

SNV

Connecting People's Capacities

December 2010



**7 ways that
changed
communities**



Improved education





Connecting People's Capacities

Media & Documentation Project

This was a project conceived to document and tell the success stories that SNV and partners are engaging in to change lives of people and communities. These are just select cases. Everyday, the SNV team is involved in diverse projects that are making a difference in our communities.

Project Concept

Sabdiyo B. Dido

Project Facilitators

Martin Musamali - North Rift
Joseph Lagat - North Rift
Leah Njeri - North Kenya
Morgan Siloma - North Kenya
Jechoniah Kitale - South Rift
Stephen Osingo - South Rift
Lydia Naserian - South Rift
Susan Onyango - Regional Office

Media Consultant

Eric Wamanji
P.O Box 1150 00502
Nairobi.
rokomedia@gmail.com
www.fotokut.com

Contacts

Ngong Lane, off Ngong Road
P.O. Box 30776-00100 Nairobi,
Kenya
Tel: 254 20 3873656
Fax: 254 20 3873650
+254 724 46 33 55
+254 735 177 992
Email: Kenya@snvworld.org
www.snvworld.org

Foreword

We are proud to present seven stories of how capacity development has changed communities' lives, told by people and organisations who have received SNV's capacity development services.

These stories embody the groundwork of our motto, '*Connecting People's Capacities*', and reflect our focus on the empowerment of local organisations and populations in the fight against poverty. The experiences shared herein also provide a snapshot of SNV advisory work, as has been done by its advisors and local capacity builders, and in partnership with organisations and individuals mentioned.

The stories, ranging from camel milk as business to innovative E-learning largely speak for themselves as they were captured by an external media expert and were published in the local media in 2010. Our main aim of sharing these stories is to inform and inspire other development actors, be they public, private or civil, or any interested individuals on the benefits of pursuing pro-poor locally driven development.

As you will note from the stories, pursuing sustainable local development is a long road to walk, but with a favourable mindset, the right services and local knowledge, it is a fulfilling one. We hope that through sharing these development experiences that changed lives, we trigger more interest to share knowledge and experiences across development organisations.

We hope you find the stories insightful and become convinced that successful poverty reduction is possible through the promotion of pro-poor solutions.

Harm Duiker
Country Director SNV Kenya

Inside

7 ways that changed communities



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Lessos women find love in passion fruits



Passion education...a visiting delegation of farmers learn how to grow passion fruits in Lessos.

Though the sun has set in Nandi Hills, the sky is bubble-gum pink. Roseline Bitok takes a stroll through the lush vines of her passion fruit orchard in Lessos amid the soulful eve-songs of birds. Bitok occasionally stops to pluck a shrinking fruit, uproot a weed or prune a sucker.

"I'm expecting a bumper harvest," she declares as she plucks a purple fruit. She splits it to reveal a deep orange jelly, dripping with juice.

"Look, my garden yields grade one fruits," she says proudly.

For this elderly woman, passion fruit

farming is her new found-love. She has 0.6 acres under the crop and from the look of the healthy fruits dangling from the vines she is headed for a big yield. It is understandable why she affords a swagger in her walk.

"Using proceeds from passion fruits, I bought a Fresian cow, installed a bio-gas unit worth Sh70,000, bought iron sheets to replace my grass-thatched kitchen, and renovated my zero-grazing unit.

Thanks to these fruits, I have been to Nairobi where I had never been before. I have also opened a bank account," she says.

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in The Saturday Standard.

Numbers

70, 000

The money in Kenya shillings that Roseline Bitok, a passion fruit farmer in Lessos used to install her biogas unit.



Lenah Chesang, a farmer tending, to her crop. **Right:** a passion fruit orchard

Passion fruit farming is quickly becoming the jewel of Lessos, outshining traditional crops such as maize and tea. More than 700 farmers have embraced the new crop and the number is growing.

The farmers came together to form Lessos Horticulture Growers Association. This way they can bargain collectively for better prices. In the past 20 months, the farmers have made sales worth Sh14 million.

The project began with a few farmers who middle men mercilessly exploited before SNV Netherlands Development Organisation arrived.

"We helped the farmers market their products and encouraged them to form an association. Today, they can happily reap from their labour," says Martin Musamali, an economic advisor with SNV in the North Rift.

The fruits have transformed lives here if the testimonies of farmers are to be believed.

Lessos can hardly satisfy this market. There is a recruiting spree as the fruit promises a livelihood for the villagers. Musamali explains how the Lessos concept works.

"We want to guarantee markets so that farmers can concentrate on production," explains Chesang.



Nursery

"So far it has worked well. The buyer is supposed to deposit money in an account as security bond so that in event that he fails to remit money, the bond cushions the farmers."

Still, the payment has been prompt. Money is transferred to accounts and the farmers get an alert on their mobile

phones.

"Poverty," says Bitok, "is a big enslaver of people. It clouds the mind, it weakens the spirit, and it incapacitates thinking and exposes one to exploitation," she says.

"This is my office... I have worked in these gardens for the past two years. Today, I'm empowered economically,"

SNV advisor (in blue shirt) meeting farmers in Lessos during a field visit



The success of Lessos has been felt far and wide. Delegations on field tours are a common site. People come as far as Machakos, Mt Elgon, and Bungoma to learn the secrets of the people of the hills. For every visit the delegations pay Sh3,000.

The association has established a mega- seedling nursery. "The nursery holds up to 90,000 seedlings. When we sell this, we'll earn some Sh3.6 million after every four months," says Chesang.

Grafted passion fruit seedling is hot cake here.

We meet around 30 farmers in a van from Mosoriot who are making their third tour to the villages. They bought 1,000 seedlings. Farmers from Kakamega have placed another order of 16,000 seedlings. One grafted seedling goes for Sh40.

"During our Value Chain Development workshop, the local Agricultural Officer raised the Lessos case. He was worried that middlemen were exploiting farmers. They could not negotiate collectively. They also lacked the technical expertise that passion farming demands.

"We visited the area, diagnosed the problem and offered to help the farmers," says Musamali. On this day at the buying centre Chesang receives 3.7 tonnes of passion fruit.

Abundant harvest

They are packed ready for transportation to Kampala. This is a bad season for Chesang. Normally, she collects up to 20 tonnes on a good day. But she knows where the problem is – the rain.

"It has been raining on and on. This is not good for passion. For the fruits to ripen they need warmth but the cold spells are not helping us." Weather dictates price, it fluctuates like in the stock market such that during the hot season the price shoots up and drops during the cold season.

