



## Schools' green initiative challenge Phase III



# The Schools' Green Initiative Challenge Enters Phase III

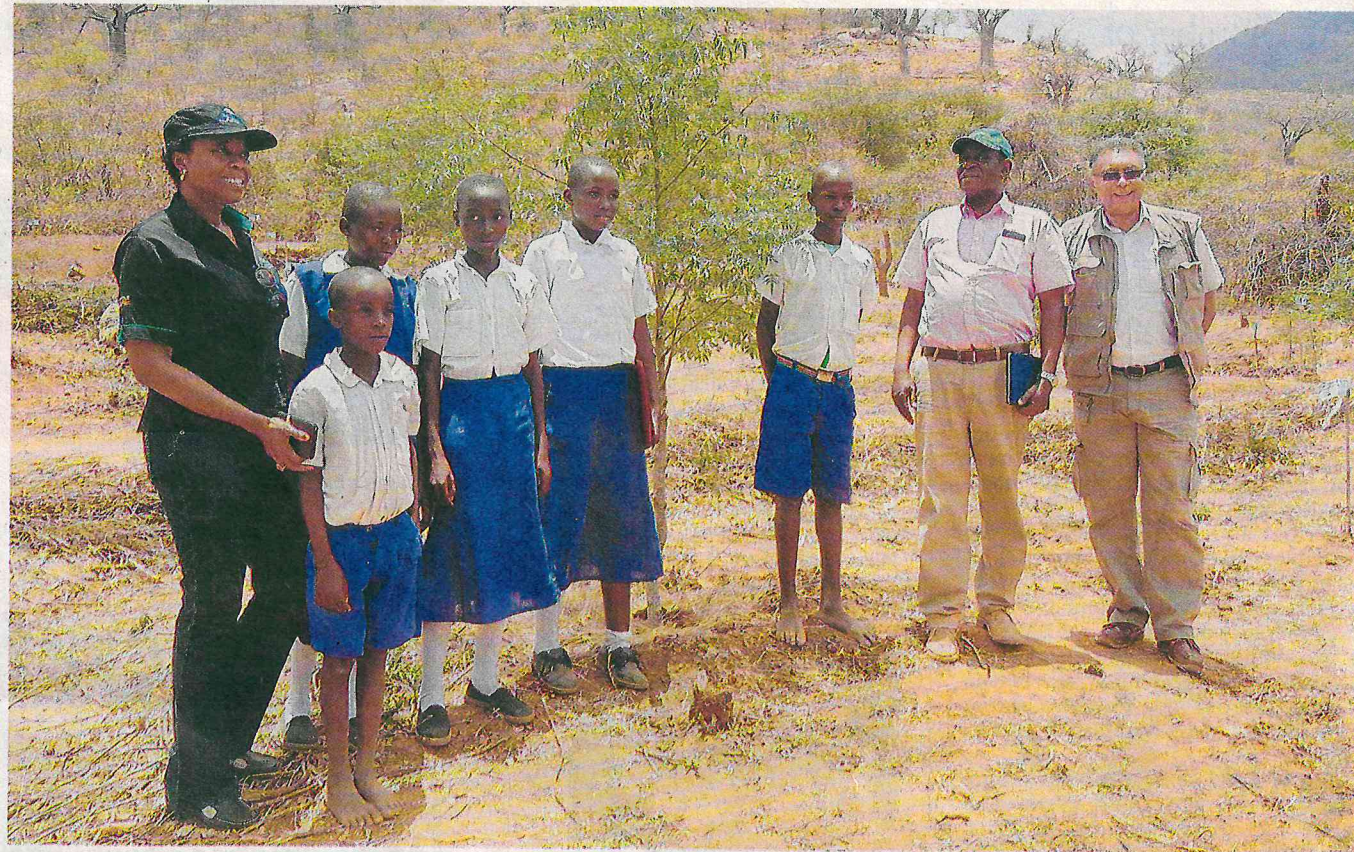
The Green Initiative Challenge (GIC) is a KenGen Foundation project designed to encourage and enable schools to participate in environmental activities by developing small forests and woodlots within their compounds for multiple benefits.

It is the flagship of the Foundation's Environment pillar, the other two being Education and Water and Sanitation.

Through the GIC project, KenGen Foundation has partnered with Better Globe Forestry Foundation and Bamburi Cement Limited to work with schools around the 7-Forks power stations to raise environmental awareness by encouraging students to improve their environment through a participatory and rewarding initiative.

