



PROCEEDINGS REPORT

**Report on a Tree Growing Initiative at Olkiramatian Primary
School, Kajiado County, Kenya.**

18th January 2020

Compiled by Manasiti Omar

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Acknowledgements

This report presents a comprehensive account of the tree growing initiative by Springs of the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (SASAL), an NGO that seeks to tackle climate change through building resilience in the arid and semi lands of Kenya's well as leaving a better earth for posterity.

This particular tree planting exercise was funded through personal contributions, and donations of various individuals and contributions. Our goals revolved around educating young minds on the importance of trees' in promoting environment transformation, while also taking an active role to plant actual trees, and promote responsibility to nurture them to maturity.

All this would not have been possible were it not for the coming together of various stakeholders. First and foremost, is to thank God, through which all plans are made possible. It is because of Him that we succeed, and more so with this noble tree growing initiative that we have begun as SASAL.

Our gratitude also pours out to Magadi Soda Foundation for not only helping in facilitating the activity but participating wholesomely too and to Tata Chemicals Magadi Limited for providing the seedlings used.

The tree planting exercise could not have been possible too were it not for the school administration and community of Olkiramatian Primary School, (an arid area) in Magadi, Kajiado County, Kenya. For the land you donated, the time you took to join us in the endeavour, and the promise to tend to the tree's until they can survive on their own, receive our many thanks.

We also thank the Kenya Meteorological Department, with a very special mention to MBS Stella Aura, the department's director. Your input towards concept preparation was invaluable in more ways than one. Our thanks also to Mr Rotich, The Kajiado County Meteorological Director, for the weekly weather reports. Its thanks to you our timing could not have been more perfect, for we received work that the rains began immediately after the tree planting session. Thanks to you we can boast of a 100% success rate as all the seedlings planted have taken root and are in perfect shape.

Thanks to you all, our shared vision of building climate resilience within Olkiramatian took a significant step forward.

Indeed,

Our Climate is Our Responsibility.

Manasiti Omar

CEO, SASAL

1.0: Tree Planting Objectives and Methodology

1.1: The Objectives

Forest ecosystems are important in supporting ecological integrity and provide a wide range of services. In the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), particularly, dry land forests are critical to human existence and especially towards drought resilience in the ASALs. Moreover, they play an important role of Climate change mitigation and adaptation (RoK, 2019)

The objectives of the exercise as set out before we kick started the event included:

- i. Partner with a school within an arid or semi-arid area to teach the importance of environment conservation and restoration.
- ii. Work with the young population within the community to plant trees, and further adopt them, to nurture them to maturity.
- iii. Create awareness on the Ministry Of Environment campaign of “towards 10% tree cover by 2022”, the vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, set by the United Nations, particularly those that deal with the environment within the community identified and beyond.

1.2: Tree Planting Methodology

The tree planning exercise was scheduled to take place over one day. Together with the school administration, 50 students of the boarding school section of Olkiramatian Primary School, and the SASAL members, we had a team of 60 individuals ready to get dirty for the environment. Each of these participants planted five tree seedlings on a pre-identified section of the school, before each of the 50 students undertook to adopt and nurture 6 trees each, to full growth.

Accordingly, each of the 50 students took an active role in conserving their immediate environment by committing to take care of a few trees, the journey towards soil restoration, heat reduction, and restoration of the microclimate was made possible.

The event had been dubbed #sasaltreegrowinginitiative and considerable efforts had been made to push the day's activities on various social media platforms including Instagram and Twitter using the above hashtag. While we remain proud of the results we achieved, a lot still remains to be done, to build on the results achieved and attain greater scalability.

2.0 Flow of Activities

2.1: Sourcing and Availing of the Trees

Having identified a school to partner with in Olkiramatian Primary School, all that was left was to transport the 300 seedlings sourced from TATA Chemicals, Magadi, to the school. Transportation for the same was provided by volunteer, by use of his Landcruiser, and he was pleasantly welcomed by all of the day's participants, including

the SASAL team, a representative from the Magadi Soda Foundation, the school administration and school children.

2.2: Arrivals

Following arrival and signing of the visitors' book by both the SASAL team and the Magadi Soda Foundation representative, all participants, (guests and students) were assembled for a brief devotion, before the day's MC, Mr Samuel Munyere took over the day's program.

A brief welcoming speech was delivered by the headteacher with a few other teachers making their remarks, before the SASAL and Magadi Soda Foundation members were introduced by Ms Umulkheir Salah, SASAL's board of directors' chairperson.

2.3: Talk on Importance of Trees and The UN Sustainable Development Goals

Following her introduction, Ms Manasiti Omar, the CEO and Founder of SASAL talked in brief on among other things, the following:

- The importance of Trees
- The vision 2030The UN Sustainable Development Goals
- The Kenyan Government's target for #10%TreeCover by 2022.