Chesang is not worried though. She knows too well that when sunshine comes to the hills, all the green fruits will turn purple and thus an abundant harvest.

The youth are also gainfully employed. Some have organised themselves into groups where they run nursery projects. Some have been employed as clerks at the collection centre yet others get jobs as extension officers.

"SNV is facilitating the training of extension officers who will provide support to members," says Chesang. "I'm looking forward to the day when we will start our own processing units or exportation abroad."

Poverty...is a big enslaver of people. It clouds the mind, it weakens the spirit, and it incapacitates thinking and exposes one to exploitation.
- Roseline Bitok



Passionate farmer....Roseline Bitok in her orchard. Passion fruits have changed her life



Men rejected it, now they have passion for it

When the idea of passion fruit was introduced in Lessos, the men laughed at the idea. They thought it was too sissy a crop to engage in. Real men grow maize, tea and on large tracts of land, not in small portions. That's a mockery!

Others claimed the passion fruit project was just a passing cloud and some men are said to have even barred their wives from planting the fruit crops. Little did they know it is actually a goldmine.

It is the courageous women and a few men who bit the bullet. When the first harvest came and earnings started flowing in, it embarrassed most men who were largely broke. Then there was a scramble for the passion fruit seedling which is so revered in this region.

Economic Balance

The fact that it requires just a small piece of land complicated

matters for the men who had even denied their wives and daughters an opportunity to grow maize or tea. The economic balance at once tilted in favor of the women.

"We realized that maize takes too long to mature. Twelve months. So most the year we are broke. Maize fetches very little sometimes it fetches nothing. Dairy collapsed and the tea sector is no-loner lucrative. Yet, here are our women earning a staggering Sh. 40,000 every week. I said no. now every man owns an orchard," says John Boit says.

"One quick win which we at SNV offered was to dismantle the middlemen ring. We proposed one contract per month through a competitive bidding from interested buyers. This explains the stable high prices the fruit is offering and thus it has remained attractive to both men and women," Musamali concludes.



Visiting farmers buy passion fruit seedling; Passion fruit being received at the collection point and finally loaded into a truck



Tonge Ole Mokuia carrying his bale of hay

Making hay while sun shines

Tonge ole Mokuia is blissful as he tends to his herd. Yet ordinarily, like every pastoralist, he should be concerned about the predictions of an impending drought. But he is not.

A year ago, a sheer thought of drought would send a chill down Mokuia's spine. Prolonged dry spells have inflicted pain and destruction of disgusting proportions to pastoralists, Mokuia included. He is yet to recover.

"If drought comes today, I am prepared," he boasts. "I will not even need to migrate," he says, with a cheeky smile.

So what has changed for Mokuia? In the sleepy Orinie village, Kajiado Central, about 150km south of Nairobi, pastoralists have become smarter — they are making hay, literally, as the sun shines.

In a pilot programme, the livestock farmers have been conserving pasture, which mature to hay. They are harvesting, baling and storing hay in preparedness for drought.

Some 3,900 acres of land are under this project and the harvested hay can support up to 5,000 bulls or 40,000 goats for about five months.

Almost ruined my life

This is Mokuia's thrill and confidence. He is among the 400 pioneer farmers of the hay conservation endeavour.

"The last drought almost ruined my life," Mokuia recalls. "When it got worse, I migrated to central Kenya. I had 168 cows and bulls but came back empty-handed. I restocked and went to Tsavo when the second drought hit but only returned with 40 frail animals.

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Numbers

3, 900

The acreage under hay in Kajiado. The hay is harvested, baled and will be used to feed the cattle during drought.

Making hay while sun shines

Making hay...pastoralists are harvesting and baling hay to save their cattle during drought



The rest died of diseases, thirst and hunger while others just disappeared in the forest," he explains.

Kajiado was one of the areas worst hit by drought a few years back.

In February, last year, for instance, the area had a beef cattle population of 352,000, according to the Ministry of Livestock records.

As the drought wave spiralled, people started to migrate to Naivasha, Chyulu Hills, Mt Kenya, and others to Tanzania. And by December, the population had reduced to 174,000.

Many pastoralists who moved out in search of 'greener pastures' returned several months later penniless: More than 80 per cent of their livestock had died.

"I wish I had this idea then," says Mokua. "I would have saved my cattle. I would be richer today."

It is after the predicaments of the past droughts that a Dutch non-governmental organisation, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, partnered with a local NGO in Kajiado, NIA, and the Ministry of Livestock to create awareness to pastoralists in hay management.

"Our interest is to develop new methods that would cushion farmers against drought. Through the hay conservation pro-

gramme, during droughts, movement will be minimal and animals can still stay here in the traditional environment," explains Jechoniah Kitala, an economic advisor with SNV.

Among the Maa community, livestock is the mainstay whose purpose is two-fold – cultural and commercial – and the former supersedes the latter in supremacy.

Livestock keeping is deeply weaved in the philosophical and emotional predisposition of generations. It is part of life and soul of the community.

This explains why, in the past, pastoralists have trudged treacherous terrains in search of pasture and water. This adventurous streak was threatened with the ever-shrinking pastureland.

Indeed, migratory designs are no longer feasible for the today's pastoralist. It is such ingenuity as hay conservation that would save a community whose future is heavily threatened by rapid modernity.

However, with this new trend, nomadic lifestyle that has defined the Maasai culture since time immemorial may be taking a different trajectory. More so is the agony of epic treks that became deeply embedded in this community's lifestyle.

"I was deeply disturbed about the future of my people," Pashile ole Lompesh says.

"We need to be innovative otherwise our generation is threatened. Movement is not good for our animals. They always get weak and susceptible to diseases when we are out,"

-Pashile ole Shompe, Pastoralist

Kajiado pastoralists beat drought with hay management

"Everywhere I moved during the last drought, there were fences. We were unwelcome. That's why when SNV and NIA came with this idea of conserving hay I received it with open arms. It would save our generation."

Today we find Lompesh, Mokuia and his group members cutting and baling hay.

Barely a year ago, Orinie village was sunburnt and strewn with carcasses. The ground was bare as if it was accursed and the elderly and children left behind were emaciated and desperate. There was an eerie feel of a haunted place of death.

Now it is the same fields that are promising a major cultural and economic revolution for the Maa culture, as we know it. This hay project promises hope, security and permanency and more efficient use of pasture, too.

And the humble Orinie has become a hotspot for NGOs and other pastoralists who are keen to follow this project.

"We need to be innovative otherwise our generation is threatened. Movement is not good for our animals. They always get weak and susceptible to diseases when we are out," says Pashile ole Shompe, another pastoralist.

