

A close-up photograph of a young plant with large, vibrant green, oval-shaped leaves. The plant is growing out of a grey, biodegradable nursery bag filled with dark brown soil. The background is slightly blurred, showing other similar plants in the same nursery setting.

THE RECENT EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN ASUMBI T. T. COLLEGE

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REPORT FROM: OGETO K. RICHARD – ESD RESOURCE PERSON, 6TH MAY 2014

Asumbi Teachers' College has in the last one year recorded significant achievements in the field of Education for Sustainable Development which are worthy highlighting. Education for Sustainable Development is defined as an approach to teaching and learning which helps people to develop attitudes, values, perspectives, skills and knowledge to enable them to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and for the future, and to act upon those decisions.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. The three pillars of sustainable development are the social pillar, the economic pillar and the environmental pillar. The sustained harmonization of the three pillars projects humanity to good livelihood. Sustainable Development is accorded special space and emphasis in The Constitution of Kenya, Vision 2030, The KICD ESD Policy, The National Environment Management Authority ESD Policy and The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which will be replaced by The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the year 2015 onwards.

Planting of trees as an adaption strategy

The College is fully convinced that climate change whose principal causes are anthropogenic is real. To address the adverse negative effects of climate change the College encourages the planting of trees as an adaptation strategy from time to time. Last term alone, a total of over 10,000 trees were planted in the College, Local Community and in the 49 Teaching Practice Primary Schools. Each Student



Tree seedlings being bought by a Government Officer, April 2014.



Students preparing tree seedlings for marketing.

from Asumbi proceeding home for the Easter Holiday collected two seedlings from the College tree nursery for planting. All the seedlings planted were donated free of charge by the College. The total area under forest cover currently in the whole College is 40%.

The College tree nursery currently has over 500,000 seedlings with the leading ones being Grevillea, Casuarina, Eucalyptus, Jacaranda and Kei Apples. Students voluntarily and heartily provide free services in the tree nursery such as seed bed preparation, soil treatment, seeds sowing, weeding, potting, pruning, spraying and sprinkling water. Students with serious financial constraints remain in the College during the holidays (April/Easter, August and December) to work in the tree nursery to generate money which goes into scaling down their fee balances. Most of the Students of this College have acquired knowledge, skills and perspectives necessary for the establishment of tree nurseries in this County for purposes of economic empowerment/income generation.



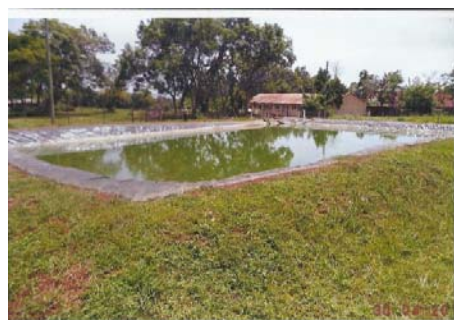
The Green Belt Movement

Prospects of the College concentrating on the production of fruit tree seedlings and flowers are quite bright. Plans on generating indigenous tree seedlings in honour of the late Professor Wangari Muta Maathai are already in the pipeline. The Green Belt Movement will be brought on board to guarantee the effective success of this initiative in the next 10 years.

The main tree nursery challenges are:

- marketing
- drought
- rapid regeneration of weeds
- attack by termites.

The College wishes to request interested persons and institutions to purchase and plant in large scale our high quality and affordable tree seedlings. At present the College generates some income from the tree nursery for its upkeep.





Fish farming – 1,100 Tilapia Fingerlings in the pond ready for harvesting.

Fish farming addresses the concern of food security

The College has developed fish farming to address the concern of food security. The fish pond hosts over 1,000 fingerlings of the Tilapia type currently. Tilapia thrives in water temperatures ranging between 20^o C and 30^o C. Tilapia matures in a period of 6 months once raised according to conventional standards. Involvement of Students in fish farming (aquaculture) is a special priority by the College. The challenges of fish farming include the high cost of commercial feeds, attack by predators, the vast growth of algae and prolonged drought. Plans are already underway to expand the fish farming project to raise at least 20,000 fingerlings in the next five years, from the ponds to be constructed. Experts are being keenly consulted over this noble initiative.

The College encourages all her 49 Teaching Practice Primary Schools which she regularly uses to be education for sustainable development competent. The Primary Schools have established strong Environmental Clubs. The Head Teachers of those Schools are ESD positive. Activities initiated in those Schools include the planting of flowers and trees, cleaning of the environment, soil and water conservation and the adoption of learner-centered methods of teaching.

