

East Africa Report: Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya

June 8th - July 2nd, 2008

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Uganda ~ June 8th – June 17th

My trip to East Africa began with a very pleasant introduction to *Kawesa Mukasa* and the staff of **Solar Connect Association** (SCA). I was impressed at the outset by SCA's active involvement in community efforts, promotion of Integrated Cooking and manufacture of subsequent materials at their Kampala based office. There are an abundance of hay baskets and fuel efficient stoves available in SCA's office, and employees busy cooking with integrated cooking devices and making WAPI's throughout the day.

I arrived in Kampala in the company of the hosts of the project, *Mary Lou Ozimek* and her son *Max*, along with their friend and priest from Ohio *Father Alexander Inke*, who originates from the village of Obia in Eastern Uganda on the border of Congo. Father Inke provided transportation (11.5 short hours) to his village where we were greeted warmly with song and dance by what seemed to be the entire town. Our accommodations were more than comfortable in a local clinic that Father Inke has been working on for some time, and we were treated with the utmost kindness and hospitality throughout our stay.

The five-day training workshop provided by Mukasa and *Olivia Kanyesigye* of SCA was well organized, with an impressive turnout by the 22 women who had signed up for the workshop as well as what seemed like every friend and family member in the area. The workshop was nicely structured to maximize information distribution, solar cooking and CookKit and hay basket construction, while allowing the flexibility to accommodate our surprise guests from **Aid Africa** (AA) who were able to make the trip from Gulu (approximately 150K) to demonstrate the 6-Brick Rocket Stove. I had met with *Ken Goyer* and *Peter Keller* in Sacramento the week before my departure and requested AA's participation in our workshop, and was pleasantly surprised and impressed by how quickly they were able to mobilize their team in Uganda. Rather than send us a single representative for the workshop, we were honored by the presence of AA's top four trainers, who came equipped with the materials and expertise to effectively demonstrate the importance of a fuel efficient stove as a fundamental component of Integrated Cooking. AA's staff put on an impressive presentation demonstrating the construction and fundamentals of the Rocket Stove, and stayed two extra days to learn more about solar and integrated cooking, as well as water testing and treatment. A wonderful alliance was made and I look forward to productive and happy collaborations with our new friends at AA.

As a bonus to the workshop I was able to test five local sources of water in Obia, instructing our SCA & AA colleagues in depth and presenting the results to the workshop participants, providing a nice transition into the workshop's water treatment and solar pasteurization segment.

In addition to this successful and rewarding workshop in Northern Uganda, I was able to make some good contacts with a few local NGO's in Kampala: **Heifer International** expressed an interest in a collaborative community outreach and using the CookKit for possible milk pasteurization. **Peace Corps Uganda** fully embraced the importance of solar cooking and water testing and treatment in volunteer projects and local activities, requesting further assistance and training from SCA; and **CARE Uganda** referred me fervently to CARE Kenya and has requested a demonstration on Integrated Cooking by SCA in the next week.

Hopes for the future in Uganda include a close collaboration with both SCA and AA, assisting in follow up of the Obia project, program development, material distribution and networking with government officials and environmental NGO's for a possible Safe Water / Integrated Cooking Workshop in Kampala next year. I would like to work with Bob and Margaret, SCI-EARO, SCA, AA to develop a five day workshop, focusing on safe water testing and treatment and modeled after the June 2008 workshop in Kenya,

supplemented throughout with environmental education, income generating techniques and technical approaches for the practical implementation of integrated cooking.

