consulting with the headmaster of Ucala primary school we found that the students were happy to come into school for a day of lessons. WE created a timetable and taught 'Kenyan history: the colonial period', English, and maths to four different years. We also did an English culture discussion.

Sports: We organized a sports day in the local school – egg and spoon race, relay race, sack race, and three legged race. We also played a few games of football with the local youth groups.

2005

Dams worked on – 2

Water Tanks - 1

Dam work - The first team were primarily initially involved in the completion of the Mbuani Dam with the local community group (Zya Moyeeseo). This work was started on the first work day (although the community had previously started the work the week before. This large dam (largest created by Excellent Development (ED)) took a total of 10 work days and more than 300 bags of cement had to be mixed, with the help of several communities who joined in to help.

Secondly the team moved 1 km down the river bed to a second dam site extension, working with the same community at the edge of Patrick's (chairman) land. This smaller dam required approx seven Quest Overseas (QO) team days and the logistics involving cement transfer from the farm down to the river bed caused the most problems and was the limiting factor in terms of time. There was less work here but enough to keep the majority of the team busy especially as work started at the school. During this phase work was also carried out at the nearby school.

Water tank work - Running simultaneously to the second dam extension was work creating a water tank at Muusini Primary School from scratch with funding from QO, ED and a school

in the UK. This generally involved three or four students, with one ever present and acting as the leader for that project. Quest students worked on the tank for six days, whilst working on the second dam and also in the school. The nature of the work meant that the unskilled students were often unable to help at every stage. The sides of the tank were finished by the fundis when the final work only required skilled workers and the roof was due to be finished soon after. The Water tank was not finished as planned when team 1 were present and deadlines set by JM seemed to change daily.

Research work - Beth Chapman managed a small scale research project, in which members of the local community groups were asked questions via an interpreter. The method and results of this work are to be written up separately by BC ??????

Education - This involved four afternoons of planned lessons aimed at Standard 8, but due to their success covering three different years. The lessons covered topics such as England, Letter Writing, Trees, Water and the Environment. Each lesson was planned, a lesson plan created and basic feedback provided by the QO students involved. Each lesson featured one, two or three QO students. Care was taken to avoid any clashes with present school timetable or disruption of the school. The timetable was created with help from the teaching staff.

After 4 afternoons of teaching, the week was closed with an Education Day at the school (see Other Activities Section). Education Day. Friday 29th July acted as the QO/Muusini Primary School Day. The day involved dam work for 6 Quest students before 11am, before all Quest students, each armed with a tree seedling arrived at the school. Trees were planted, speeches were given on the environment, songs were sung, poems read, gifts presented to the school (brought by some Quest students), before lunch with the staff and football and volleyball to end. The day went brilliantly and This was a highlight for many of the group and a great end to the week of working with the kids.

MHC (Health Centre/Accommodation for QO) Work – One of the rooms at the MHC was painted by the students. More work was planned to be completed at the MHC but due to lack of time and materials it was not possible.

Kenya Team 2

Dams worked on - 2

Dam work - The team were primarily initially involved in the completion of the Mikono Dam with the Utooni Development Project (the Utooni ladies). Work here took place over 8 work days, building the dam from its positions 20 years previously to over 2 metres higher and considerably broader. The work required large amounts of mixing cement, passing rocks, fetching water/rocks, digging for sand and passing wet cement, as well as digging into the soil/sand at the sides to create space for foundations. On different days different community groups would come and help.

By the 5th work day, with less cement needed and more skilled labour required the group were split and the second team moved 1 km down the river bed to a second gabion

extension, working with the same community. This smaller dam was attended by five students for five half days, but the continued shortage of firstly water and secondly cement led to exceptionally slow progress. Student generally collected rocks.

A third site, near Mbuani (30 mins drive away) was visited for two half days, but due to lack of transport and other pressures, little work was carried out there.

On 7th September the team left to spend a day in Manaathi, approximately 2 hours drive south of Kola. Along with several other communities (approximately 500 people), the group descended on the dry area where there has not been rain for 5 years. Everyone involved worked hard before a feast of a lunch (especially considering the circumstances), speeches and presentation of seeds for the next (hopefully) rainy season. Much singing and dancing was done prior to departure back to Kola, leaving at 3pm.

Research work - One of the students managed a small scale research project, in which members of the local community groups were asked questions via an interpreter. The method and results of this work are to be written up separately by BC.

Education - This involved two and a half days of lessons for the Standard 6, 7 and 8 classes. Topics included England/Kenya comparison, Letter Writing, Creative Writing, Environment, Ecology, and the 5 Senses. Music and Games sessions were conducted with the whole school present, much to the delight of everyone. Each lesson was carefully planned, a lesson plan created and basic feedback provided by the QO students involved. Each lesson featured one, two or three QO students. Care was taken to avoid any clashes with present school timetable or disruption of the school. The timetable was created with help from the teaching staff and the Headmaster Paul. After the lessons a Tree Planting session was carried out with speeches, presentations and sports for all. The pupils provided an array of dancing, singing, poetry and combinations of all three.

Ngui Forest – Two days were spent with four students and Joe Kioko at Ngui Forest, preparing holes for planting in October/November. Work involved clearing, digging and weeding, lunch was taken at JM's farm