The project area is semi-arid, and tree growing is intensive work, requiring innovation for the trees to survive. Participating schools plant multi-purpose *Senna siamea* (Muveshi) and *Melia volkensii* (Mukau) tree seedlings on their specially designated 0.5 to 1 acre plots

The trial project, which kicked off four years ago, enlisted 81 schools from the semi-arid areas of Embu and Machakos. Today, most of these schools are already boasting of small forests and woodlots that have now changed their compounds and improved their learning environment.



Bamburi Cement Corporate Affairs and Sustainable Development Director Susan Maingi, KenGen Foundation Managing Trustee Mike Njeru (2nd right) and Better Globe Forestry Managing Director Jean-Paul Deprins at Thua Primary School, Kitui.

## 219 New Schools

The launch of Phase II Expansion Project two years ago brought in 120 more schools. Today, the GIC is taking in a further 99 new schools from Machakos, Kitui, and Embu counties to battle it out for the top prize. The new schools will continue to raise the awareness and participation of many more school children in the environmental conservation activity.

The sustainable management of woodlots ultimately provides the participating schools with renewable sources of wood fuel, reducing pressure on surrounding vegetation and forest resources.

It also accords the schools an opportunity to

diversify their income through sale of timber as well as non-timber products.

An even higher benefit is the project's contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gases through carbon sequestration, and the control of soil erosion by increasing topsoil infiltration and reducing run-off.

GIC community members are also encouraged to establish 'household woodlots' through the participation of their children in the school projects.

The GIC expansion project targets the greening of a total of 460 acres with 324,300 tree seedlings, as well as 113,956 fruit seedlings (passion and pawpaw) on approximately 460 acres.

The project is designed as a challenge to participating schools, mainly due to the dry weather conditions in the areas. Prize awards are based on the highest survival rate of seedlings and use of innovation. The programme includes four to eight capacity building sessions per year for all participating schools, and two monitoring and evaluation sessions per year.

The best performing schools stand to benefit from education scholarships, infrastructural development, water tanks and rainwater-harvesting, and cash awards, among others.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

A team of judges from the KenGen Foundation and project partners continuously monitor the schools' woodlots as part of the GIC competition. The final evaluation is done after two years, and it is based on the seedlings' growth and survival rates (numbers and size), effort, innovativeness, and creativity.

The schools that demonstrate innovative techniques such as fencing, use of drip irrigation, strong teamwork and ownership, application of manure, intercropping, mulching and other techniques stand a higher chance of winning the competition.

## Lessons learnt

A total of 150 tree seedlings of *Senna siamea* and 150 of *Melia volkensii* are distributed to each school and planted on an average of 0.5 acres of school.

Innovations to enhance the survival of the seedlings are inevitable due to the climate of the competition area. It is actually noted that the schools that perform poorly do not show any initiatives to enhance the survival of seedlings.

Those that experience higher success rates show combined innovative techniques ranging from water conservation to soil preservation methods. These schools also show absolute commitment in their woodlot management.

**The GIC expansion project targets the greening of a total of 460 acres with 324,300 tree seedlings, as well as 113,956 fruit seedlings (passion and pawpaw) on approximately 460 acres"**

## Strength of partnerships

"KenGen as a company is committed to environmental conservation, and sustainably safeguards the environment it shares with communities.

It is with this in mind that the company continues to invest in long-term programmes such as the GIC, and is dedicated to environmental conservation and promoting a tree-planting culture with like-minded organisations and individuals.

The task of environmental conservation is not the sole responsibility of a single institution, but that of every citizen, whether individual or corporate."

**Mike Njeru, Managing Trustee, KenGen Foundation**

"Successful tree planting is achieved through mastering the fundamentals of patience and long-term vision. When properly initiated in schools, it is an all-round educational activity with a great number of individual and collective benefits for the future."

**Jean-Paul Deprins, Managing Director, Better Globe Forestry**

"Our commitment to support GIC demonstrates our environmental responsibility as a cement manufacturing firm. The project is in line with our sustainable development programme that seeks to conserve the environment, while partnering with stakeholders and communities. GIC, which we are proud to be part of, is one of the possible solutions contributing towards the commitment of 10 percent tree cover that Kenya made during COP 21."

**Bruno Pescheux, CEO Bamburi Ltd.**

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## The great story of the GIC over the last four years

### Phase I: A Big Success

The Green Initiative Challenge (GIC) Pilot project was launched in October 2013 in 81 schools in the 7- Forks area. It was initiated to help address massive deforestation in the semi-arid areas of Machakos and Embu Counties.

The project worked with schools to promote environmental awareness through the participation of students and the wider school community. It involved planting tree seedlings in schools and nurturing them to develop woodlots.



St. Martin Kaewa Secondary School during a field trip to Mombasa as part of their prize for winning in GIC Phase I.