This year there was enough rains, Mokuia explains, and the once barren land was transformed into vivid green, and now hay.

"My cattle will not die again (of hunger)," says Lompesh. "The last time the drought struck, I lost about 200 heads of cattle," he recalls.

Kitala says so far the results of the programme are impressive and the same would be replicated in other drought prone regions.

Idea Opposed

"We convinced the community to have a fresher perspective on the issue. The idea received some opposition here and there because the thought of conserving pasture was new. However, we convinced some 400 farmers," says Kitala.

And the conservation process was easy. Farmers formed 21 hay groups. A piece of land was set aside and fenced to bar cattle from grazing there. Hedges of sticks were erected to put wildlife at bay, too.

Households were equipped with skills in pasture conservation. As a result the productive capacity of the rangelands has been enhanced and there has been a reduction of the cost of hay by up to 80 per cent.

"Hay is expensive, here. A 15kg bale trades at Sh400. In the past drought hay dealers cashed on the farmers' desperation. With the new system, a similar bale goes for about Sh60.

"Our target is to have storable hay that can be used for much longer

periods, as opposed to the traditional grazing system, which is wasteful and prone to destruction through wild fires, wildlife and harsh weather patterns that characterise rangelands," Kitala explains.

While elsewhere hay is a mechanised process, here, it is just a basic but effective method of conservation and harvesting.

First, you don't need to till the land; you let the grass just grow. The farmers use pangas and sickles to harvest.

They have dug a small cubicle hole, which is used for baling. They just lay two parallel strings on the hole, fill it with the grass, step on it to ensure it is compact, and tie the bale for storage.

"We don't have machines yet, but for us the most important thing is to have the hay," Mokuia says.

Fact Box

Farmers formed 21 hay groups.

Hay in Kajiado trades at Sh. 400 per 15 kg.

The new system cuts the cost of hay to Ksh. 60 for a 15 kg. bale.

SNV partnered with other players like NIA to introduce hay management in the region.

The team equipped households with skills in hay management.

Usually farmers suffer heavy losses when drought hits.





The amazing Grace of Samburu

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- Standard on Saturday

Grace Seneiya has three awards under her belt and boasts a strong family. But above all, she has managed to save over 500 disabled people in Samburu in the last 10 years, some from ostracisation and others from death.

In 2003, she attended a workshop on community work, retrogressive cultural practices and resource mobilisation. She left so fired up and possessed by a passion to help the disabled.

"I started it all in my small room at Kampi Chang'aa, a sprawling slum in Maralal. I'd round up disabled children and we would share everything, including my small salary. They slept in one room while I used the other," recalls Grace.

"Every time I sit and watch the children alive and lively, I get the greatest joy. I mean, there is nothing better I could offer humanity apart from giving these children a chance to live and do so with dignity," she says as she cuddles Guardian, her month-old baby.

In Samburu, woe unto you if you are born disabled. You will be called a ngoki, a most derogatory name meaning 'cursed' or 'demon-possessed'.

According to the culture, such a child ought to be killed. Disabled children are left in the forest for the hyenas to scavenge on or snuffed with a tobacco concoction or the poisonous desert rose until they die. Some children are also tethered on spiky scrubs, abandoned in the bush or left in the goats' pens. It is mothers who perform the killing. Men issue orders.

Saddest picture

"During raids, the disabled children are left in the manyatta as the rest take off. It is the most inhuman treatment you can ever imagine. A year ago, in one village there was a raid and everyone fled. Two disabled children were left. They died. That was the saddest picture I have ever seen in my life," says Grace.

Grace Seneya at the Sherp centre in Maralal



“It was a tough start for us. Then, even Christian clergy could not sit next to these children. They would stand at a distance. Today their attitudes have changed,”

Grace Seneya,
Director, Sherp

Amazing Grace of Samburu

“It was a tough start for us. Then, even Christian clergy could not sit next to these children. They would stand at a distance. Today their attitudes have changed,” notes Grace. Grace started the Samburu Handicap Education and Rehabilitation Programme (Sherp) in 2000.

She explains, that there are not so many disabled adults in Samburu and neither will you find albinos. They are killed or abandoned soon after birth in horrific cultural acts that border on the bizarre.

As nomadic families move in search of pasture and water, the disabled are considered a baggage. As for girls, much as they are not raiders, they are supposed to bloom to beauties that could attract premium bride price. Dis-

abled girls never attract suitors.

“You may think that this is a practice of a bygone era. Just recently, there was a woman who was forced to kill her child. She carried it to the forest but she was smart. She dug a hole, placed the baby inside, covered the top with twigs, then walked to South Horr to seek help from a priest. The baby is here with us,” Grace says.

Sanctuary of love

Women who defy such orders are excommunicated from their matrimonial homes. Three such women have sought refuge at Sherp. Some even commit suicide from frustration.

But this little sanctuary abounding with love receives the children with teddy bears, dolls and toys. Children giggle and play. Nannies are at hand to clean them and slip cookies on the little palms.

While a Girl Guide in Baragoi Girls’ Secondary School, Grace rescued a disabled child abandoned in a thicket. The boy is a priest today. “I think that is where it all began,” she chuckles.

Grace with some of the women she rescued



Heart-wrenching story

Each child at this centre has a heart-wrenching story.

She cites examples: Mantelina was partially blind and was left for the dead in the forest. She was rescued, underwent surgery and now she can see.

Lenkai was tethered and still bears the marks of the rope on his heels, while Spider was just found abandoned. To date, no one knows his relatives.

"We're now moving from rescuing to creating awareness. At least today, they'd rather come and dump the child here than kill it," Grace says.

At first, Sherp stirred Samburu, but soon it became a runaway success, providing a chance to life and dignity for the disabled.

Here, Grace is like the bearded girl who dared the gods by challenging deeply embedded cultural practice. Indeed, she endured an avalanche of criticism from friends and relatives alike. She was accused of surrounding herself with cursed people and as such, they swore, she would never get married.

Today, she looks back and laughs. "I have a stable family. My husband is a great supporter of my efforts. We have proved that the curse is unfounded," says Grace, a mother of three and a teacher by profession. She has studied special education.

Distinguished medals

Grace won the Young Achievers Presidential Award in 2001. She also



Grace is attending to a child brought to SHERP on suspicion that he is disabled

won the Woman of the Year Award and Human Rights Award in 2006. The daughter of a military officer, she easily displays a woman's empathy, extraordinary defiance and a sense of adventure.

Until 10 years ago, Grace was just another ordinary Samburu woman. Now, thanks to her new venture, she has become a star. She says: "People used to peek at the gate and hedge awe-struck at what we were doing. They were convinced I was nuts."

