Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) Kikuyu Escarpment, Kenya

KENVO works closely with local government environmental officers, as well as Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Service.

Environmental education has been encouraged by KENVO through the donation of tree seedlings to local schools and annual World Environment Day events. KENVO also participates in the Canada World Youth International student exchange programme.

Fish-farming is another environmentally-friendly livelihood activity that has been promoted. Local women’s groups have been given tilapia fish to cultivate in fish ponds, while KENVO assists them in marketing the fish to meet local demand.

KENVO’s three tree nurseries, in Kereita Forest and at Matatia Primary School, have the capacity to produce up to 100,000 tree seedlings annually. These include indigenous croton and olea species, and the exotic, fast-growing greveria. They are sold to local farmers for agro-forestry.

In 2010, 500 mosquito nets were given to local health centres and dispensaries, to combat increasing incidence rates of malarial infection. This was funded by KENVO’s partners in Canada, as part of a scheme to mitigate the effects of climate change at the grassroots level.

Since 2000, KENVO has worked with the headquarters of the UN Environment Programme in Nairobi in a paper-use compensation scheme. For each ream of paper used, UNEP donates the funds necessary to grow one seedling to planting height. This scheme currently contributes around 30,000 seedlings annually.

Since 2005, KENVO has encouraged bee-keeping by local groups, using funding from the EU Biodiversity Conservation Programme. They have given 150 beehives to ten youth and women groups, who have been able to market and sell the honey produced.

KENVO’s planned eco-tourism initiative at Osotua Camp has used funding from IUCN and USAID to construct an eco-lodge, which will be completed by December 2010. The revenues will be used to ensure KENVO’s long-term financial sustainability.

What did we achieve?

“The Equator Prize is a fitting recognition of KENVO’s work in and around the Kereita forest. KENVO has been largely responsible for educating the public on the usefulness of the forest and other forests in the Kikuyu escarpment.” (WildlifeDirect, 2008)