### Phase II: GIC Expansion Project

It's the success of the pilot phase that inspired KenGen Foundation to move on to Phase II through a partnership with Better Globe Limited and Bamburi Cement Limited.

GIC Phase II is an up-scale of the pilot to a 10-year project that integrates an additional 919 schools from Embu, Machakos and Kitui counties. The project, currently ongoing, has 120 schools from the three counties participating in the competition, set to culminate in 2018 with the awarding of top performing schools.

Also included in Phase II is the element of the "Green Teacher" – the environmental patrons charged with guiding and mentoring the students involved in the competition.



1. Students showing off their tree seedlings at Kalatile Primary School, Kitui County. 2. KenGen Foundation Managing Trustee Mike Njeru during the launch of the GIC Phase II at Kitui County.



### Phase III: The Green Journey Continues

Phase III of the afforestation challenge will see the inclusion of 99 new schools from the three counties in the afforestation challenge.

The first capacity building has already taken place, and apart from the "Green Teachers", school heads and principals were included in order to equip them with the necessary skills and information on how to participate and manage the afforestation competition.



GIC Phase III Green Teachers Capacity Building at Nyangwa Boys High School, Embu.

**99** The number of additional schools to be included in Phase III of the GIC Project

## GIC Project Partners



The KenGen Foundation has over the years been implementing Corporate Social Investment projects targeting communities living in areas near KenGen's power installations.

This corporate effort has been driven by KenGen's commitment to being a responsible corporate citizen and its belief in adding value to the livelihoods of targeted communities by establishing relationships and implementing sustainable community projects.

The KenGen Foundation works within three main pillars of sustainability, namely Education, Environment, and Water and Sanitation, complementing the newly unveiled Sustainable Development Goals aimed at ending extreme poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and mitigating the effects of climate change through afforestation.



**Better Globe Forestry Ltd (BGF)** was incorporated in Kenya in 2004. It focuses on the need to fight poverty by promoting massive tree-planting and sustainable agricultural programmes through dryland forestry, microfinance schemes, educational programmes and water supply for rural communities.

**BGF's vision** is to create a combination of a secure commercial project with vital humanitarian and environmental activities.

**Its mission** is to make Africa a greener, healthier place in which to live and eradicate poverty by focusing on the development of profitable, commercial tree plantations that will deliver environmental as well as humanitarian benefits.

The company also publishes *Miti*, The Tree Business Magazine for Africa.



Bamburi Cement is a subsidiary of LafargeHolcim, the world leader in the building materials industry with a well-balanced presence in 90 countries and a focus on cement, aggregates and concrete. As one of the oldest Kenyan cement companies, Bamburi Cement Ltd, incorporated in 1951, is a household name known to majority of Kenyans as "Bamburi Cement".

The company has grown to be the leader and Industry Captain with a bold vision for the future, which is, "To delight our customers with innovative construction solutions with a commitment to sustainability".

Ingrained within the Bamburi Cement's value system is the long-standing commitment to make positive, tangible and sustainable difference among the communities it operates and serves. Its sustainable development agenda is organised around Social, Economic and Environmental pillar.

As a corporate citizen, the company plays an active role in meeting societal challenges, development of communities and implementation of proactive measures in favour of sustainability.

It is committed to the future and the positive contribution it makes towards securing the interests of future generations in light of the challenges of rapid urbanisation and environmental degradation. Bamburi Cement has made great strides in the area of Biodiversity Management, improved energy consumption and resource efficiency with thorough utilization of non-fossil fuels, including biomass as a continuous programme to reduce environmental footprint.

## Other Initiatives Under the GIC

### Education Scholarships

Through the GIC Expansion Project awards, KenGen Foundation has been able to expand its Education Scholarships programme to include two more beneficiaries, thanks to support from project partner Bamburi Cement Ltd. At the conclusion of phase II of the project, two more students will also get a chance at being supported through the GIC.

### Schools Infrastructure

Included within the GIC framework is the element of schools' infrastructure development. The KenGen Foundation, together with Bamburi Cement Ltd, support infrastructural development and improvement to schools, including the construction of classrooms and sanitation facilities.

## The project trees of choice

Mukau (*Melia volkensii*) is drought-resistant and can grow in dry areas with mean average rainfall between 400-1000mm. It has high commercial value and is used for timber.

*Senna siamea* is locally known as Mjohoro (Swahili), Mubeci (Mbeere), Mukengeta (Kamba), Kassod tree and Yellow Cassia (English). It is a medium-sized, evergreen tree that makes good fuel. Its charcoal is also of superior quality.



Muveshi tree in Kitui.



Five-year-old Mukau woodlot at Kiambere.