And it is right here at Sherp where a cultural revolution is shaping up. The long shunned home has become a shrine of hope.

"She is our inspiration of the emancipation of women and the weak in this society," says Anne Kanai, a Maralal resident.

Says Grace: "For long, I used to mount my motorbike and tour the manyattas to inquire about disabled children. At times, I would stumble on one or two abandoned ones. Most of the time you find them tethered on a shrub, feeble and shrunk."

Today Sherp is home to 140 rejected children — lame, blind, mentally handicapped and deaf. The older children attend Maralal Primary School where they can learn brail or sign language.

Some are taken to technical institutes and today, some are working with foreign embassies and even the Teacher's Service Commission.

Fact Box

Grace got the empowerment from a workshop organised by SNV - Netherlands Development Organization.

SHERP has rescued over 500 children who would have otherwise been killed due to their disability status.

In Samburu disability is treated as a curse.

For her outstanding work, Grace is a recipient of several awards.

Women too bare the brunt of bringing forth disabled children.

Grace has ensured that the children get basic education, vocational training and even college training.

Grace also offers medical attention to the children

Mantelina Nasieku and Grace Seneya at the Maralal Primary School. Mantelina is partially blind. She would have been a dinner for wild cats.



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31/12/2010

Mantelina Nasieku, 14, knows too well what she wants in life- to be a lawyer. It is a miracle that she is alive to declare her dream.

Being mauled by hyenas, strangulation, suffocation, being snuffed to death by tobacco concoction or being poisoned by desert rose juice are some of the things that might befall her at birth after she was born partially blind.

But suffering doesn't end with children with disabilities. Women too have to pay the price of bringing forth such children. The men issue orders; the women do the execution. Objections to such decrees are met with frown, ex-communication, or battery.

Rogue woman

Luckily for Mantelina and 500 others, are alive due to a rescue operation. Mantelina's zeal is an embodiment of triumph over cultural oppression.

"She has a big appetite for knowledge," says Grace Seneiya, a woman who defied culture to offer a new lease of life and dignity to the condemned babies. From a 'rogue woman' to a celebrated figure in the community, today Seneiya, 37, befuddles even her sharpest critics.

Samburu woman's crusade against killing of the disabled

"In Samburu, disability is frowned at. The disabled are viewed as a curse, a burden, a bad omen," explains Seneiya as we take a tour of Samburu Handicap Education and Rehabilitation Programme (Sherp). "With this amount of loathing, such babies are condemned to death," adds as her voice falters.

Commit suicide

Here, the disabled are called ngoki, meaning curse, useless or demonic. That is why, Seneiya explains, there are not so many disabled adults in the area nor will you even see albinos. They are killed soon after birth in one of the most horrific cultural acts. Indeed, treading through the thorns and thistles of this near-barren world, the scrubland shrinks as if in shame of the infamy of the atrocities it has silently witnessed and concealed. There is an eerie feel of death here.

So you think that this is a practice of a bygone era? You are wrong. "Just recently, we have had cases of abandoned disabled babies," Seneiya says after a long silence.

Death designs are as varied as they are many. Babies are tethered on spiky scrubs, abandoned in the bush or left in the goat pens. It is mothers who perform the killing. Men issue orders.

Women who defy such orders are ex-communicated from their matrimonial homes. Some commit suicide because of frustrations, Seneiya reveals.

Locals seem to have been sworn into silence and interestingly even though the administration or law enforcement is aware of the practice, no one seems to want put in force the rule of law.

A pupil at Maralal Primary School using his brail type-writer. Sherp is integrating the disabled with other ordinary children in society



Samburu woman's crusade against killing of the disabled

Turning point

"There was a time some leaders wanted us to be ejected from this ground arguing that disability does not add anything to the growth of the community. No one is taking action against these dehumanising culture," Seneiya mourns.

The turning point came in 2003 when Seneiya's and five other women in Samburu were engaged in a workshop in Nanyuki by organised by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. "We went to Nanyuki and there was a lady called Sabdiyo Dido from SNV who opened our eyes. She empowered us to think critically and to be strategic in resource mobilisation for our cause. It is after that training that I came out like a possessed person. I knew I wanted to help the disabled. That is how I soldiered on," she recalls.

Not deterred

Thankfully, this rescue effort required a brief women empowerment effort to kick-start these changes. In Nanyuki SNV wanted to find solutions on the myriad problems affecting women and children in Samburu, and instantly, Seneiya, herself a special education teacher, knew where to place her cards. It has paid off.

"All these children you see here would either be long dead or living miserably," points out Seneiya. For instance, Mantelina was born par-

tially blind and was left for the dead in the scrubland. She was rescued and underwent surgery and now she can see.

Maralal is a dusty township with wooden structures fashioned from cedar. Men draped in red shukas sit on one side of the street snuffing tobacco and engaging in small talk. Across the street, women, sitting on the dusty grounds supply the tobacco.

The irony is that the much cherished drug is the killer dose here for the disabled.

One old man, Daudi Olekentai, doesn't think there is anything wrong with killing the disabled.

"We the Samburu are always on the move. How do you expect us to carry a disabled adult," he poses, snuffs his tobacco, sneezes and requests if we can buy him more tobacco.

To Seneiya, this is a classic impunity but she is not deterred. She hopes a time will come when the disabled will be accepted in the social circles of the community.

"We're now moving from rescuing to awareness. At least today, they'd rather dump the baby here than kill it. We want them to appreciate the children and show that they can be productive," Seneiya says.

However, such a bold act was and still is considered a perilous enterprise

that fires high emotions, fear and hatred with equal measure.

Premium bride price

Indeed, Seneiya endured an avalanche of hatred from friends and relatives alike. She was accused of surrounding herself with curses and as such, they swore, she would never get married.

"The nomadic Samburu lifestyle is intolerant to the weak and disabled. As they move for pasture and water, a disabled is considered an extra baggage. During raids, the disabled are usually left behind. A year ago, in one village there was a raid. Everyone fled except two disabled people who were killed," she recalls.

Girls are supposed to bloom to astounding beauties that could attract premium bride price. Disabled girls never attract suitors. The very textile of this society is cut on bravado and bride wealth. Anything that threatens these key rudiments is frowned at and has to be destroyed. Disability, real or perceived, is such a threat.

"For long I used to mount my motor-bike and tour the manyattas to inquire about disabled children. At times I would stumble on one abandoned here and another there. Most of the time you find them tethered on a shrub, feeble and shrunk."

"People used to look at me awestruck. They were convinced I was nuts," she says.



