



Maragoli

Community Development
Foundation, Inc.

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The mission of the Maragoli Community Development Foundation is to assist the Maragoli people of Western Kenya in improving their quality of life through the funding of sustainable development projects that community members themselves conceive and implement.

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President



Dear Friends,

As we wrap up our sixth year, it is worth reflecting on the many beautiful aspects of Maragoli life: the lush landscape of banana trees and small plots of land interspersed with winding brooks, a strong tradition of storytelling and dance, a deep sense of spirituality and respect for the elders and the ancestors, strong extended family networks, a vibrant mother tongue, a slow pace of life, and local food traditions and herbal remedies—envious qualities, all of them.

In spite of these rich traditions, however, community members feel that their aspirations for a higher standard of living have largely been thwarted by forces beyond their control. Imagine schools without electricity or running water, or students sitting in afternoon classes on an empty stomach; imagine soils so depleted that the harvest cannot feed you and your family, or cooking every meal on wood in a smoky hut; imagine having a treatable illness but no money for treatment. These are still daily realities for many people.

Community members in Vigetse and Vigena, like elsewhere, are working hard to preserve their cherished traditions and create momentum for transformed living conditions. It is a difficult balancing act, and the path forward is one that only they themselves can chart. It is a privilege to be able to play a small part in this important work, and in this year's annual newsletter and report, we highlight several projects that community members prioritized in 2010.

It was another year in which you so generously supported MACODEF to make these small, durable projects in Western Kenya possible. Projects that are not designed by outsiders, but that are thought of and carried out by the local community. Projects that don't use imported technology, but use locally available materials. Projects that are not for short-term improvement, but are helping the community in the long term. Vihiga's future is looking brighter.

We thank you for your continued support!

Jan Kees den Bakker
President

Summary of Program Activities

The year 2010 marked the ratification of a new Constitution in Kenya and the continuation of a stable power-sharing agreement between President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga. In the context of a new sense of optimism that the judicial system would be reformed and the rights of ordinary Kenyans respected, MACODEF embarked on two major projects—a sustainable agriculture/school lunch program and a community resource center—that integrate educational, health care, and environmental goals. These two projects will benefit virtually all community members. At the same time, we expanded our solar cooking initiative and continued other important educational and income-generating projects, including our emergency funds to the neediest segment of the community.

Sustainable Agriculture and School Lunch Program

With a matching grant from Cordaid, we were able to launch the first year of a three-year project to improve soil quality and agricultural practices in the two villages and, at the same time, set up a viable school lunch program for all students at the two primary schools. The two prongs of the project were tied together in this way: parents who received seeds, fertilizers and training in sustainable agriculture committed themselves to donating 10% of their increased yields back to the schools in order to sustain the school lunch programs. In addition, the grant provided funds for construction of kitchens and food stores at the two schools. It also supported the purchase of hoes, wheelbarrows, and energy efficient stoves. For their part, Vigetse and Vigena Primary Schools both established school lunch program/sustainable agriculture sub-committees to oversee the project. Implementation thus far has been very consultative and inclusive.

Government agricultural officers were invited to conduct training sessions for parents, stressing conservation measures, farm layout, land tillage, and preparation of organic compost. These sessions were very well-attended, and families that participated were required to begin assembling organic compost months before the March planting season. One agricultural officer described initial soil quality in the two villages as “pathetic,” due to depletion of soil nutrients from mono-cropping and erosion; however, there is a lot of optimism that the new project will allow farmers to retain traditional farming practices that work while modifying their approach to allow for more sustainable.

Community Resource Center

Detailed plans have been drawn up for a community resource centre that will serve the people of Vigetse and surrounding areas. After receiving a generous grant from the Noble Foundation to jump-start the project, our local board of governors convened a meeting of all the stakeholder groups and community residents to get their ideas for the design of the building and the kinds of services that should be offered. Suggestions for the latter included a seminar room, a library, a computer lab, battery recycling, a kitchen and demonstration garden, and a meeting hall for weddings, voting, adult literacy classes and other large group meetings. We also hope to build modest accommodations where visitors can stay.

