

2019 SGG REPORT ON MATAYOS DEMONSTRATION PLOT

INTRODUCTION

For several years SGG has been encouraging MMO farmers around Busia to adopt various organic gardening & permaculture techniques to increase farm productivity. The techniques which we have particularly promoted include improved water supply, agroforestry, better soil fertility by greater use of compost, more emphasis on vegetable/fruit and a greater variety of crop production. By 2014 it was decided to establish a Demonstration Plot near Matayos market as a focus from which these innovations could be spread through the community. Progress at this Demonstration Plot has been described already in two previous reports i.e. [DEMONSTRATIONplot\[18.12.16\]](#) and [DEMONSTRATIONplot\[27.2.18\]](#). To get a full idea of the progress achieved in the last few years, it might help to glance through those earlier reports before reading this update.

PROGRESS IN 2018

The report of February 2018 indicated that the group of farmers who were cultivating the Matayos Demonstration Plot were starting to make a significant profit from their work. This continued in 2018.



Originally the Matayos Demonstration Plot was under the management of the local NGO Maendeleo Mashinani Organisation [MMO]. This proved to be ineffective, so 5 community-based organisations [CBOs] located around Matayos took over the work & management of the plot.

One of the early actions of the Demonstration Plot [DP] workers was to establish a new CBO, called Matayos Development and Empowerment Initiative [MADEI]. Joshua Wabwire of FOCUSA [see top left] was elected the Chair of MADEI. Here he proudly displays one of MADEI's pawpaw trees. Joshua is learning how to write reports, and Appendices A and B are his work.



Since MADEI members started working here there has been much experimentation with crops new to Matayos. Last year SGG reported 'green onions' as a new experimental crop. Subsequently, members have discovered that, rather than selling individual leaves as done previously, it is more profitable to sell the whole bunch of onions at once for Ksh 50/- at the local market. Here [see lower left] MADEI members are counting the onion bunches. This single raised bed will produce more than Ksh 5,000/- potential income, although some will certainly go for home consumption.



Mohamed Wandera is a member of MADEI with the DP on his land, and also the Chair of the local market association. He is starting to benefit from the hard work he has done as *Grevillea robusta* trees planted several years ago reach maturity and mangos planted 4 years ago bear fruit [see above left]. As the raised beds and orchard of the original DP are now fully occupied, MADEI members made a decision to lease another part of Mohamed's land. This plot is not that large nor impressive [see above right], but it is being used to grow sukumawiki seedlings for sale in the local market to provide another source of income for the MADEI group.

There is now insufficient land within the DP for anybody new who wishes to adopt the various horticultural innovations found on the DPM. New land must be found. This has been done in 3 ways. The first was that Mohamed started to use more of his own farmland next to the DP for these innovations – as is illustrated by his mango harvest above. Subsequently Fred Wako, who is Chair of the Lonely Orphans Self-Help Group and also a MADEI member, started to develop a separate vegetable plot nearby. Last year some neighbouring farmers, seeing the improvements within the DP, have begun to change how their own shambas are farmed.



Lonely Orphans are a CBO supporting approximately 50 orphans &/or vulnerable children, and their Chair Fred Wako is also a member of MADEI. Here [see above left] Fred and Judith Khamaya are displaying some of the vegetables in Lonely Orphans plot. The prime purpose of this production is to provide more nutritional food for those orphans who attend the Lonely Orphans Centre, so there is limited income gained here.

Judith is a volunteer teacher at Lonely Orphans, where staff receive only an occasional salary. In order to provide some additional income, SGG has sponsored Judith to set up a tree nursery. By October she had sold about 700 Mwarobaini nusu [*Melia azedarach*] & 300 eucalyptus, with a further 500 seedlings still unsold. She was selling seedlings at Ksh 8/- each, and had given Ksh 1,000/- to the Lonely Orphans group. Strictly speaking, this was not DP business. However, it illustrates the multiplier effect which the Demonstration Plot is having.

Since the establishment of the DP Mohamed Wandera has been adding fruit trees, especially in the orchard. This *[see top right]* is a view of the DP from the orchard. To many this would seem to be a mass complex of green, but if the picture is expanded on the computer it is possible to see bananas, citrus fruits, pawpaw as well as Grevillea, Mwarobaini nusu, and moringa. There are more than 50 fruits in this orchard. Another point of note is Abisai Wesonga in the right foreground. He is a neighbouring farmer to the DP. He has not adopted all of the innovations here, but in 2017-8 he planted 84 trees on his own plot after visiting the DP.

