



## SymbioCity KIMININI STUDY VISIT TO NAIROBI

### Mr. Emmanuel Masika

*SymbioCity Coordinator in Kiminini town Trans-Nzoia County*

Tuesday 7th November 2017 saw the arrival of one of SymbioCity's Pilot City programme participants arrive in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi on a hands on 3 day study visit of various waste management projects in Nairobi and the neighboring Kiambu & Kajiado counties. We had a chance to sit and chat with **Emmanuel Masika** one of the attendees; one of the project coordinators of SymbioCity in Kiminini town and an avid football fan and player, he shared his thoughts and expectations on the visit.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for making time for this interview straight off, Kiminini is a relatively smaller town, what makes up the biggest form of waste in Kiminini?

**Emmanuel** The biggest form of waste is domestic waste, more than industrial waste. We mostly have cottage industries like flour milling and mills for jaggery, the biggest industrial company would be Seedco and perhaps the Dubia Milk & Dairy. So our biggest challenge is definitely domestic waste more specifically, market waste.

**Interviewer:** Kiminini being a growing town there is a need to try and attract investors and grow various sectors in terms of development, industry and infrastructure. Do you feel that this need might lead to sacrifices being made with regards to environmental concerns and waste management?

**Emmanuel** There is always a huge risk of this happening and to sacrifice the environment at the altar of development is not just naïve but counter productive. This is why it is important that laws and policies are put in place. While this is a challenge it is also an opportunity since, we can influence decision and policy making positively for instance under the Cities Acts, where Waste Management can be incorporated to govern the workings of industries and how they deal with their waste and the environment in general. We can borrow a leaf from already tried and tested policies or studies such as the one we are on today.

**Interviewer:** What would you say is the biggest challenge in dealing with waste management in Kiminini?

**Emmanuel** Changing the mind-sets of the people on the ground. Sensitization and educating people would go a long way towards showing them that waste is not a burden but an opportunity. An opportunity to recycle and re-use, keep our environment clean and sustainable and finally, if properly managed it can be a source of income and employment whether for primary or subsidiary income.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion, what three things would help Kiminini establish a sustainable and profitable waste management system.

**Emmanuel** **Education** will play the most critical role. **Enacting policies** that result into laws. These laws hand in hand with civic education can have a huge impact. Finally **infrastructure** - many smaller towns and cities lack the proper infrastructure such as transfer centres, dumpsites etc It is redundant to educate people & fail to provide accompanying infrastructure to deal with the results of the education.

**Interviewer:** A 2-part question – Is there a fiscal element involved in all stages from planning to execution and if yes, what would be the best way to not just start but ensure projects become self-sustaining?

**Emmanuel** There is definitely a monetary element to it. Civic education, infrastructure and enforcement, all these factors are financially intensive. However, waste management should not be looked as an expense rather as an investment. Budgetary allocations at County & National levels should be dedicated to this. Initial costs may seem intense but in the long run, projects and systems are bound to be income generating through sales, licensing, taxation and fines & penalties. Not forgetting the benefits such as a cleaner environment and better health for everyone.

**Interviewer:** Everyone has different hopes of what they will learn or take away from this study trip, what are some of yours?

**Emmanuel** I am hoping to learn more about waste. We can't solve a problem until we understand it. What types and forms of waste do we have, are these relevant to us in Kiminini if not in the immediate present, in the near future. Things like electronic waste seem like a future problem but they are very much a near future problem. We just left the Kamongo paper recycling factory, I've always thought that the way to deal with waste paper was to burn it, now we are learning that it can be pulped and re-used. As a project coordinator in Kiminini my duty is to learn, practice & lead all waste management projects in the city and beyond

**Interviewer:** Finally Emmanuel, on a personal level, what are the steps you are taking at your work place or at home towards managing waste?

**Emmanuel** (\*Laughs) I'm almost ashamed to say but at home, every plastic container no matter how big or small is re-used, none are ever thrown out. They are very useful for storing things or weighing things. I like to believe it's my small contribution to waste management.

"Sensitisation and educating people would go a long way towards showing them that waste is not a burden but an opportunity." **Emmanuel Masika**



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