A portion of the grant has already been spent on the acquisition of the land, fencing of the plot, production of the proposed building plans/drawings, architectural designs and bills of quantities. The local MACODEF stakeholders groups have made commitments to contribute services and materials towards the construction of the resource centre. During a visit to the site in March, 2011, College of Wooster students and Wooster community members planted trees and helped make bricks in preparation for the construction phase.

Education

In 2010 we provided scholarships and school uniforms for 38 AIDS orphans and students from very poor families to enable them to continue their primary and secondary school education. The students who received partial tuition for Vígina Secondary School this year were:

Silas Kedan Akinga	Sheilla Kavwahi	Mildred Mbone	Alex Muravi	Allan Obege
Sheilla Ambuso	Reuben Kidwalo	Synthia Mbone	Lydia Musimbi	Francis Omega
Petronilla Isigi	Sospeter Kisivuli	Moris Mukina	Dorothy Mwaniga	Kelvin Uzwanga
Mildred Jahenda	Wendy Makungu			

We also supplied four computers to Vígina Secondary School, which, more than 30 years after its founding as a community day school, was finally provided with an electrical hookup, thanks to a new transformer installed nearby. Though electricity rationing is common, the students can now benefit from a modest computer lab.

Patti Moll and her mother continued to supply assorted educational supplies to the two primary schools. The gifts include files, writing paper, crayons, calendars, stickers, story books, bags, pens, T-shirts, staplers and pins, calculators, tape measures, world maps, teaching aids, rulers, sharpeners, etc. According to the teachers, these items have greatly improved the teaching standards in the two schools.

Solar Cooking

Financing by the Alliance Rotary Club and local facilitation by Sunny Solutions, an affiliation of Solar Cooking International, allowed the purchase of solar cooking and water pasteurization kits. This project included an extensive training session and follow-up for recipients, each of whom received one solar cookit, one fireless basket (an insulated basket for continued cooking after taking the food out of the cookit), and one pasteurization kit. The training coordinator for Sunny Solutions reports that the MACODEF project has been the most successful one they have overseen in all of Western Province.

The follow-up report shows that the cookits are being used effectively as a supplement to cooking over an open fire and are especially popular as a means for boiling drinking water. The stoves allow for conservation of charcoal and firewood—saving up to one-sixth of a family's disposable monthly income—and they also reduce smoke inhalation. Over 87 families (62 in 2010 alone) have so far received the benefits of this simple technology; in addition, Vígina secondary school teachers were trained and the home science class teachers received cookits, fireless baskets, and safe water pots for use in their classes. Based on the positive response to solar cooking, the local board and the community are eager to pilot a new solar lighting project in 2011.

Health Care

In 2010 we continued outreach to AIDS support groups and moved forward on the rural health clinic. With the purchase of a suction machine this past year, the Noble Foundation funds have resulted in completion of the Vígese Health Clinic building, as well as purchase of basic furnishings and equipment.

After some delays in constituting the health clinic management committee, it is now in place and is charting the way forward, including drawing up a fee schedule and a plan for staffing and for acquiring medical supplies.

The clinic is still waiting on final approval from the Ministry of Health. Though progress has been somewhat slower than expected, the building was visited throughout the year by a biweekly mobile clinic, which administered immunizations, provided pre-natal care, and treated hundreds of patients for a variety of illnesses.

Water Projects

This past year saw the completion of the final stage in the environmental projects supported by a grant from The Rotary Foundation. The projects included construction of 40 pit latrines, installation of 20 rainwater harvest systems, and rehabilitation of two additional community springs. In addition, approximately 1000 trees were planted throughout the two villages. The cumulative effect of these projects on sanitation and water security in Vigetse and Vigena has been extremely positive.

Emergency Fund

The emergency kitty continued its vital role in serving the quietly suffering and less publicly exposed members of the community. In 2010 MACODEF provided a small number of grants to individuals who needed immediate assistance due to severe poverty or disability. Mary Kitu, Herman Azere, and Isaac and Zipporah Lihasi, (pictured in our newsletter) each received grants to repair or rebuild their houses. Walter Andugu received a wheelchair and is now attending school. Famines Mileja and Jane Oresha each received grants to assist in caring for orphaned babies. And 11 others received small grants to stock a kiosk, purchase a calf, or pay for medical expenses. Thanks to the keen eye of our project coordinator, Joyce Adisa, we have been able to assist a segment of the population that often does not show up on the radar screen of social welfare services.

