

Appendix K

THE KISUMU
Children's
meeting
place



A report on the

Second
Preparatory Roots
Meeting

Entebbe, Uganda. 1st – 4th December 2003

**And the Inauguration of
"The Children's
Meeting Place"**

**Jamhuri Park- Kisumu, Kenya.
*8th – 9th December 2003***

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Environment Department Background information

A great many noble decisions have been made the world over affecting the welfare of our children, whether di-rectly or otherwise, without consulting them. This happens everyday at all levels from the home to the



international levels. Some of these decisions fail to represent children's aspirations in life since they have been relegated to spec-tators, rather than participants in their own fight for better living conditions. More and more children are silently suffering from some of the poor decisions we make on their behalf. It is therefore necessary provide an enabling

environment for children from all walks of life to come together and share their life experience, so that some of their problems can come out and be heard at decision-making level. This can be achieved by having a centralised children's meeting place. The children's meeting place provides an environment different from the class as well as from their homes. It is on this premise that the United Nation sanctioned Globetree, an

international NGO, to run the children's meeting place at the UNEP headquarters in Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya.

The Children's meeting place was inaugurated from 19th to 20th September 2001. Adopting an Acacia (*Acacia xanthopholea*) tree as the children's meeting place, 250 children from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Finland and Sweden all shared a strong determination to unite over boundaries and celebrate life and light. Through speech, dance, song, poem and drama, the children were able to share their visions, ideas, hopes, dreams and concerns for a common future.

To inspire the growth of the Children's meeting place, and further prepare the children for the Roots meeting 2004 a first roots preparatory meeting was held in Nairobi, while the second preparatory roots meeting was latter set for Entebbe Uganda.

A Mayor's meeting was then held in Nairobi between the 6th and 8th April 2003. An important resolve of the meeting was

Globetree has worn many honours and awards. It won the UNEP global 500 Honours for Environmental Achievement Category Youth, for outstanding achievements in the protection and improvement of the environment. It also has a consultative status with UN-ECOSOC and was appointed as a NGO of the UN-DPI.

that each participating Local Authority will identify a Children's meeting place and dedicate the same to the children of the city. Following the first roots meeting and the ensuing mayors' meeting, His worship the mayor of Kisumu Councillor Otieno Karan Sanctioned the Environment department to identify an appropriate location for the Kisumu Children's meeting place. Jamhuri Park, one of the serene parks in the city was identified as a suitable location. The president and Chief Executive officer of Globetree, madam **Kajsa Dahlstrom** came down to confirm the participation of Kisumu in the second preparatory roots meeting and to visit the proposed meeting place. Kisumu was specially allocated five slots to the meeting in Entebbe.

Second Preparatory Roots Meeting

The composition of the team was two children {a girl and a boy} and three adults. The children were drawn from Kisumu Girls and St. Paul's Kanyakwar primary schools, both being under the environment department's school's programme, while the rest were a councillor, a representative of Youth and

Children Department and a representative of the Environment department. The five were: -

1. **Winnie Adhiambo**, *Secretary, Environment Club Kisumu Girls*
2. **Axcell Gadaffi**, *Chairman Environment Club, St. Paul's Kanyakwar primary school*
3. **Councillor Peter Karogo**, *Chairman Audit committee*
4. **Silas Odhiambo**, *Director, Youth and Children Department*
5. **Bernard Obera**, *Ag. Deputy Director, Environment Department*

The meeting brought together experts, mayors, laymen and children from the various cities in Sweden, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya and was graced by the presence of four Ugandan mayors. The meeting was a quest for the unknown for the betterment of children's welfare. Representatives from The Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden {Professor Gunnel and Jacky Foo}, LVRLAC {Dr. Ayoo}, Nature Resource Centre {Anders Sundval}, teachers, children and actors made their presentations on what they had been doing.

There was presentation of the reflections from the children's tree in Nairobi, its implications on life and how this can improve the life of many.

Presentations on the Swedish as well as the African roots and cultures with regards to children, were made and the possible areas of integration and development highlighted.

