



Schools in dry regions planting trees to change their environment

BY A CORRESPONDENT

In the sun-scorched and dusty plains of the arid a Kitui, Machakos and Mbeere South constituency in Embu County, narratives are changing. Primary and secondary school children who were accustomed to the scorching sun, dry and dusty land and abrupt wind gushes, are now enjoying the benefits that come with planting trees. The once open and bare lands are now green with trees. "When our 105 *Melia volkensii* trees (locally known as Mukau) mature, our environment will no longer be hot, dusty and windy," says 13-year-old Joyce Nduku Mutunga, a pupil at Muthwani Primary School, Kitui County. Nduku has the tallest tree in her Green Club.

Tree planting in these ASAL regions is the second phase of school's Green Initiative Challenge (GIC), initiated by Bamburi Cement, KenGen foundation and Better Globe Forestry. It is aimed at improving the environment in ASAL regions, as well as contributing to increased forest cover.

Through our school's Green Club, we are taught about trees and their effect on our environment. The GIC initiative will change the environment in our school, because we will have cleaner air, and these trees will provide us with a better learning

environment. They will also act as wind breakers, because our area experiences a lot of wind which carries dust when it blows," says Nduku.

Nduku has planted three Mukau trees as well as Moringa and Aloe vera "which give us medicine, at home". She nurtures her tree by watering them twice a week, applies manure on them the reason she has the tallest and healthiest trees. Nduku also helps her fellow pupils nurture their own.

"Even when we close school for the December holidays, I will be coming to school to water and nurture my tree," says Nduku.

The GIC phase two has a total of 120 participating schools, 40 in each of the participating ASAL regions of Kitui, Machakos and Embu. Each participating school received 300 multipurpose tree seedlings of *Terminalia brownii* or *Senna siamea* and *Melia volkensii*. *Senna siamea* is a fast growing tree that is good for timber, while *Terminalia brownii* is good for firewood, charcoal and timber as well.

Pupils and students in these ASAL regions are happy with the project, they say.

William Kinyamasyo Muisyo, a Form Four student at Katalani Mixed Secondary School in Kitui County took trips to his school in August holiday to take care of the trees. "My interest in tree growing was

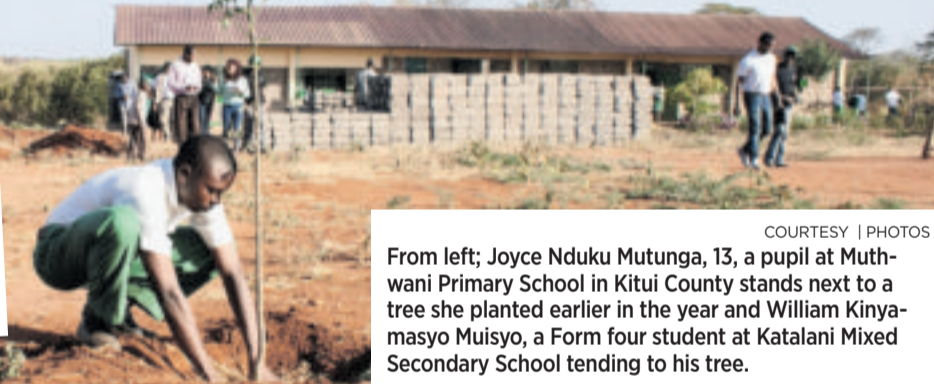
aroused when I was young, after I saw my father earn a lot of money from selling mangoes. I began planting mango trees at home, and right now I have prog-

ressed into planting Mukau trees in school. I really enjoy planting trees because it also makes our environment beautiful, and when students from other schools come to ours during competitions, they admire it.

Our area is drought prone, and with these trees, we will be assured of an improved environment as they will prevent soil erosion, and enrich the soil when leaves fall," Kinyamasyo says.

The school has a limited number of classrooms, and some students are forced to do their learning outside, while others have their lessons in the classrooms. The students who attend classes outside do it under tree shades, and with more trees planted in the school compound, they will have more spaces for them to learn.

Parents and teachers have not been left behind, as their enthusiasm towards the project has seen them come up with traditional innovations to ensure the trees flourish. Teachers and pupils in Mikuyu Primary School in Machakos County are using ash to keep off



COURTESY | PHOTOS

From left; Joyce Nduku Mutunga, 13, a pupil at Muthwani Primary School in Kitui County stands next to a tree she planted earlier in the year and William Kinyamasyo Muisyo, a Form four student at Katalani Mixed Secondary School tending to his tree.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

5	2	1	4	6	3
3	6	4	1	5	2
4	1	2	6	3	5
6	3	5	2	4	1
1	4	3	5	2	6
2	5	6	3	1	4

CROSSWORD

SOLUTION

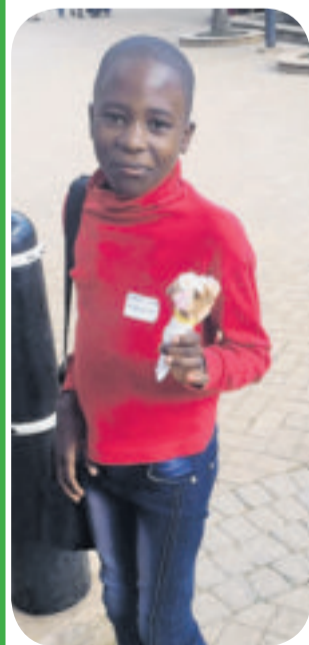
ACROSS:

2. Diaper
4. Gas
7. Glasses
9. Elevator
13. Raincoat
14. Pants
16. Hawaii
19. Kale
20. Easel

DOWN:

1. PIN
3. Placard
5. Wheelbarrow
6. China
8. Britain
10. Torch
11. Vest
12. Thai
15. Shovel
17. Iraq
18. Coat

My Album



PHOTOS/COURTESY
Nazline Rehema Kogai of Ndira Kokoth primary School in Homa Bay County enjoying ice-cream after a fun-filled day at the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi recently.



Central Bank Governor Dr Patrick Njoroge with participants of the Central Bank of Kenya at 50 art competition at the National Museums of Kenya recently. The children, drawn from various schools, spent the day colouring, beading and doing art and craft.

Makini Junior Academy celebrates after sterling performance at music festival

BY THOMAS RAJULA

Makini Junior Academy, which is situated on State House Avenue, had a thanksgiving and presentation ceremony to parents last weekend after posting good results during this year's Kenya National Music Festival. The school managed to scoop three trophies overall during their in the national competitions.

First position Class 231 (lower primary) was an accompanied set piece where the pupils presented "A Farmer Went Trotting", an American folk song

arranged for a two part-choir of between ages six to nine.

First position Class 238, was for an own-composition, "I want to fly" which was composed by the school's very own choir teacher, Mr David Isindu.

The school also got a third trophy; a challenge trophy for the best lower primary choir.

At the weekend, Pre-schoolers (aged between three to four) opened the event with a set piece presentation. The school management says their success is a result of the institution's goal to train from earliest possible age the pupils in their care to take part in extra-curricular activities.

All the winners during the Music Fest had an opportunity to entertain the parents with the winning pieces.

This is not the first time Makini Junior Academy were winning trophies at the music festival. They have made a name for themselves for consistently performing well at the festivals.

However, this was the first time they had won all three categories at the same time. After presentations; it was time to party. They later cut a cake and had a feast.



PHOTOS/COURTESY

Pupils show off the certificates they got after impressive performance during music festivals. Back row, with their parents last weekend.