Isiolo women milk fortunes from camel

Safia Kulow, in the arid centre of Kenya, is in firm control of her economy after she and other traditional Anolei women made big business of camel milk.

Now they consider which investments to make to increase revenues from their industry.

The camel - long fabled as the ship of the desert - may not be your idea of turning conservative women to some financial independence. Just consider that the camel is clumsy, not so good looking and is seemingly in a constant mourning mode.

But that description cannot be told to the Anolei women group in Isiolo, central Kenya, located 285 kilometres north of Nairobi. Here, Safia Kulow and members are upbeat. In the past year, they have earned a staggering shilling 19 million (euro 176,000) from the sale of camel milk.

This evening, we arrive in a cacophonous Isiolo - the muezzin is drably calling for maghrib prayers, Somali tribesmen are busy fingering their tasbihis as a green Land Rover pick-up, full of yellow plastic containers, lurch out of the dusty township.

The Land Rover is a common site here. Every day it delivers close to 5,000 litres of camel milk, which is becoming a hot commodity in the region.

This has helped the traders improve their lot to pay bills, education and even to invest in other areas like transport and real estate. Safia, who is also the chairlady of the group, says that the income from milk has empowered women and changed their lives profoundly.

This development firmly affirms the place of camel milk as more of an economic product than a mere subsistence or cultural product. It is also culturally believed that camel milk is medicinal; some believe it casts off bad spirits. It is said that Egypt's Queen Cleopatra - herself a legendary beauty - bathed in camel milk. Some traditional women of yore in the desert also guzzled pints of the milk to keep an ivory complexion.

At dawn break, we are in Nompolio, a rusty, scrub-ridden village stashed between hills. The cattle are still at the kraal, but Aden Mohammed and his brother are out milking the camel. He has harvested 40 liters and still counting.

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Isiolo women milk fortunes from camel

Safia Kulow,
Chairlady,
Anolei Women
Group - Isiolo



"The milk production is shaping up. This is attributed to improved weather patterns. We are looking forward to a great harvest next year because this season most camels mated," Aden says.

Ms Kulow has also joined us. She beams with smile every time she takes a tot of raw milk. Safia is a cattle keeper as much as a business lady.

"We are located at the hills for security reasons," Ms Kulow says as we weave through acacia scrubs. This is a haven for camels which mourn in the morning as they are milked. Two men stand in opposite direction in what for long has come to be known as the ship of the desert. Today is more revered for the milk.

The group has been running this kind of business for the past 15 years in an informal design. But it is this year that their fortunes have changed dramatically.

The beauty of camels, says Safia, is that they are less prone to raids as would cows. And this explains why, even communities that hitherto disregarded camels are embracing it. Cattle raids remain a serious problem in parts of Kenya.

The group has been running this kind of business for the past 15 years in an informal design. But it is this year that their fortunes have changed dramatically. Better fortunes are also attributed to the collapse of the Somali government, which triggered mass movement of her citizens to Nairobi and other major towns.

Improved weather patterns, reduced cattle raids and increased demand for camel milk are attributed to these good tidings. To ensure constant supply, the farmers are engaging veterinary officers to advice on husbandry. This way, not all camels are allowed to conceive at the same time. The alternating design has allowed for the milk to keep flowing.

Besides, development agencies like the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the UN Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and VSF Suisse are now playing a pivotal and revolutionary role in placing the group on the straight and narrow of business.

Fact Box

Milk is collected from Manyattas, brought to Isiolo, preserved and dispatched to Nairobi the following morning.

Eastleigh is the main market hub though the team is exploring other markets.

Every day Anolei delivers close to 5, 000 liters of camel milk.

A litre of camel milk trades at shilling 60 in Isiolo (euro 0.56) and shilling 100 (euro 0.93) in Nairobi.

Isiolo women milk fortunes from camel

When insecurity and cattle raids were a byword for Isiolo, most women like Safia were ejected from the grazing land. They moved to Isiolo Township. They were not being discouraged. They quickly transformed their misfortunes to a lucrative business that has given them comfort and cash.

SNV has been providing capacity building skills, exchange visits and scouting for new markets so that the group can reap maximum benefit from their business.

Every day, an old green Land Rover traverses the unforgiving terrain as it collects the milk from farmers.

Then it delivers in Isiolo Town around noon, where the Anolei women group receive it. The milk is then put in a freezer till the following day when it is parked in buses and transported to Nairobi. Around 11:00 it arrives Eastleigh with the milk.

A litre of camel milk trades at shilling 60 in Isiolo (euro 0.56) and shilling 100 (euro 0.93) in Nairobi. Some members like Safia earn up to shilling 60,000 (euro 560) a month as profit

from the enterprise. This has helped improve their lifestyles a great deal.

In Somali culture, the camel belongs to the man and the milk belongs to the woman. This explains why the Anolei group seems to be having an edge in the milk business in Isiolo and Eastleigh alike.

But more could be done. According to SNV, the Anolei group could add value to the product to make it popular beyond the Somali community and of course to earn more premium from it. And SNV is teaming up with FAO to spearhead the camel milk project, which is now growing at an incredible rate.

Siloma Morgan, who is in charge of the project, says his team is scouting for new markets in Komarok, South Central and Nakuru provinces. SNV is also interested in building the capacity of the women group so that it can improve on the areas of hygiene, improved production and fodder management.

Safia indicates that the group will form a cooperative where members can own shares. She suggested that Anolei may start to process and package the milk in Isiolo.

Isiolo is one of the Kenyan regions with high numbers of camels - currently put at 41,000. The Somali camel is said to be the high yielding type and drought resistant. It is estimated that the region produces up to 40,000 litres of milk a day.

However, transportation to Nairobi is taking a huge toll on the group. Today, it spends about shilling 450,000 (euro 4,200) in low season and 750,000 (euro 7,000) a month in high season. That is why Safia says they need to buy their own truck so as to cut on the transportation cost. Talks are under way with some financiers toward that effort.

Indeed, camel milk is critical to the pastoral communities. It is culturally important as much as a wholesome food. Today, the commodity has shifted platforms from culture to commerce and is revolutionising the lives of women in this poor semi-arid region of Kenya.



Aden Mohammed a camel keeper in Isiolo has found massive market for his milk through the Anolei Women Group

Tech-savvy...
Asilong
Primary School
pupils using their
laptops in class.



The little green laptop that's stirring Pokot

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on
Saturday

In the sunburnt Asilong Village in West Pokot, there is little that courses a frenzy save for arrival of relief food and the pe

Nonetheless, the source of excitement is from the most unlikely gadget – a little green XO laptop that a local primary school is using to complement teaching.