Management and Administration

As in previous years, our international board of trustees continued fund-raising and providing feedback on recommendations from the local level, which is where most of the “heavy lifting” occurs. In 2010, our newly constituted local board of governors completed their first full year of work together and welcomed Sheilah Vugutsa as an office assistant. Our project coordinator, Joyce Adisa, reports that this group of board members is unique. They are a hard-working, transparent, and community-minded group who carry out a wide range of responsibilities and are diligent about attending the bimonthly, six-hour board meetings. Their enthusiasm and commitment, coupled with MACODEF’s track record over the past six years, has created a high level of legitimacy in the eyes of community members.

The heart of the local board’s administrative approach is participation and information exchange among the approximately 30 stakeholder groups that MACODEF has funded. Throughout 2010, the local board continued to hold “stakeholder meetings” to maintain close communication with these community groups. Joyce writes in her annual report that this year MACODEF has “mobilized community members to use all their human resources and cultural knowledge in order to become self-reliant.” She goes on to say that MACODEF has “facilitated participatory development education among marginalized communities and has been able to incorporate and unite all classes of people.” In her eyes, the key to MACODEF’s success has been involving community members in decision-making and encouraging them to take ownership of their projects.

One indication of the success of this approach is that neighbors in other sub-locations, who admire the work of MACODEF, are asking for services to be extended to their areas. MACODEF local board members are increasingly called on by government officials and non-governmental organizations to serve as representatives at different functions because of their reputation for transparency and efficiency. And MACODEF and some stakeholder groups have been recognized for their achievements at agricultural field days and other public events.

Financial Report

Thanks to an extremely dedicated group of donors who contributed generously despite a weak economy, we received \$41,991 in the U.S., surpassing our annual campaign goal of \$30,000. The number of individual donors stood at 70, and once again, more than 90% also gave the previous year. We are very grateful for this level of commitment among our individual donors. In 2010, 98.4% of donor funds went directly into the local Vihiga area economy. Our only costs in the U.S. were for printing, postage, the post office box, and bank wire fees.

In 2010, we received strong support from nearly a dozen foundations and businesses. The Noble Foundation contributed \$20,000 for the community resource center, and The Korver-Huisman Charitable Foundation gave us a generous grant of \$7500. The Wooster Rotary Club coordinated an Alternative Christmas that netted more than \$2000 in gifts. The Alliance Rotary Club gave us another \$1000 grant to expand our solar cooking project. We also received support from ABR, Inc., the Microsoft Giving Campaign, and the Wooster Book Company. Patti Moll continued to provide school supplies for Vagina and Vigetse Elementary School children. In The Netherlands, Dutch MACODEF received a matching grant from Cordaid for our sustainable agriculture program

At the local level, one challenge we faced this year was that the Bukuga Village Bank, which we used for distributing grants and loans to individuals who cannot afford to go to bank in the city, experienced liquidity problems. The government intervened, but the bank folded with Ksh 43,564 (about \$500) owed to MACODEF. On the positive side, our main bank, Standard Chartered Bank, approved us under its corporate social responsibility charter, and is no longer charging us ledger and cash withdrawal fees.

Most importantly, with Elkana Buhiru Okwaro, a trained accountant, assuming the position of MACODEF Treasurer, local record-keeping and financial reporting on a quarterly basis has become very detailed and polished. This past year a Kenyan government-certified auditor completed an official audit of the 2010 books kept by our local board of governors. The finances were found to be in order and copies of the report were sent to Kenya's NGO Coordinating Board.

<u>Breakdown of Income and Expenses</u>		
BALANCE ON DECEMBER 31, 2009		\$14,303
TOTAL INCOME AND REVENUE:		\$41,991
	Individual Contributions	\$12,924
	Foundation/Non-Profit Gifts	\$28,500
	Corporate Donations	\$567
EXPENSES:		
	Program Services	\$27,070
	Adminstration and General	\$7,504
	Fundraising	\$582
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$35,156
BALANCE ON DECEMBER 31, 2010		\$21,138