

Engineering/IT/Environmental Sub Group

Summary Report of the visit to Mbale, June 2008

Sub Group members on the visit:

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1. Mooni Water Project (HS)

The project is to improve an existing scheme at Mooni. The proposal is to discontinue the current single water source, which does not provide safe water quality, divide the system into two sections and supply these with 3 new safe water sources.

Funds have been raised for the project via Pontypridd Rotary, and these are being channelled via international Rotary to Mbale Rotary in order to benefit from matched funding grants. The projected costs are circa £21K, and Pontypridd Rotary have advised that this amount is available.

During the visit a meeting was held with Mbale Rotary, Jenga (the NGO that will implement the project) and the Mbale District Water Officer. The meeting was happy to proceed with the project, and the Rotary furnished HS with certain information required for the grant form. Further details of the Rotary Water Project supervisory committee would be forwarded to HS by email.

The District Water Officer agreed to furnish PONT with the official water coverage statistics in order to aid PONT in identifying future projects.

2. Mechanical Machine Shop IGA Project (HS)

This project is to set up a mechanical machine shop IGA (Income Generating Activity). This will utilise redundant machines provided and shipped by Cogent Power Ltd (part of Corus). The business will be owned by PONT-Mbale and will provide vocational training as well as operate as a business. Profits will augment the funds available to PONT-Mbale for poverty alleviation projects.

The container had arrived a couple of weeks prior to the visit. Early on during the visit the container was officially opened by HS and LC3 chairman. The Bunghoko sub county LC3 council chairman, the Mbale county LC5 CAO (Chief Administrative Officer) spoke about the project to the assembled crowds and press with considerable enthusiasm being expressed by all.

A building has been provided by the LC3 council, rent free for an initial 2 years, subject to review. This building is located in Bunghoko on the main Mbale Tororo road. It had been an agricultural workshop a couple of decades ago, but had fallen into disuse and had been stripped of many of its assets. However, certain items remained, and amazingly these were exactly the items needed that had not been able to be shipped over in the container.

The building comprises a main workshop area 16x13m with large double external doors opening to 3.7m. There is an additional storage area, and office accommodation. There are significant external covered areas and also a concrete ramp to aid in the loading of lorries.

Unfortunately there were 'squatters' in residence. The council has found alternative accommodation for them, and it is hoped that they will be moved there very shortly. In the meantime the main part of the workshop was sealed off from the rest of the building so that work could commence on moving the machines in.

3. **Mbale General Hospital - IT (HS)**

A lack of time prevented much progress at the hospital. However a visit was made and a meeting held with the IT manager. He agreed to provide a drawing showing where there is existing network cabling installed, existing IT equipment, where additional facilities would be desirable. This would be used by PONT to help to plan the way forward, and in particular how to best utilise the PCs that had been shipped in the workshop container.

4. **Environmental/Sustainability**

Roads (MQ)

Time was spent with Apollo2, Steven Sikuku (Elgon Labour-based Training College (ELTC)), and Bob Arnold (CMS, Bungokho).

The vast majority of the roads are of murrum and are in a very poor state of repair. Repairs can start to degrade within months of completion, depending on the time of year. The materials for murrum are generally obtained at the roadside, but resources are becoming harder to obtain, resulting in the additional expense of transport and land purchase.

Discussions on alternative, more durable road surfaces took place. This would be in the interests of development of markets for agricultural produce, access to education, healthcare, etc. However, any alternative would have a cost implication. It was agreed that solutions would be sought which involve (insofar as possible):

- Local materials
- Local techniques
- Local workforce

The two candidates which emerged were

- Stone setts (cobble)
- Clay bricks

In both cases, there was considered to be much scope for collaborative work between UoG, Mbale District Authority and the Elgon Labour-based Training College, and potentially other partners.

Solar Power(HT)

The first installation had been viewed which was smaller, and more expensive than originally expected. This was due to the withdrawal of a subsidised government solar power installation office in Mbale. Installation had had to be arranged via Kampala. Discussions started on possibly funding UWCM to be trained in solar power systems installation. With this in place only parts and in house labour costs would need to be covered to install systems.

Weather recording(HT)

The pilot scheme at Arthur's school was proving very useful. HT reviewed the data so far, and discovered an anomaly. On a day when torrential rain was reported in the comments, only 3mm of rainfall was recorded from the rain gauge. Enquiries revealed that the school was so proud of their rain gauge that they wanted to protect it from theft. Thus the teacher took it into his home each night for security (!). HT persuaded them to put alternative security measures in place. This demonstrated the benefit of the pilot and was a useful learning exercise for all involved.

Environmental (general)

A very effective meeting had taken place with the person in the Mbale LC5 council responsible for the environment. A PONT/CAP sub committee was set up to oversee the work, and the carbon offsetting in particular. The first meeting of this was held during the week of the visit.

Vegetable Oil Stove

This cooking stove ran on vegetable oil. It was well received at demonstrations, and potential sources of fuel had been identified. As it was CKT/UoG design it could be optimised to suit the fuels available in the area.