Here *[see lower photo]* is Joshua Wabwire planting a boundary line of 215 *Maesopsis eminii* ['mzizi'] at Gladys Ochieng's Children's Home. Gladys has already planted several hundred Grevillea and about 35 fruits [banana or mango] on her land, but this is the start of a MADEI member working to radically improve productivity on Gladys's farm. The planting round a field is now complete, so the main task now is to prepare 10 double-dug raised beds to provide a kitchen garden for 50 orphans & vulnerable children [OVCs] in Gladys's care. That work had started during my last visit to Gladys, but I do not have photos yet.

Gladys Mary's Children's Home is several kilometres from the Matayos Demonstration Plot and MADEI – so this is another example of the multiplier effect & extension of farming innovation associated with MADEI. This working on plots outside the original Demonstration Plot is likely to increase in the future.



While extension work is liable to increase improvements are still needed within the DP. Generally there has been sufficient rain in the last few years to secure two harvests, but that rainfall is both seasonal and unreliable in its timing. Thus, MADEI have looked to improve water supply for the plot. By 2018 the DP had the benefit of a shallow well, shared between MADEI and Mohamed's household, and a water tank. In later 2018 this facility was greatly improved for the DP by installation of a pump to lift groundwater 30 metres and into the storage tank. The second phase of this water supply project will be the establishment of a drip irrigation system which will allow 3 harvests per year. As market prices increase significantly during the dry season when MADEI will be able to harvest, this is a very welcome development for MADEI members.



Joshua Wabwire and Mohamed Wandera stand next to the water tank which is supplied by water pumped from the neighbouring well [see above left]. Fred Wako shows some of the yams which are being grown in Lonely Orphans garden [see above right]. This is another new crop, not usually found on most local farms.

The above section of the report is based on the several visits made to the Demonstration Plot in March and also October-November 2018. During this time I have given advice to Joshua Wabwire concerning the importance of reporting progress, and Appendix A and B are largely produced by him. Appendix A was written in August 2018 i.e. after the main rains of April & the harvesting of much of the crops planted in March-April. The major points from this document are the Ksh 34,700/- [about £260] gained from sales, and the request for the water pump – which was installed in October. Appendix B was written in late November. It gives some figures for income from sales [Ksh 6,300/-, about £47] for the previous month. This does not sound a lot but this covers a period when much of the harvest would have been gathered previously, and the main activity was now planting new beds. These two documents imply that the availability of irrigation in the future would enable this plot to produce an annual yield, spread over 2-3 harvests of up to Ksh100,000/- [about £750]. However, it must be remembered that much of this harvest will be used to provide better nutrition for the orphans/vulnerable children [OVCs] under the care of MADEI members & their associated groups.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

As mentioned in SGG's 2017 report, there are several possibilities for the establishment of a new demonstration plot. I suggested last year that the location of a new demonstration plot could be any of the following:

- At one of the other MMO groups in Busia dealing specifically with supplementary feeding & support for OVCs. An unexpected grant last year meant that this has in fact happened with a kitchen garden [rather than a demonstration plot] being established at Gladys Ochieng's home for 50 OVCs;
- A demonstration plot being established in Rusinga. At present this is now the 3rd or 4th option for SGG, because the groups concerned are increasingly seen as family, rather than proper community initiatives;
- my Malawi suggestion has not made much progress over the last 12 months. Although there is a good case for investment in Malawi where people are generally much poorer than in West Kenya, there is strong view within the SGG Board of Trustees that it is better to focus on our present partners rather than look to new partners elsewhere.

During 2018 a new potential partner has come on the scene. As a member of the Rotary Club, I have recently come into contact with two groups of interest to SGG. One is ESRAG, of which I am a member. This group have been very helpful over the last 2 years when rotarians throughout the world have been encouraged to tree-plant. You can read how SGG has been involved in Rotary tree-planting on our website. Of much more relevance here is another Rotary group called Food Plant Solutions. It is worth checking their website at www.foodplantsolutions.org. For the last few years SGG has been thinking about how to encourage our OVC guardian groups in Busia to grow more nutritious crops for their children. The Matayos Demonstration Plot is just one outcome of this thinking. After a recent meeting with their Executive Officer of FPS, Karalyn Hingston, in Tasmania, SGG would like to make the establishment of kitchen gardens among our several partner community groups one of SGG's priorities for the next few years.

The community groups in Busia where we support OVC guardians with table-banking are very similar to the ones where we hope to establish kitchen gardens. Thus, in response to your 1st March 2018 email suggestion I would like to propose that you –

- invest any further donations in the table-banking programme in Busia, so that more community groups can participate. Appendix C and D are examples of table-banking reports from two community groups together supporting about 100 orphans &/or vulnerable children; or
- use additional funds to continue the process of establishing a network of kitchen gardens in Busia.

It would be fairly easy to invest any additional donations on what would be a combination of these two suggestions.

I hope you and your household are all fairing well, and once again I thank you for your generous support of African households who are continually struggling to make ends meet.

Paul Keeley

Sustainable Global Gardens