



Milgis Trust
Water Projects Department



Projects maintenance report January 2021 – September 2021

Summary

It has been an incredibly crucial year for the water projects department. Kenya has suffered a prolonged period of drought, and it has been especially severe in the Milgis ecosystem. Many areas have not received rain since April. There has been huge migrations of pastoralist communities throughout our area, all in search of the pasture for their livestock. Herdsman from Samburu and Rendille tribes travelled distances as far as 150 kilometres, battling to keep their precious animals alive.

The water projects have been instrumental in keeping the peace. After their long journeys, they have been able to have a much needed break at our water projects - giving the livestock a chance of recovering. In the past, people have fought over water during desperate times. Thankfully the projects have also kept human wildlife conflict to a minimum. In other areas, wildlife has had to compete with humans at wells, limiting their access to water to the night time. Many of the wells are too deep and many animals fall in and drown – especially elephants.

Out of the fourteen projects, we focussed on improving the projects in the more desperate places. These 5 projects rely on very fragile aquifers so have needed careful water management. The majority of these are our older projects, as they were the most needy communities. This has meant that they are also now the highest maintenance projects, as their equipment is getting older. Your support this past year has been incredibly well received - Its estimated that at least 11,000 people would not have been able to access clean water if we did not do the below maintenance. Most of these people would have had to push deep into the mountains to find water, and this would have resulted in massive pressure on the surrounding forest and wildlife.

Below:

A meeting taking place to discuss the importance of sustainable water usage.



Mikenya Water Project

This is possibly our most important water project during the drought – it is on the edge of the Kaisut desert. The people from this community used to have to walk a two day round trip to collect water. Fortunately, they now only need to walk a few metres to get water – freeing up a lot of time for more productive activities.



Mikenya – a traditional Rendille village



The Panels and well



Watering time at the trough

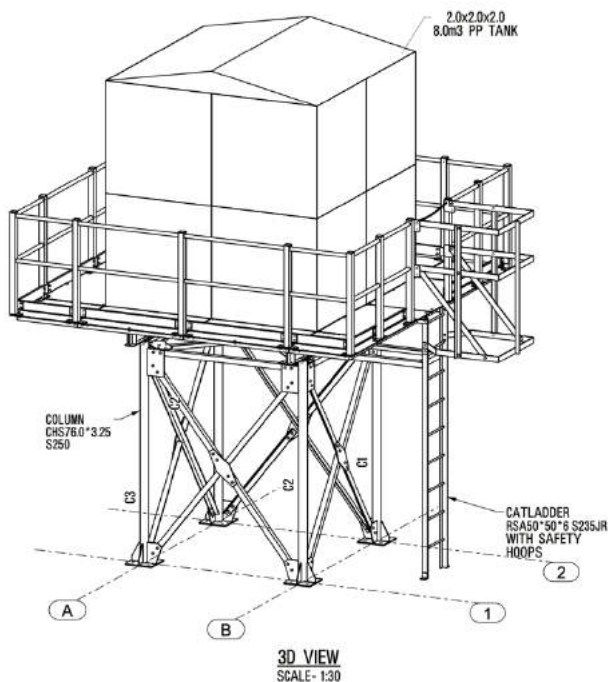


Unfortunately due to the extreme heat, the plastic tanks that we installed have not lasted. They are now leaking badly, and have to be replaced. We have opted to change all of our tanks to galvanized steel tanks on a slightly taller tower. Hopefully these will last many years to come. We have purchased the first one including a tower, which has added some cost. Going forwards we will fabricate our own towers to save expenses. The new tank is not in place yet as it will take two months for the fabrication by manufacturer. We are hoping to install this in the next few weeks. It will also increase the storage capacity by 200 litres, reducing the pressure on the well.

Left: The current tank showing damage & leaks

Below left: the design for the new tanks.

Below right: Women travelling to Mikenya from a nearby community. They have created clever 'water carts' to help them carry more water over longer distances.



Loltepes Water Project



In January, we had to replace a pump end for loltepes. We also recently carried out several repairs on loltepes' pipeline due to elephants breaking fittings to get at the water. Shortly after these were repaired, a ele decided to just put his tusk straight into the tank, which is now irreparable leaking badly. We have decided to add a steel tank here too.

Left: The damaged tank

Right: We have recently upgraded all of our signposts at the water projects. They are now beautifully decorated and have got meaningful proverbs, some explaining the importance of sharing water with the wildlife

Urura Water Project

Urura is one of our first water projects, set up nearly ten years ago. Our team were informed that there was a panel that had cracked. After inspection we found this had also irreparably damaged the controller. We also were told that these models of panels and controller are now off the market. We decided to replace all of the panels and install a modern controller. We also refurbished the original panel frames, and improved the wiring system.

Right: Newly installed panels – the white dots are caused by dust sticking to a few fresh raindrops – it's not damage.



Mpagas Water Project

Mpagas has had some repairs done recently. A thirsty elephant for some reason broke through the fence and ripped up the entire stand pipe. Our team had to make a more robust standpipe. More importantly, it was a good lesson to the community to ensure there is ALWAYS water in the troughs, even after their livestock have had their fill. Mpagas also had a motor burn out on the solar system. Our team replaced this in January.



A massive hole where the standpipe was!



Building a more robust concrete plinth

Nkwe Eltome water project



Nkwe Eltome is the nearest community to our Milgis Trust HQ. They had a panel broken by somebody. We opted not to fix it until they had done their best to deal with the culprit. Fortunately they were able to track the person down and get them to pay for a new panel. In April, the pump end stopped working. Fortunately we were able to replace this using your funding.

Left: Happy goats enjoying the wildlife/livestock trough in Nkwe Eltome

A very big thank you from the Entire Milgis team ad all the communities that really benefitted this year!!