The team of seven youths representing seven cities on the lake Victoria region also shared their experience on the Swedish trip last year, and what they had done since they came back. Kisumu however was not able to share its experience because the youth representative {Boyd Oyier} relocated to Nairobi. As a result Winnie Odhiambo was nominated to take over as the youth representative to the lake Victoria Children and Youth network.

Experiences from other parts of the world e.g. Brazil, Uganda, Tanzania and Baltic cities were also shared.

General and focussed group discussions followed the presentations for the way forward.

Agreements

The meeting agreed on the need to establish children's meeting places in all the cities. The meeting agreed that there was no formula for the children's meeting places as they were supposed to be as unique as the children in the different areas.

There was to be a tri-cities programme with seven cities from the lake Victoria Region, seven from Sweden and seven from

the Union of the Baltic Cities. Uganda started off with an advantage in that it already had four of its cities {Mukono, Busia, Entebbe and Kampala} leaving out the other three slots for Kenya and Tanzania. There was a proposal for Homa bay to be the seventh representative.

The meeting agreed on the need for the establishment of the lake Victoria Children and Youth Network, headquartered at Entebbe, which will be linked with the UBC children, and youth network. The Lake Victoria Region Youth and Children network was to operate through LVRLAC. Winnie Odhiambo was nominated the Kenyan representative

The meeting agreed on the need to come up with projects that the different cities could do in the next three years for possible assistance. {See annexes for the list of proposed projects for Kisumu and Homa bay}.

The last day of the meeting was graced by the four mayors of Uganda and the presence of the first secretary of the Swedish embassy in Entebbe, who assured the meeting of the Swedish government's commitment to the development of lake Victoria region.

Presents from the Mayor of Haninge, Pelle Svensson, for the mayor of Kisumu, Cllr. Clarkson Otieno Karan, and a flag for

the Kisumu children's meeting place were handed over to the Kenyan team.

Inauguration of "The Children's Meeting Place"

Having finalised the Entebbe meeting, the Kenyan team rushed back to prepare for the inauguration of the children's meeting in Kisumu, while the Swedish team left for the inauguration of the Tanzanian children's meeting place in Mwanza.

The inauguration of the Kisumu children's meeting place was a two-day event. On the first day, 8th December, was a formal day with the welcoming of the visitors at town hall. The Swedish team was accompanied with the mayor of Busia, Uganda who travelled with them from Mwanza. This was a day for speeches and presentations from the children. In the evening was a bonfire under the children's tree at the children's meeting place where games songs and dances were held at the fireside. This was followed by dinner at Blue sand s hotel, for the visitors.

The inauguration was the main day, 9th December 03. Mayor s from Mukono, Busia Uganda, Deputy mayor and councillors of Homa bay and Kisumu, and the deputy town clerk representing the councils, were in attendance. Children, teachers and stakeholders in the children's rights and development were in attendance.

The day started with a band performance and guard of honour hosted by the St. Paul's Kanyakwar church children band. The president of Globetree madam Kajsa, accompanied by the mayors of Mukono, who joined us that day, the mayor Busia, D/m of Homa bay and Cllr Karogo, on behalf of the mayor of Kisumu, inspected the guard of honour.

This followed a play by the children, dubbed kalongo longo, to portray what their daily life at home looks like from sunrise to sunset. Several other plays, poems, songs and dances were also used to convey various messages from the suffering of children to the rot in the society.

The peak of the inauguration day was the unification of waters and soils from the various represented areas, under the children's tree. All gathered around the tree for this ceremony guided by the Globetree president.

A sampling of the prepared Luo dishes crowned the day. This was important in that it gave the ceremony the cultural roots

making this meeting place unique, which is so necessary for the for integration of culture in our children's development.

The ceremony came to an end after the dishes. The afternoon session was spent visiting St. Paul's Kanyakwar and Okok secondary schools.

Lessons learnt

The two events were an eye opener to many of us having shared with the other participants from the other areas. A few lessons were learnt in the process.

1. The heavy presence of the Mayors from different cities, Swedish team, their embassy, professionals and UNEP in the two events was an indication of the international goodwill in children's participation in our society.
2. Children, having no barriers, are more dynamic and effective at communication than adults hence can be a catalyst for change today for a better tomorrow.
3. There is a need for a place where children can freely meet, raise issues, discuss and present their views to decision makers. It is their right to be heard.
4. For the integration of cultures in the development of society, networks must be strengthened.

