

About Meto: Meto is a rural town in Southeast Kenya, in the Kajiado District, with a population of approximately 3,700. These are mainly Maasai people and were traditionally nomadic, moving with the seasons and with their cattle to where they could find grazing and water. With the increase in fencing in Kenya, since independence in 1964, and the decrease in reliable seasonal rains, the nomadic pastoralists have found it more and more difficult to sustain their herds. Many Maasai persist, but many have turned to a more permanent lifestyle and other methods of agriculture which are more sustainable.



Photo above of Meto Shamba in 2007 prior to any work being done.



Photo above of Meto Shamba in 2009 showing results of work being done.

Drought Preparation: In order to minimise future risk of the affects of drought it is important to maximise opportunities as they present themselves. A large water storage tank and several rainwater harvesting systems have been constructed to capture rains, in addition to training the community in the use and protection of this water. These are effective methods to better prepare the community to cope with the impact of another drought.

Photo right of the 75,000litre underground water storage tank at Meto. The main source of water is a spring located 15km away. Water is also captured from the roofs of buildings, as seen in the background of this photo:



Water conservation: The last time it rained in Meto was May 2008. The spring supply to the town of Meto is inherently unreliable, because it is simply an overground pipe, 15kilometres in length, which can easily be broken by man or animal. With so little water to rely on, the people in Meto must conserve what they have. Therefore the Agricultural plots are irrigated using drip-irrigation methods. This consists of a 1,000litre storage drum, elevated 8' above the ground, which feeds a network of PVC pipes that are laid on the ground in a grid. These pipes have tiny holes along their length, which release a constant but very small amount of water to feed a plant (see next page).

Photo left of a drip irrigation plot being set up ready to plant with a crop. This is the most efficient way of conserving water whilst irrigating.

Agriculture: In the dryland shamba maize and beans are grown. Using drip irrigation, cabbages, spinach, tomatoes, mung beans, courgettes, water melons and orange trees are grown.

These crops are used as a source of food for students and staff and the surplus generates income for the Meto shamba. More importantly, the plots serve as a training area for students who want to learn agricultural methods, and who can then apply the skills to improve life at home in their own village.

There are approximately 200 students being trained per year and around 70 people visit per month in various small groups. Last year over 370 people attended an Open Day at Meto, and 900 went there for a celebration on World Food Day.

Photo right of a new bean plant benefiting from water from the a drip irrigation pipe.



Photo above of the caretaker of the Ranch Aid Store along with Alison Shine, who was in Kenya visiting Meto from Ireland in July 2009.

Ranch Aid Store: This is one of the greatest services that the Meto shamba supplies to the people of Meto. It is a store which supplies veterinary and agricultural products, such as injectable veterinary drugs, dewormers and minerals for the livestock. Certified seeds and pesticides for local shambas are also in demand. The alternative centre to buy goods (such as those sold in the Ranch-aid store) is at Ilbissel town, beyond this, they would be available in Kajiado or Namanga. Ilbissel is approx 70 kms away and would cost approx Ksh400/= (€4.00) for return journey by public transport. It would take the whole day to get there and back. Approximately 5-10 people visit the Meto Ranch Aid Store for supplies everyday.

Guest House: This is another good source of income for the Meto shamba. Guests come from the community and Community service providers e.g. Government / NGO workers. From Jan – Dec 2008, there were 37 guests and this year to date, there have been 38 guests.

The Meto shamba also provides cheap communication to the community through wireless telecommunication. This is placed under a tree where network is available and community members can now call relatives at a very cheap rate rather than have to travel to Ilbissil to make the call.

Photo right of guest house in the Meto shamba, which accommodates many people travelling through Meto and staying there for work / study.



A message from Daniel Taama who manages the Meto shamba: "We are presently experiencing the worst drought in living memory which has destroyed any crops planted and decimated the livestock belonging to community members. We badly need donations for seeds to help people sow their shambas in anticipation of rains."

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO THE METO PROJECT, OR FIND OUT MORE, PLEASE SEE OUR DEVELOPMENT WORK PAGE AT www.minerex.ie, SEND CHEQUES, OR WRITE:

MINEREX ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITED, TANEY HALL, EGLINTON TERRACE, DUNDRUM, DUBLIN 14. (enquiries@minerex.ie).

THANK YOU.