ESD networks are established

The development of strong ESD networks is taken seriously by the College. By linking up with like-minded Individuals and Organizations, the College acquires

the material and moral support necessary for the ESD advancement to higher standards. In the contemporary times the College works closely with NEMA, AFEW, LVCEEP, WWF, GRCEs, WCK, KEFRI, Forest Department – Homa Bay and the Fisheries Department – Homa Bay. Plans are underway to widen the scope of ESD network by bringing on board large Companies such as Safaricom and Total Kenya.

ESD associated competitions

The Asumbi Students do excel by participating fully in ESD associated competitions at Local, National and Regional levels. Last year three Students from this College emerged as the top three in Essay Writing and Artwork Competitions on climate change adaptation sponsored by WWF/LVCEEP. The sampled participating Colleges within the catchment area of Lake Victoria hailed from Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. The Students were Oseko C. O. (Position 1, Essay Writing), Odhiambo K. J. (Position 3, Essay Writing) and Kenyatta N. C. (Position 1 (Twice), Artwork). In the last four consecutive years the Drama Club Students of Asumbi have been out-smarting all other Colleges in the National Drama Competitions while presenting Environmental Sustainability items. The Students and Patrons of Drama Club do an excellent piece of work which significantly bolsters the positive image of the College and creates the requisite ESD awareness in the Country.



Tree nursery featuring various types of seedlings ready for transplanting.

Environmental Sustainability Policy of the College is in place

Currently, the certified Environmental Sustainability Policy of the College is in place. It clearly spells out a broad spectrum of activities which ought to be undertaken in order of merit to be more ESD competent. The policy is the first one of its kind since the year 1936 when the College was formally established. The policy lays down special emphasis on the adoption of The Whole Institution Approach for effective ESD operations by the College. The policy was drafted by The Environmental Sustainability Committee according to the specifications of The Performance Contract. In equal measure the College operates on a strong Code of Environmental Ethics and Conduct.

The area of land under vegetables production and napier grass cultivation has been increased remarkably in the last one year. The production of milk for local consumption is reasonably high at present. The large production of Sukuma Wiki by the College has led to substantial financial resources savings. The area under horticulture farming is set to expand further with the passage of time.

The College has established the position of The Environmental Sustainability Secretary within the Student Union which is headed by a democratically elected Chairperson. Mobilization of the Students to carry out ESD activities is mainly a prerogative of The Student Union. The College appreciates the noble input of the Union Officials and all other Students which is finally marked with the issuance of duly signed certificates on the conclusion of the two year training programme.

The College has a strong link to the local community

The College derives a lot of support from the Local Community which has catapulted her ESD Projects to great horizons of success. The Local Community provides space and opportunities for ESD teaching and learning. Members from the Local Community are often hired to provide a wide range of services in the various ESD Projects. In the last 78 years of the College's existence, the Local Community has been a reliable source of food supply. The element of strong College-Local Community relationship is quite strong. Earnings by the Local Community from the goods supplied and services rendered to the College have gone along way to raising the standards of living. The Local Community provides a large and reliable market to the tree seedlings produced by the College. The College and Local Community are inseparable and firmly intertwined in matters pertaining to Education for Sustainable development.

An Environmental Club and Committee

The College has a strong Environmental Club and Environmental Sustainability Committee. The chief task of the two bodies is to give the College direction regarding the attainment of the highest environmental sustainability standards. The two bodies are democratically run by the Students and the Tutorial/Non-Tutorial Staff. In developing The Environmental Sustainability Action Plan varied perspectives are accorded due consideration. The College is in the process of ad-

addressing a number of suggestions made by the two bodies such as exhaustive rain water harvesting, establishing a community based ESD training facility, the production of biogas and briquettes, solar energy production, the upscaling of the sanitation standards, effective waste management strategies and the establishment of greenhouses for horticultural crops production. Chances of the College replacing the already aged physical structures with ultra-modern ones are extremely bright in the near future.

The success recorded by the College in Sustainable Development is exclusively attributed to the adoption of The Whole Institution Approach. The key components of the approach are The College Culture and Ethos, Monitoring and Evaluation, Teaching and Learning, The Students, The Community and The College Estate. Keen attention is also paid to The Six Cornerstones of ESD, namely; Life Long Learning, Learners in Focus, Holistic Approach, Democratic Work Methods, Reflection and Different Perspectives. The College Administration provides leading support in all ESD initiatives from time to time.

To conclude it is necessary to ask everybody to offer serious solutions to the prevailing and anticipated sustainable development challenges for the good of our planet Earth and Humanity in totality.



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