Way forward

Children have always been referred to as the leaders of the future. However, very little has ever been done to give them a chance to acquire and practice leadership skills in preparation of their future roles. It is high time we took a near radical step towards the empowerment of children by placing important decisions affecting their lives in their hands.

For the betterment of the lives of our children, it is imperative that certain steps and measures be taken in line with the international goodwill on the rights of children. We need to not only show our commitment to the fulfillment of these objectives but also be seen to be doing so by committing our resources {time, capital and Human} and political support towards this. We can only do so if we think of each and every child as our own

A step in this direction will be by: -

1. Set up a children's committee to oversee the affairs of the children within the town. The committee comprising of the schools/homes, the council and NGOs should be steered by the Director of the Department of Children and Youth, with the Education and Environment departments providing the support.

2. This committee should prepare the programme for the children in the town and for the Roots meeting in April-UNEP headquarters, Nairobi.
3. Approve Jamhuri Park as the children's meeting place and involve the children in the improvement of the park.
4. Popularize the meeting place to the children. This can be achieved by having regular activities e.g. Plays, drama, competitions among others in the park, as the children may deem necessary.
5. We need to support the children's representative to the Lake Victoria children and youth network in her bid to form and maintain local, regional and international networks.

Annex I

List of Proposals from Kenya (Kisumu and Homa Bay)

Nr.	Name / Organization	❖ Scope & Activities	❖ Requirements	❖ Outputs
KY - K0 1	Mr. Peter Karogo Kisumu City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Right of the Child ❖ Music, dance and drama ❖ Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Internet access ❖ Computer ❖ Digital camera ❖ Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Awareness ❖ Dance, music, drama troupes
KY - K0 2	Ms. Winnie Adhiambo LVCYnet-Kisumu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Networking ❖ LVCYnet-Kisumu ❖ Friendship and pen pals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Access to Internet ❖ Support for network activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ LVCYnet-Kisumu
KY - K0 3	Mr. Silas Odhiambo Kisumu City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Curriculum therapy for early childhood development ❖ International Cultural Galas in Stockholm (2006) ❖ Display of artifacts and handicrafts ❖ Exchange of gifts ❖ Fund raising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Travel funds ❖ Rehearsals and materials for shows ❖ Coordination with other groups for exhibition of products ❖ Funding for activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Children fund ❖ Scholarships to secondary school
KY - K0 4	Mayor Kisumu City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ International Sailing Ship exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 2 boat that will sail in the Lake Victoria and in Baltic Sea with children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Cultural and educational integration

KY - K0 5	Mr. Bernard Obera Kisumu City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ establishment of schools Environment Network ❖ local, regional and International Student exchange (school linkages) ❖ Joint high value tree planting activities ❖ “Keep City Clean” campaign using schools ❖ Sports, dances, drama and eco-tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Travel funds ❖ Computer ❖ Funding for activities ❖ Support for network activities ❖ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Cultural and educational exchange ❖ Clean city ❖ Environmental network
KY -06	Mr. Francis Omondi Ogango Lake Victoria Sunset Birder c/o WCK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bird watching excursions ❖ Awareness of birds in the Lake Victoria ❖ Putting up bird-feeding tables in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Materials for construction of bird-feeding tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Awareness of types of birds, their feedings habits and their role in the Lake ecosystem
KY -07	Mr. Axcell Gaddafi St Pauls Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Food and animal garden ❖ Fish pond ❖ Composting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Plant nursery and tree planting ❖ Small animals ❖ Garden tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Greening of school ❖ Income generation
Homa Bay		❖	❖	❖
KY - H0 1	(to be identified- 2004) LVCYnet-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Networking ❖ LVCYnet-Homa Bay ❖ Activities at the CMP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Access to Internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ LVCYnet-Homa Bay ❖ Awareness of socio-cultural values
KY - H0 2	(to be identified- 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Food and animal garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Plant nursery ❖ Small animals ❖ Garden tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Greening of school ❖ Income generation