

**REPORT OF RICHARD & POSY STOCKMAN'S VISIT**  
**(18 FEBRUARY - 10 MARCH 2012)**  
**TO SET UP THE ADULT RURAL EDUCATION CENTRE AT**  
**IMPREZZA ACADEMY, BUSIA, KENYA**

*The aim of the Project is:-*

*To encourage rural people, particularly smallholders/subsistence farmers, to live and farm more sustainably in increasingly challenging climatic conditions, and to help them learn the skills to set up micro-enterprises from which they can earn an income. To achieve this aim, an adult rural training centre and demonstration plot, need to be established.*

*The purpose of the visit was to survey the site, establish infrastructure, interview for the post of Project Leader and network.*

We arrived at the bungalow on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March and were greeted by The Principal, Rose Omanyo and some of the resident students.

The next day we were taken to the school campus where a shelter had been constructed prior to our arrival at our request – we had expected a simple pole and thatch roof, which we had thought could provide shade for our camp whilst there, and for a possible tree nursery in the future. However, it turned out to be a more substantial round hut with mud walls – still under construction! We quickly realised this could eventually become the Centre's office. Almost as soon as we had set up camp with the tent inside, a storm broke overhead and torrential rain deluged through the roof, which was incomplete.

Having spent two hours holding a tarpaulin to protect the camp during the storm, Richard's first priority was to get the roof watertight and on Monday morning he and Rose went in search of more tin sheets to finish off what had been started, in the absence of suitable thatching grass being the end of the dry season. It took a couple of days to trace all available roofing sheets in the area and with the school's labour, the roof was made reasonably good. It will eventually be covered with thatching grass and works are being undertaken to fully render the walls, cement the floor and treat for termites before they totally demolish the building.

We very quickly realised that the demonstration plot would hardly be viable with the existing water supply; a spring some 300 metres away in the valley below, from which water was collected for the school. After some local research we found that there was a community water supply that ran down the service road about 400m distance from the school. Having established the cost would be approximately £1,000 to install the water supply into the school grounds and feeling this resource was essential both for the benefit of the school and the Centre's demonstration plot, we engaged the community water technician, Mr Robert Mukadi, to carry out the works. There were a number of challenges, not least the unforgiving nature of the ground, which in places is bare rock making it

difficult to impossible to bury the supply pipe to the required depth – in those stretches we used galvanised pipes. One of the frustrations was the non-availability of long lengths of good-quality alkathene water pipe – so readily accessible here in the UK. The best available water pipes come in 20' lengths of questionable quality, necessitating numerous joints, with obvious potential problems of leakage. Richard did his best to get the pipe buried to a reasonable depth and we decided to install a standpipe in the school grounds and to take the supply through the garden fence to a second stand pipe and a 6000litre storage tank for the benefit of the demonstration plot, designed to provide gravity-fed water. Until the Centre is properly up and running next year, the school can make use of the water supply from the tank.

At the same time as overseeing the installation of the water supply, we organised the marking out and fencing of the demonstration plot of approximately 11/2 acres, using a local contractor. We did our best to ensure the metal straining posts at the corners were adequately constructed and despite our best efforts they still managed to overstrain one length such that it pulled the entire metal post and concrete out of the ground - despite Richard's warnings! The posts are of cedar, which are said to be termite resistant (a vital quality in that area), and are buried in termite-treated concrete. The purpose of the fence is to keep out trespassers, free-ranging cattle and goats and the intention is to plant an impenetrable hedge against the fence. The ground in the plot is in places very challenging - being bare rock - but the hope and belief is that if it can be shown to be productive using Conservation Agriculture principles on difficult ground, it will be all the more effective as a demonstration plot. To achieve this, time and patience will be needed.

Another of our missions was to recruit someone to manage the Project, who had the necessary intellect, training and work ethic. We knew a young man, Tony Kanundu, whom we thought might be suitable and is currently studying for a degree in forestry at Moi University, Eldoret. Tony has been working for a small NGO based at the coast, where he was teaching environmental conservation and the basics of Conservation Agriculture in schools and the local community. He came to see us at the school over a weekend for a 24hour job interview - which he survived! He cannot start full-time until June 2013 but we feel he is worth waiting for. In the meantime, he will make a start on preparing the plot as and when he has the time this year, and will continue the process that we started, of networking with contacts in the world of Conservation Agriculture, which we identified were worth pursuing through our research and recent travels in Kenya. He will undergo a period of practical teacher-training in Conservation Agriculture, which we have organised for his long vacation in July with contacts we made, who are currently doing farmer field-training in CA in the Laikipia district with smallholders. It was clear to us that to undertake his duties more effectively, Tony will need a motorbike, which can be purchased second-hand. (See attached Job Description) There is a Norwegian NGO (NORAD), which has been running a pilot scheme introducing CA in Kenya for the past two years, that will now expanding the project throughout the country. We met with the Director who is co-ordinating the effort and he was keen to share knowledge from their experience and was encouraging in what we are hoping to achieve.

Other contacts made included Laurie Sessions, a large commercial wheat farmer in the Laikipia district, who is prospering from the consistently better yields produced through using CA principles. He is also committed to helping smallholders in his area to adopt these same principles and will be a very useful contact for this Project.

On two occasions we arranged meetings with Ignatius Wang'ombe, the Kenyan representative of the Eden Project's Gardens For Life project. He came to the school for a site meeting at our request and met Tony and Rose Omanyo, the school Principal and ourselves, to discuss how best the school could become involved with this programme. The Gardens For Life concept is a basic one of encouraging schools in Kenya and India to grow their own food and linking them with schools in the UK, which may not have the same food security needs, but the intention is that mutual benefit will flow from contact and communication with overseas schools. Ignatius was impressed with what he saw and keen that Imprezza Academy should become a lead school in Western Provenance, tasked with identifying a cluster of other suitable schools in the local area that wish to join the programme. It was good that he could meet Tony, who will be closely involved with implementing this scheme. The advantages of becoming involved with GFL are that the school will be associated with the Eden Project, a well-respected name, particularly in the UK, and in the initial stages of setting up the Adult Training Centre, will provide an enlarged group of school parents in the wider community, who may become future trainees.



The Centre's office/our hotel! – still under construction



The school buildings – still under construction



Tony's 24 hour interview



Water storage tank connected and fence completed