This little green laptop is prolific. It is revolutionizing teaching and learning as it puts children fo the semi-arid on the cutting edge of technology. For instance pupils no-longer write composition on paper, they type; if they are unsure about an English word's pronunciation, they type it and the computer reads out.

"We already have 100 laptops," boast Joachim Krop, the head teacher here. "At first they were enough for all the pupils, but the numbers surged threefold when other children learnt about the laptops. Still we are managing and every pupil from Class One to Eight do access the laptop for learning," he offers.

But even as Krop grapples with the need for more computers, learning in this part of the world is undergoing a major revolution. The concept of e-learning is here.

But Sakat Village where Asilong is, is the last you would expect this technological flair. Electricity connection is still a mirage, classrooms have no windows, no doors and the muddy walls are peeling off; other pupils are studying under a tree.

This trip was irresistible to us too. We arrive in Sakat and our phones chirp; MTN welcomes us to Uganda. Here, we find Gladys Lokilamak perching under a shade on a dry cattle skin, holding a tiny green XO laptop. Her father, step-mother and other younger siblings surround her as she takes them through her little gadget in mother-tongue. There is excitement in the compound that they hardly notice our intrusion.

It is this reality that informed SNV Netherlands Development Organization together with partners like Eldoret-based Kifcom, to pilot e-learning in the region – it is a runaway success. Kifcom is also in partnership with Moi University, Baraton University and the North Rift E-Learning Consortium that is bringing together all partners with an interest in e-learning in the region. Over 400 teachers have been trained to facilitate this take off here.

"We at SNV are supporting the uptake of e-learning following the challenges that pupils and teachers go through. We piloted in the north rift and now some 70, 000 pupils can use computers for learning," says Joseph Langat, SNV's senior advisor on education in the region.

This explains why schools from Kericho, Eldoret, Wareng, Keiyo-Marakwet, Trans-nzoia and West Pokot are residents of the 'Silicon Valley'.

E-learning wave washes North-rift

It is this unprecedented phenomenon that attracted the PS Education to officially launch the e-learning uptake in Wareng District just recently.

"Everyone is excited about e-learning here," Elizabeth Atieno, the DEO Wareng observes. "School boards and managements are investing in ICT to support the programme." These efforts are hoped to finally realize the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) dream to accelerate e-learning.

"The challenges are many but we take pride in introducing e-learning here. Pupils now have a wider scope of learning materials from their laptops; they improve their education accordingly," Krop explains. "See we don't have a library. We don't have enough teachers. It is the laptop that is saving the situation around here."

And the fame of Asilong has spread like bush fire. In its humble status, it has attracted giants like area MP Samuel Pogisio who have come to marvel about the new uptake. Today, hundreds of school children and their teachers from as far as Kitale and Eldoret, some 200 kilometers away, tour this rugged world to see for themselves the wonders of Asilong.

Gladys goes to maps and shows her clan the globe then the African continent then Kenya and finally the border of Kenya and Uganda where we are standing. We watch in admiration. Then Gladys goes to the Record program, turns the screen to face her father and presses a button. It clicks and her papa's anxious passport size picture appears on the screen. She does the same with others; they smile heartily.

Her father then shakes his head, smiles and declares, "I will not marry this one off. I want her to read and drive a big car." Gladys, the last born is the first to attempt school. Her predecessors are mothers.

"Everyone is excited about e-learning here,"

-Elizabeth Atieno, the DEO Wareng.

"I want to be a computer scientist," Gladys mutters as we trek to school some two kilometers from the manyatta. We pass through spikes, bush and shrubs, past a brook where newly-initiated girls are doing their last rite to be admitted into adulthood. We are barred from using that path so we make a file past scrubs to the school.

"My wish is to teach other children in my village on how to use a laptop for

studies," she says.

The Asilong laptops were a generous donation from a church organization. The donor also supplied four solar panels, four batteries and a converter. Thirty laptops are charged at ago for about two hours.

However, the project risked being stillborn – there was no expertise to roll it out.

Besides, locals and teachers were scared about the laptops. Quickly myths milled and spiraled about the computers alleging that the laptops were devilish and would corrupt the minds of the young ones.

"We had never seen something like this; how could we operate them?" Krop chuckles. "It's then that SNV came on board and trained through, KIFICOM, a local capacity builder, some six teachers and six community members on operating the XO laptops."



A pupil at Asilong Primary School with his laptop during an out-door exercise



Teaching my folks...Gladys (center) explains to her father and mother how the little laptop works.

Today, laptops have fascinated this world. Krop says even villagers want to sample this new gadget. An evening adult education is being put in place to cater for their needs. Young boys are even abandoning their herd to come and enjoy the laptops.

Meanwhile, Krop admits that his is a poor imitation of a learning institution for want of everything mandatory prerequisites of a school. Still, Asilong's story is enviable

And pupils like Gladys never disappoint. She is savvy, confident, and intelligent. "Yesterday I took a picture of myself," Gladys offers. "Then I described it. I said that 'I was black, I'm not brown; that my blouse missed a button at the collar and that my hair was shaggy and needs plaiting.'"

"Asilong Primary is of course our flagship project. This is a success story," Langat enthuses.

"We want Asilong to serve as a model school on how e-learning can work even in the marginalized areas."

Sunrise Academy, in Iten we find Class Six pupils exploring maps on desktop computers. The teachers are optimistic that the learning will never be the same again as their pupils become smarter with technology.

Using a package called Msingi Pack, the Sunrise students take a mock test, the computer marks and grade the exercise.

In Wareng High School, Eldoret, the principal informs us that it is only through the computer lab that they can cope with the surging number of students. Students are directed to explore topics in their computers.

It is at Wareng that we meet Kenneth Makokha, a Form Three student, trying to catch-up with Circuits a topic in physics. The speed with which Makokha is navigating the package is simply fascinating.

"After classes I like to come and explore on my own. Computers are great. They have animations which demonstrate concepts livelier than a dead diagram on a text book," he says.



Gladys doing her assignment in school



On top of the game... Kenneth Makokha, a student at Wareng High School studies the heart using his computer.

However, schools are confined to pre-loaded programs and cannot surf the World Wide Web due to poor connectivity and the cost of internet connection although Safaricom is providing some with free modems.

In Cheplaski Secondary School, Wareng County, the portable internet modem is not of any use either. We find the Principal, Christopher Rongoei, roaming the compound in search of network.

"Network is a big challenge," he laments. "I know we're missing a lot. However, we're grateful that our students are learning to use the computers for their own studies."

