

Embassy of Japan visits Save the Children projects in Habaswein on 28 June 2012



The small Cessna plane sped off Wilson Airport's chilly runway and landed at Habaswein's sun scorched airstrip in less than two hours. On board, from the **Embassy of Japan** were **His Excellency Deputy Chief of Mission Mr. Yoichiro Yamada**, **Second Secretary Mr. Masaru Nagamine**, and **Researcher/Advisor Ms. Mihoko Sakai**. They were escorted by **Save the Children Japan's Regional Representative, Emiko Mikami**, and **Save the Children UK's Kenya Country Director, Prasant Naik**. Accompanying them were journalists from KBC and The Daily Nation.

Save the Children's Habaswein Area Manager Beatrice Otieno led the area staff in welcoming the guests

before they paid homage to the **District Commissioner, Mr. Daniel Nduti**. The DC praised the organization and the government of Japan for their noble service to the



Habaswein community. "Thank you for your support during the drought, and assisting us to see how we can store water during the rainy periods. Another direct benefit for our community is employment; even though some of the contracts are only for a few months at least the young people get little money to start other businesses or pay for classes to continue learning." The DC enlightened the Deputy Chief of Mission on other projects that the government was undertaking to harness water, and plans to help the deep-set pastoralist culture, which in some instances posed challenges to the community's development.

The group then visited Kibilay Girls School, the only girls primary school which caters for Class 1 and Class 2 girls, where the visitors inspected 2 recently installed 10,000L water tanks that serve as the reservoirs for the new water harvesting systems, water taps with clean running water, and two new brightly colored latrines, all a stone's throw away from the classrooms.



The visitors then made their way to the nearby Baraza Park, where a large crowd was happy to welcome them. Young confident girls from Kibilay Girls School presented poems on drought and hygiene. Next was a captivating and entertaining skit by students from Habaswein Mixed Secondary

School's DRR Club on drought mitigation. Incidentally these very students recently represented Habaswein at a national schools drama festival. These DRR club members were happy to receive trophies and other prizes presented by the guests, to encourage them in their efforts of sensitizing their community about drought preparedness.



The Deputy Chief of Mission began his speech by

appreciating Save the Children. "I know of Save the Children, the noble organization and, I've asked myself, 'save the children from what?' Here, there's evidence that you save the children from drought and its effects." He encouraged the attentive crowd to embrace education.



"You're current economic situation is like that of Japan's 70 years ago, when women were only supposed to take care of families. Your country is growing technologically like Japan did. Education will help you adjust life to the changing and prevailing circumstances." His advice against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and the early marriage of young girls; both delicate and controversial issues within this community, was stern.

The area District Education Officer also advised fathers to discourage their sons from expecting future brides who have gone through FGM. Mr. Prasant Naik urged the listeners to be wary of the signs of drought in order to take appropriate measures to prevent great loss. He said, "drought shouldn't be allowed to become an emergency in this time and age; it must be addressed as developmental issue."

After a quick stop over to nearby animal watering hole, the guests thanked the Habaswein staff for their life enhancing interventions and encouraged them to keep up the good work.