The students were receptive of the information being shared, especially on the importance of trees towards having a sustainable environment. However, the children knew little to nothing at all on the SDG's and the #10%TreeCover by 2020, yet both contained objectives and targets that would primarily benefit their age sets if achieved, or have them suffer immense harm, if the said objectives were not met.

(speeches can be found at www.sasal.org)

2.4: Tree Planting

Tree planting commenced with a brief demonstration of proper tree planting and watering by the School's headteacher, assisted by Ms Manasiti Omar. Once this was done, the students proceeded to plant their 5 trees each under the careful supervision from members of the school administration and SASAL with commendations going all round for a job well done. The MC also ensured the day's events were full of pomp and colour with the provision of cool music throughout the endeavour.

2.5: Refreshments after a Job Well Done.

After all, 300 trees had been planted, watered and adopted, the entire, 60-member team proceeded to have some refreshments jointly, and this provided an opportunity to interact more and answer various questions posed by a number of students.

3.0: Lessons learnt

A lot of sensitization needs to take place around SDG's and Government's conservation efforts.

There remains a lot of goodwill from different stakeholders towards concertation efforts as seen from;

- i. The readily donated land
- ii. Volunteering to transport the seedlings
- iii. Donations
- iv. Adoption of trees by the students.

Communities living in Arid and Semi-Arid areas of Kenya know the importance of planting trees and all that's needed is much more mobilization of resources to enable these communities' plant and care for tree seedlings.

The success witnessed at Olkiramatian Primary School, needs to be amplified, and extended to other semi-arid communities and the public primary and secondary school model provides a suitable model through which the above tree planting venture can be scaled further up.

4.0: Challenges

While, the successes of the tree planting initiative are evident, and the lessons profound, various challenges still stand in the way of building upon our efforts as SASAL. The biggest of these challenges are:

4.1: Financial constraints

4.2: Few Volunteers

4.3: Minimal Staff

While these challenges throw a big cloud of uncertainty over the continuity of our efforts to grow and scale conservation efforts across Kenya, we are no less, motivated by the immense and urgent need, fulfilled by our vision to protect the environment, and counter the effects of global warming and climate change. Failure is not an option, and so we must succeed; for both the current generation and the next.

5.0: Recommendations for future projects.

Over the course of the tree planting exercise, we did uncover various gaps that need addressing over time. These gaps form the basis of future project and scaling initiatives we hope to implement, in the days to come.

5.1: Facilitate Formation of Climate Action Clubs within the Kenyan School System

With our tree planting exercise at Olkiramatian Primary School, we noted that little to no information was available on climate change, the resulting effects, and actions taken against the pandemic. This unavailability made efforts to counter climate change consequences i.e. droughts, famine and floods, (All of which the Olkiramatian community face regularly) a significant challenge. To counter this, we helped form the first Climate Action Club at the school. With this vehicle, we can drive the climate change agenda, around the community, even as members of the club, learn more on the same, care for the adopted trees, and grow to see the benefits that will accrue once the trees mature. This club will also act to enlighten the member students and community at large, among other things, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Government plans i.e. Vision 2030, and the #10%TreeCoverby2022.

5.2: Expand the SASAL Tree Nurseries Program

SASAL has a tree nursery program with over 300 tree seedlings being fostered in anticipation for the next tree planting initiative. However, we are intent on growing this program to readily produce 1000 seedlings repeatedly and on a monthly basis to enable us grow our tree planting efforts to many more schools and nearby communities within Olkiramatian, Kajiado County. These efforts we believe are necessary for greater and

faster scalability of our tree planting exercise, with over 12,000 trees planted within the next 12 months alone.

In setting up the nursery, we also took into account that one seedling costs an average of KES 100, (US \$1.00). A majority of the communities we serve are among the most vulnerable in Kenya, living on less than a dollar per day, we would rather not have them make the choice between a seedling and their livelihood. To this end, we shall endeavour to provide these seedlings for as long, and as best as we can.

6.0: Concluding Remarks

We are very encouraged by the work started at Olkiramatian and look to the future with hope that it shall bear the intended fruits. As SASAL, we are also motivated to multiply our efforts with time, to have even more trees grown with an aim to grow even more trees, and have local communities take charge and care for their environment, to bring up springs for posterity.



SASAL: *Our Climate, Our Responsibility*

Connect with Us



Pictorial



We Assembled
after arrivals of course 😊



Before a Few Addresses Commenced



And then, The Demonstrations



And then some . . . 😊

Before the Students Transformed to become The Teachers



Ooh this one was not joking,



And Neither were These Angels



But Climate Change is No Joke Either



SASAL: *Our Climate, Our Responsibility*