Meantime, evening has come in Asilong. The cowbells tinkle as the animals head to the kraal. The school's time keeper hits the bell- its time for home. Yet for Gladys and her school-mates, it is time to explore further the little XO.

How e-learning work in North Rift

The success of e-learning uptake in the north rift region has left educationists like Joseph Langat thinking.

"The biggest challenge now is to rollout the programme countrywide," Langat says. "However, we need content development so that pupils will find value from the computers. We also need to train many more teachers who will facilitate this uptake."

Today, SNV is partnering with stakeholders like Kificom to provide technical expertise to schools. It also facilitates the installation of software and hardware as e-learning is strongly integrated in education. "The most critical aspect is to

develop the capacity of people for self-sustainability," Mathews Kituu of Kificom explains.

Langat however appreciates that though e-learning is noble it should never replace the traditional teaching.

"Teachers are still central to learning. It will be disastrous to attempt to replace them with computers. However, computers are important as a complementary learning aid," he says.

He says that technology can be great with intelligent content development. He also urges that the content should be able to boost children's morals and social well-being.

"Even schools that can access internet should strive to block all immoral sites. That's a huge task, yes, but it is very desirable."

SNV is building the capacity of the likes of Kificom to provide technical support services and training of teachers to take on the new role of e-learning.

"We have carried out sensitization sessions with teachers and school managers about the benefits of e-learning. The response now is very impressive," says Kituu.

Children are curious. And the e-learning proponents are tapping on this attribute to achieve superior education.



Why parents in Samburu are joining their children in class

Josephine Nasieku assisting her daughter with school work

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Alice Lesororo sits quietly through a mathematics class at Longewan Primary School, Samburu County. Like other pupils, she has to grapple with additions and subtractions this sizzling Friday afternoon. Lesororo is keen on what it means to get a tick and an X.

But Alice is not in school so that she may sit for KCPE exam. Like hundreds of parents in Samburu, she is being introduced to the school system so that she can appreciate education and offer the best support for her children.

"Today I have learnt what to look for in an exercise book. I know when my children have failed and when they have

got sums right," she enthuses when we catch up with her during break time.

With an acute sense of insecurity and drought, parents here know the way to sustain and perpetuate a generation is through the school and not the age-old culture of cattle rearing and rustling.

"I want the best for my children," Lesororo declares thoughtfully. "I have six children in this school; it is important they succeed. Education is their future."

Ordinarily at this hour, Lesororo would be tending to cattle. Her children used to miss school in turns to help in domestic chores. "All that is in the past," she promises.

Complete assignments

Parents in Samburu County are increasingly being sensitised on education issues. Today, they troop to classes and seminars in their hundreds in a bid to understand the dynamics of education thanks to an elaborate home-grown model mooted by retired teachers to stimulate the growth of education in an area where illiteracy level stands at 90 per cent.

"Former teachers chose to sensitise parents on the importance of education. We realised that there was little appreciation of education due to illiteracy. That is why we chose to bring them to classrooms," says Joseph Owino, one of the founders of Samburu Education Empowerment Programme.

**"Former teachers chose to sensitise parents on the importance of education."
- Owino**

Parents in Samburu follow a workshop.



Education revolution in Samburu

Their efforts have borne fruits. Today, a Samburu parent knows the importance of working closely with the teachers and the pupils.

Parents have been shown the significance of checking their children's exercise books and they are being encouraged to allow their children time to complete assignments.

The parent is aware too that the future of their sons and daughters is not in the grazing fields but in classrooms.

Rose Lenkai knows this too well. Her children go to Lesuuk Primary School, and Rose has been keen to know why their homework seemed little.

She raised the issue with some teachers and the workload was increased.

"Now my children are busy. When I have time, I assist in with revision," she says.

SEEP came up with an ingenious way of getting parents involved in their children's education

This phenomenon is threatening non-performing teachers and more than once, parents have stormed schools to demand explanation when children lag behind.

"Some parents now know the syllabus and we can't afford to drag our feet. There is a time they came to demand why their children were not given enough homework," Rodgers Wambuko, the head teacher Lesuuk says. This is an effort that will eventually change the community for the better.

Parents are finding the opportunity outstanding. Initially, schools here were enrolling very few pupils and there was runaway absenteeism, but all that seems to be in the past now. Confront teachers

"Initially we believed education is the prerogative of teachers. We never bothered. But now know better," Lesororo says.

And it doesn't end at the classroom. Lesororo says every evening she must check her daughters exercise books to see if their assignments have been marked.

She knows that she can confront a teacher in the event of laxity. She knows that her daughter must go to school, but that's not all. She knows every day the teacher must give her

"We chose to provide seminars to parents and encourage them to take interest in education for the good of their children," says Owino, "We realised that left of their own, literacy level will remain low."

Alice Lesororo checking her son's work.



SNV and Seep officials join parents in Longewan Primary School after a workshop.



Education revolution in Samburu

Leah Njeri, a programme advisor at SNV Netherlands Development Organisation is upbeat that the next generation of Samburu will not be one wielding bows and arrows, but pens and papers. SNV has been keen on improving education in marginalised areas by building the capacities of organisations such as SEEP and the Ministry of Education.

"Our approach is holistic. It ranges from empowering education stakeholders to encouraging proper man-

agement of funds," Njeri says.

In the manyattas, we bump into Josephine Namlek. She scrutinising the exercise book of her child to check on progress and performance. Her daughter's performance has really improved, she says. Namlek also enlists the services of her older children to guide her on the performance of the younger ones.

Wambuko is happy, he says there is positive change among stakeholders following genuine participation and interrogation.

Fact Box

SEEP and SNV partnered to sensitise parents in Samburu on the importance of education.

Parents have learnt to check their children's exercise books and guide them on doing their home work.

Parents have allowed children time off from domestic chores like herding and collecting firewood so that they can concentrate in schoolwork.





A hand-wash at a time keep cholera at bay in Kajiado

In Kajiado County the thin line between life and death, or success and failure in schools has been identified – washing one's hands.

While this simple exercise may seem too basic, here, it is a serious matter that is attracting an army of actors determined to ensure that hands are clean, safe water is available for drinking and that sanitary facilities are accessible to all.

Thus, the perennial cholera outbreak in the county, incessant skin and intestinal worms, has spurred the hygiene corps into action.

This explains why in each primary school and most homesteads you will find a leaking tin. This is a plastic tin or can fashioned from waste bottles or jerrycans. It is suspended from a tree branch and filled with water. At the bottom a tiny hole is made using a nail for outlet. This tin

is critical because it provides water for washing one's hands and sometimes face. The tiny hole moderates water flow to avoid wastage.

