

Project Update: May 2019

Since the receipt of the funds, a number of activities have taken place. Some of the activities were outlined in the previous progress report. Outlined below are activities which have taken place after the last progress report.

- 1) Participation in the UNEP Environmental Assembly 4th Session.
- 2) Participation in International Day of the Forest.
- 3) Production of calendars for distribution to project schools and others.
- 4) Establishment of 12 Environmental Clubs in Mathira West.
- 5) Participation in UNEP Breakfast Meeting on implementation of Greening Kenya.
- 6) Training of Environmental Club patrons, community leaders and youth leaders on environmental conservation.
- 7) Key milestone.
- 8) Conclusion.

1) Participation in the UNEP Environmental Assembly 4th Session

Karatina University was privileged to be invited to participate in the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) held in the UNEP Headquarters at Gigiri, Nairobi from 11th to 15th March, 2019. The United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level environmental forum that was attended by heads of states, environment ministers around the globe, CEOs of multinational companies, NGOs, environmental activists, faith based organisations and scholars to discuss and make global commitments to environmental protection and sustainability. The invitation was engineered by the Rufford supported project on establishment of environmental clubs in primary schools and a botanical garden at the university. The team from the university was led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (ARSA), Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho who is also the Rufford Project Coordinator. As mentioned earlier, Karatina University has branded itself as the green university largely due to the Rufford Foundation project.

The United Nations Member States delivered a blueprint for change, saying the world must hasten towards a new model of development in order to respect the vision laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. The assembly rested under the themes of innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production aiming to inspire nations, companies and individuals to take a critical look at how they produce and consume. A Twitter hash tag *#Solve Different* and *Think Beyond* drove online participants globally to the forum.

On 14th March 2019, the French President Emmanuel Macron was hosted by President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya in the high level One Planet Summit and he affirmed on the world leadership commitment to tackle laws and rules that are binding and adopted internationally to safeguard and protect the environment for posterity. He concluded: *'Our biosphere faces total devastation'*. Karatina University team was once more privileged to be invited to attend the high profile discussions.

Some Pictorials during UNEA



Courtesy Photo with the Director General, NEMA Prof. Geoffrey Wahungu (Centre) at the University booth during UNEA



Deputy Vice Chancellor (ARSA) Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho explaining a point on Rufford Foundation project and Karatina University green concept to Hon. Najib Balala, Cabinet Secretary Tourism at the UNEA conference

In conclusion, Karatina University has a strong focus to mirror on environmental sustainability. This is a follow up of the recent branding of the university as a green university. By being the only university invited to participate in the high level conference, Karatina University has made a mark in the global dialogue especially on

environmental sustainability especially the through the Rufford Foundation project activities.

2) Participation in International Day of Forests

The Rufford Foundation project team participated in the above celebrations on 21st March 2019. The team led by Dr. Mugo Mware explained to the crowd the activities of the project in Nyeri County. The County Minister for Environment Mr. Fredrick Kinyau lauded Karatina University for the environmental activities the university is undertaking especially establishment of environmental clubs in primary schools in Nyeri County. He appreciated the collaboration between the university and the County Government.

3) Production of Calendars for distribution to project schools and others

As part of publicity for the project, 500 calendars were produced for distribution to project schools and other schools. The calendars have been distributed widely in Nyeri County primary and secondary schools. Most government offices within Nyeri County received the calendars. A few calendars were distributed to schools in other counties. A sample of the calendar is attached as a separate PDF document.

4) Establishment of 12 Environmental Clubs in Mathira West

On 28th March, 2019 Ngorano Primary school hosted Karatina University and Nyeri County during the Mathira west Sub-County launch of environmental clubs. The CEC, Environment Mr. Fredrick Kinyua graced the occasion and also the Sub County Director for Education Mr. Mwetii and his team from the education office. The team from Karatina University comprised Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho (DVC-ARSA), Dr. Josphat Kagema, Coordinator, Community Outreach, Ms. Joan Wakasa, HoD Computer Science and Informatics and Mr. Wilson Lochomoi, the Marketing Officer. During the launch of the Environmental Clubs, 12 primary schools attended, it was an opportunity to emphasise that Karatina University has branded itself as a green university and has a botanical garden for environmental awareness creation. Pupils were asked to share the information with their parents and relatives and extend invitation to them to visit the university. The teachers and other stakeholders present and club patrons were requested to visit the university to be trained on environmental conservation and management. The patrons of environmental clubs were each given the Rufford Foundation project calendars with university environmental conservation activities.

5) Participation in UNEP Breakfast Meeting on implementation of Greening Kenya

After the exhibition during the UNEA conference at the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Karatina University through the Rufford Foundation project team was once again invited to UNEP breakfast meeting on 11th April, 2019. The meeting was to launch the Greening Kenya Project which was initiated by the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta. The launch was presided over by the Cabinet Secretary of Interior Security, Dr. Fred Matiangi I and his counterpart for Environment, Mr. Keriako Tobiko. During the meeting, we shared our experience of working with primary schools and the Chief guest, Dr. Matiangi appreciated the efforts of Karatina University towards greening Kenya.

6) Training of Environmental Club Patrons, Community Leaders and Youth Leaders on Environmental Conservation

On 21st May 2019, The Rufford Foundation project team trained environmental club patrons, community leaders and youth leaders. A total of 20 people made of 15 patrons, three community leaders and two youth leaders were trained on environmental conservation and management. Participants were taken through topics including seedbed preparation, tree nursery management and a review of the project, among others. At the end of the training, participants were taken through practical sessions in the botanical garden. They appreciated the University for equipping them with such skills. Some of the pictorials for the training are given below.



Group photo of the training of Patrons, Community and Youth Leaders (Seated in the middle is the DVC-ARSA and Project Coordinator, Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho).



Prof. P. Aloo-Obudho, the Rufford Project Coordinator speaking during the training



Dr. Mugo Mware, Project team member speaking during the training

7) Key Milestones in the Project

During this project, the following are some of the milestones that have been achieved:

- ❖ Establishment of 61 environmental clubs.
- ❖ Establishment of a botanical garden at Karatina University.
- ❖ Collaboration with UNEP.
- ❖ Invitation of project team to high power environmental meetings/conferences.
- ❖ Partnership with NEMA, KFS, Community and the County Government of Nyeri.
- ❖ Appointment of the project coordinator in to NEMA board membership.
- ❖ Branding of Karatina University as a green university.
- ❖ Recognition of the university as an environmental conservation institution.
- ❖ Publicity of Rufford Foundation.
- ❖ Publicity of Karatina University.
- ❖ Promotion of environmental conservation in Nyeri County.

8) Conclusion

On behalf of my team and the university, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Rufford Foundation Trustees for supporting this project which has now opened many doors of collaboration including with UNEP. The project has enhanced the image of Karatina University as a green university and has given us enormous publicity. The County Government of Nyeri and the National Government have recognised the University as an environmental conservation champion through the project. The project has also created awareness about Rufford Foundation and its activities. The calendars with Rufford logo have been circulated far and wide in Kenya.

I wish to appeal to the Trustees to re-consider their original decision allow us to apply for the enhancement funds. We wish to extend the project to four other counties and create environmental conservation soldiers among the youths and women groups in each county for sustainability of the project. We will train them to grow their own seedlings to sell hence create a source of income to the groups but advance our objective of promoting Environmental conservation in Kenya. This is very much in line with the initiative of the President of Kenya on "Greening Kenya".