Tanzania ~ June 18th – June 22nd

What I had hoped would be a hop, skip and a jump across Lake Victoria turned into a day tour of capital airports of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, and a hopper from the coastal port of Dar es Salaam back up to the southeastern portion of Lake Victoria (not far from where I started) and the village town of Musoma. As it happened I arrived on the same flight as *Marianne Walpert* of **TanzSolar**, SCI's newest cohort and solar collaborator. As referenced in previous reports, Marianne has recently established the nonprofit TanzSolar to provide affordable solar panels to rural internet providers, small businesses and local individuals. TanzSolar already has a strong foothold in the community as a result of a close collaboration with an old friend and colleague, *Robi Machaba* of **Juasun**, an internet company based in Musoma. Robi has lived in Tanzania for over 20 years and is well established in the community and passionate about what he does. In addition to introducing affordable solar panels to the rural communities of Tanzania, TanzSolar will carry an inexpensive solar lantern from a company called D-Light. TanzSolar is interested in expanding its solar repertoire with solar cooking and water testing / treatment and has expressed a sincere interest in collaborating with SCI. Marianne is motivated and easy to work with, and we would both like to nurture this relationship to bring solar cooking and water treatment to the northern region of Tanzania by using TanzSolar's compound as a base for trainings in the TZ / Lake Victoria region, as well as a place to store materials for further trainings, sales and demonstrations. We are working with SCI-EARO to provide a week-long training at TanzSolar's compound later this year.

With the help of Marianne and Robi I was able to meet with a good number of individuals in Musoma interested in assisting in the spread of solar cooking and water testing and treatment in the region. Approximately 20 people were in attendance for a demonstration at the TanzSolar compound, where I showed a PowerPoint presentation, highlights of the workshop in Uganda, and the SunCookers DVD while cooking nine dishes of local food in the compound yard. Despite a fickle sun, the food cooked well and all were impressed by how well the local dishes of Pilau and Ugali turned out. In addition, it was a solid venue in which to introduce the Portable Microbiology Laboratory (PML) and illustrate the advantages of water testing and pasteurization.

Participants included European workers involved in nonprofit community development projects, as well as local business people affiliated with schools, churches and youth groups in the area. It was decided that once a solid group of 20+ community leaders are identified as dedicated to spearheading local training groups of their own in integrated cooking and water testing and treatment, SCI's Katito crew will travel to Musoma to provide a week-long training. Both SCI-EARO and I will perform follow up counseling with the participants at set intervals throughout the next few years to assure proper usage and sustainability. In addition, TanzSolar will provide a space to store materials and information for further workshops and to encourage participants to facilitate further trainings. Between TanzSolar and colleagues at Juasun, there will be someone to receive and supervise materials and sales, providing an effective umbrella under which SCI will be able to successfully operate in northern Tanzania on a number of levels. It is my hope that the affiliation between SCI, TanzSolar and Juasun will provide a solid base for the effective spread of solar cooking and water testing and treatment, as well as an opportunity for SCI to expand with simple and inexpensive solar lighting.

Kisumu, Kenya ~ June 23rd to 27th

Arriving overland in Kisumu I conveniently ran into Bob & Faustine at the venue for the Water Testing Workshop, **Tom Mboya Labour College**, where we settled in to a week of water testing fun! With close to a full house to reward efforts made by SCI-EARO and Bob, 20 representatives from various districts of **Ministry of Health (MOH) & Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA)** were in attendance as Bob deftly executed an informative full two days of lecture on *Portable Microbiology Laboratory (PML)* water testing and hands-on methodology. Rose Namori and Zakayo Njara of WRMA supplemented Bob's

lecture well with compelling accounts of their own detailed experiences with water testing procedures and comparisons between the PML and local water testing methods. There had been an outbreak of Cholera a few weeks before our Safe Water Workshop, and MOH and WRMA health workers were able to contain the outbreak utilizing the PML to test water in the rural Nyakach region near Lake Victoria. This is a strong testimony to our cause, and such an encouraging step for such an influential government organization to be using the PML officially in their work, where not even a year ago they had no resources of this kind. What a monumental opportunity for the governments of Kenya to demonstrate the practicality and effectiveness of the PML in life threatening situations, and one that will pave the way for implementation in other countries.

The lecture and water testing portion of the workshop was followed by day trip in the field where participants were able to see local water sources where the water tested in the workshop was gathered, followed by a grand celebration outside Sunny Solution's Katito office, including solar cooked food & crafts made by solar cooks, and an official ceremony honoring EARO's 10-year anniversary. The ceremony was an impressive and monumental tribute to the Safe Water Workshop and ten years of work well done in Kenya!