"Proper hygiene is the basis of a progressive society. You cannot claim civilization when you are still battling with basic hygienic issues that should have been eliminated ages ago," James Malusha the District Public Health Officer says thoughtfully.

"The major problem here was lack of awareness on hygiene. The idea of washing hands was not considered critical and so people carried and swallowed bacteria as they eat," Malusha explains.

True, the Kajiado District Commissioner, is worried that over 60 percent of the region is lacking in latrines, a scaring revelation.

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WASH in Kajiado keeps cholera at bay

Jackline Lemayian is one of the beneficiaries of the WASH programme in Kajiado.

"The situation was worse than it is now," he says. "Normally issues of hygiene have been ignored as trivial either by error of omission or commission." The DC says efforts are being stepped up to ensure that hygiene issues have been integrated in the daily lifestyles of communities.

And school children have learned this mantra with speed and precession. At Lenkishon Primary School, about 30 kilometers from Kajiado Township, its lunch hour. We find pupils queuing for a leak-tin before they can partake on their meal.

"We were told hands carry germs which cause cholera and other diseases. If we want to be safe, it is important that we wash our hands before eating," says Kaiyanga Sakau one of the pupils.

Though shy, he also knows that water should be treated before drinking and that food should be served on clean utensils. He told his mother as much.

Sakau even went ahead to put up a leak-tin in his home. The tins are now phenomena in the county. Of course this tin is a far cry from your warm sinks and self-flushing toilets in the city. Nonetheless, the bottom line is to battle bacteria.

This concept is called Water Sanitation Hygiene (WASH). The approach is two-fold – School Wash and Community Wash.

"In school wash we target safe drinking water to children, availability of sanitation facilities and hand-wash. We also encourage managements to embed sanitation matters in their planning and budgeting," says Stephen Osingo an advisor at SNV – Netherlands Development Organization which has teamed up with a number of partners to deliver on this assignment.

With this new thinking, observers say, a major problem is solved in the community. Children are critical agents of change because of their pester-power. This is the reason why implementers of the project create awareness to children who percolate the same information to their societies.

Lenkishon Primary School pupils enjoy clean water.





Kajiado District Commissioner.



James Malusha, Public Health Officer, Kajiado Central



Dancun Odhiambo...DEO Kajiado Central

WASH in Kajiado keeps cholera at bay

"There is remarkable change in the level of awareness and action," boasts Christopher Meioki, the head teacher at Lenkishon Primary School.

"Most of our pupils have educated their parents on hygiene."

True, when we reached Bissil, Jackyline Lemayian was just refilling her leak- tin.

"We also have a toilet now," she tells us proudly pointing to a green plastic booth a few meters from the manyatta.

"We never thought toilets were crucial because we have been migrating. But nowadays, there is no much movement. We were told that lack of toilets contributes a great deal to cholera," she says.

"There is remarkable change in the level of awareness and action. Most of our pupils have educated their parents on hygiene."

- Christopher Meioki, the head teacher at Lenkishon Primary School.

One thing that this community seems to dread is cholera. It comes with devastating vengeance leaving a trail of death, debts and destruction on its wake.

The sensitization efforts on hygiene is seeing many families changing their life-styles.

Previously the bush worked just well. However, when rain came, it washed all that waste to a collection point where the locals also fetch water. Now you understand why cholera strikes here with abandon.

Lifestyle here dictated that such facilities like latrines were undesirable considering the continuous movement of communities. The boma (cradle) is also as close to the shelter as possible.

These realities provide a fertile breeding ground for flies and bacteria. Normally flies have been contaminating food and water. Add to this rain water that has collected every waste, and there you have a potent concoction with which health disasters are made of.

Samuel Gitahi, a hygiene and sanitation advisor at Unicef says the new approach will have multiple benefits to children and families. To Gitahi costs on treatment of diseases will be cut while children will be able to study in comfort.

Duncan Odhiambo, the district education officer corroborates Gitahi. He notes that while the government did everything to introduce free education and school feeding programme, a simple issue of hygiene was overlooked.

"This means that though you may attract many children to school, most of them would

Keeping cholera at bay

fail for lack of proper sanitary facilities. Lack of latrines for instance affects concentration and participation in class and thus contribute to poor performance," Odhiambo observes.

"Hygiene issues have been grappled with for ages. No one really knew the formula of tackling it. Every year we reported cases of deaths and hospitalization from water borne diseases, now it is solved.

Last year there was a major disease outbreak here in Bissill. It cost lives and most were admitted. This year, all is calm.

Lemayian is well schooled on matters hygiene, so she boasts.

She keeps her compound clean, she has dug a pit latrine and above all she treats her water before drinking. This she does by using a chorine tablet or by exposing the water to sunlight through the Sodis technology.

"We were taught and now I'm happy. We are all clean," she says that even her children are hygienic conscious nowadays.

To Meikoki his school goes beyond the 3 Rs. It is a center that nurtures hygiene agents.

"Children are our great medium of relaying hygiene information," says Meikoki.

"We train them on washing hands, the importance of having toilets and purifying water before drinking. They have managed to bring change to their communities."

In his school, just like in many others, the leak-tins are a common site. They are placed in strategic locations like near the toilet and others outside the classrooms to instill a culture of hand-washing.

"The school wash programme has been a great success in this region," Osingo says. In fact, most schools lacked toilets, a study revealed. In others, over 100 pupils shared a latrine.

Thus, Osingo and team have been lobbying CDF committees to set some money aside for water and sanitation. Most committees have seen the sense of it.

"Otherwise, the waiting time is long and hence discomfoting to children. This interferes with concentration in classroom," rues Osingo.

He notes that his organisation commissioned the research that established a correlation between sanitation in schools and academic performance.

"Latrines that emit foul smell were found to be the biggest distractors to learning. Pupils shy from using them



Samuel Gitahi hygiene and sanitation advisor at Unicef

for fear of the stench that is absorbed by their cloths. When they suppress the call of nature in the converse it makes them very uncomfortable," he says.

That is why we rolled out this campaign and encouraged schools to use funds for toilets. we also help them approach donors and CDF to fund sanitation facilities. The required minimum of toilets is 1 per every 25 girls and 1 for every 30 boys. This is not the case.

Fact Box

Lack of health and sanitation awareness contributed to increased cases of cholera in the region.

Pupils are great agents of communicating hygiene in the communities.

Head teachers and school committees are encouraged to set aside some CDF funds towards water and sanitation.

Leaking tins are useful in provision of water for washing hands and faces.

Economic
empowerment!



Hay Management