I met the Director of **Archway Technology Management**, Ltd. at the event described above, and the following day Margaret and I attended the Stakeholders' Forum for Sunny Solutions' Evaluation. This preliminary seminar involved brainstorming sessions with local health workers, hotel/food vendors, development agents, fuel vendors, government workers, teachers and local solar cooks discussing benefits, challenges and techniques of solar cooking in the community. This information will be compiled into a questionnaire by Archway and distributed to the participants, the results to be combined with field work results and an analysis of documented paperwork from the Sunny Solutions offices. Archway's Regional Director *Akich Kwach* and Team Leader *Cleophas Onono* struck me as professional and competent, and I hope that they will succeed in providing an accurate and useful portrayal of Sunny Solutions' accomplishments and identification of areas to improve effectiveness and productivity. It appeared to me that Archway's approach was locally appropriate and possessed a solid and thorough base for analysis.

Nairobi ~ June 28th - July 2nd

The **African Women and Water Conference** led by the women's organizations *Women's Health Alliance*, *Crabgrass*, *Groots* and *A Single Drop* was located at *Wangaari Mathai's Greenbelt Center* just outside Nairobi and took place the week following our Water Testing Workshop in Kisumu. Bob and I were able to meet some of the women the Saturday preceding the conference and specifically with *Mariah Klingsmith* who will be remaining in Africa for one year following the conference to follow up with each of the 30 participants from 15 countries in East, South & West Africa. We provided Mariah with a solar cooker, a WAPI, a PML and educational materials, and Bob was able to give her an informal yet detailed training on the specifics of water testing. Mariah will communicate with me directly in regards to programs involving the CookKit and the PML, and provide photos and brief reports during her journey throughout the upcoming year.

After a day of rest in Nairobi battling a virus that wouldn't die, work resumed in the form of networking and various meetings with official government institutions and NGO's:

I accompanied Bob to the **Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation** to meet with Chief *Kepha Ombacha*, Water Sanitation Officer *Adam Muhommad Ahi*, and *Fred Donde* of **UNICEF**. Mr. Ahi was one of the principal influences in the cholera testing referenced above. Each government representative expressed sincere appreciation for the process and materials and an enthusiastic faith in the future of the project, as well as an understanding of how necessary the PML is to their work. There was a self-ascribed emphasis on continued collaboration with WRMA and self-motivation on the part of active participants. Those who participated in the workshop will be called upon to initiate future trainings and we will look forward to reports of improved health in all regions soon.

Peace Corps Kenya was very receptive to our ambitions, and Director *Ken Puvak* has been a proponent of solar cooking for years. Public Health & Sanitation Assistant Director *Timothy Kibet* is interested in incorporating solar cooking and water pasteurization into secondary projects and volunteers' work with youth groups and schools. Bob will return later in his stay to instruct Timothy and *Louis Othieno* on water testing with the PML. There are two Peace Corps Volunteer trainings in the next few months in which Peace Corps would like to see SCI participate.

CARE Kenya works on programs involving HIV/AIDS, Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), slums and refugee camps with UNHCR. Country Director *Bud Crandall* had limited time and was only able to ask some fundamental questions regarding time, cost, process and cultural acceptance, after which Bud surmised that a small project in the Dadab Refugee Camp might be worth a purchase of approximately 100 cookers to gauge interest and practicality in that area. We described some of our previous efforts in Dadab as well as other refugee camps, and Bud will potentially recommend solar cookers for one or more of their project sites in Sudan.

WHO Kenya seems primarily interested in Safe Water projects, and with whom Bob has had positive dealings with in the past, providing a nice foundation for our most recent collaborative push. I was able to show my PowerPoint presentation to Technical Program Officer *Wilfred Ndego*, but due to conflicts in schedules and communications, some important interested parties were not available until later that afternoon, to which Bob was able to come to the rescue as I prepared for my flight home. In addition to an interest in water testing and treatment, WHO also strongly promotes the reduction of Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) in their support of MOH, further enabling a seamless relationship between water treatment and solar cooking. Margaret will meet with *James Teprey* of the Emergency & Humanitarian Action (EHA) segment of WHO about possible collaborations in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and refugee camps.