



# CLEAN UP DAR SOME MORE



Our dedicated readers out there will remember an article in January's edition of What's Happening in Dar about two NGOs' joint effort to Clean Up Dar! School children in Roots and Shoot's clubs across Dar met on Saturday mornings in November to clean a pre-chosen area of the city and through WASTEDar's teachings learnt more about the huge efforts needed to brand our city clean.

Well, two months down the line I am thrilled to be attending the official launch of Nipe Fagio, another initiative raising awareness of this extremely important issue and certainly doing so with a bang.

Nipe Fagio literally translates as 'Give me a broom' and was chosen by its founders to empower society to take a personal and collective responsibility in keeping their communities clean.

The concept of Nipe Fagio formed over four years ago when a group of friends living in Dar witnessed the desperate state of the city and felt compelled to do something about it. One of these individuals, Mandy

Fuller, describes how it was initially difficult to get the movement started, either because they were struggling to find the right partners or because they just couldn't generate enough interest or find enough outside support to fulfill their visions. However, this all changed after the December 2011 floods. "I think this time people were just well and truly fed up with the filth and were ready to participate as individuals and communities towards initiating change.

Indeed, Nipe Fagio's tag line is 'I am the change' and this message really supports the key principles behind the organization. The vision is for Nipe Fagio to grow into a national platform for an interactive community initiative.

Through empowering citizens to voice their needs and visions and through linking these same citizens to the government and other key stakeholders, communities realize that their voice and actions really can make a huge difference even to a seemingly overwhelming task like cleaning up Dar.



Fueled by this hint of a shift in attitude fluttering in the winds, in 2012 Nipe Fagio started conversations with Roots and Shoots (a programme of the Jane Goodall Institute) and built stronger partnerships with 20 other organizations across the city as a key step towards building their interactive and driven community.

In early 2013 they decided to bring some of these communities together and ran interactive dance, music and art workshops to raise further awareness around issues of waste management in the city.

“One of our priorities at Nipe Fagio is to engage in creative solutions’, Mandy portrays. ‘The arts provide the perfect vehicle to convey our message in a creative way. It is also a very effective medium for learning – working together to create music, artwork and drama generated a lot of discussion and shared ideas. Better still the end products were perfect for engaging the general public, having the advantage of being both educational and entertaining at the same time.’

It was at this point that the collaborators realized what an excellent opportunity the present moment presented for officially launching their organisation; finally they had enough support to feel like this was a true community initiative and they also had some interesting acts that would engage the general public.

Fast forward a month and I’m standing on sea view beach looking out across a sea of individuals wearing green T-shirts proclaiming ‘I am the change!’ The beach itself is spotless after over 200 individuals voluntarily showed up at 6am to participate in a beach clean-up. (Still a pretty foul whiff on the breeze but one certainly cannot expect miracles and I’d say inspiring such a number of people to pick up rubbish at the crack of dawn without so much as a soda is definitely a huge step in the right direction).

When I rock up (feeling somewhat ashamed at this point that I didn’t attend the clean-up myself) it is 3pm and three hours of planned entertainment is about to begin. After the sea of green t-shirts the next thing I notice is +100 brooms stood up like soldiers in formation in the sand. I later discover that Tinga Tinga volunteered their time to run a workshop for individuals to paint a broom as their contribution towards the launch. The brooms make a powerful statement glistening in the evening sun and better still doubled up as a fund raising effort whereby individuals could pay 5000 Tanzanian shillings to sponsor a broom of their choice.

The entertainment itself was great fun – we were wowed by student acrobats and young dancers and through the dramas the Roots and Shoots students pulled together in their Nipe Fagio workshops from the previous weeks.



My personal highlight of the evening, however, was a group of students performing the 'Nipe Fagio' song with Bongo Flava artists Banana Zorro and Sauda Simba. The song itself, which asks people to pick up a broom and join the movement, is undeniably catchy and the students were clearly having a whale of a time, bellowing all the lyrics and pulling some very impressive dance moves.

As the event came to a close I decided to approach a few students who partook in the evening's activities in an effort to find out more about what really motivated them to be part of this initiative. Having interviewed individuals from four different schools what really humbled me was their devotion to seeing their city clean.

Whether I asked them why they attended the workshops, why they were at the event or what their favorite part of the day had been, all of their answers rotated around

attending the beach clean-up and wanting to be part of an initiative that provoked change. Not singing with Bongo Flava artists and not because they wanted a free t-shirt. If that isn't inspiring, what is?

Having now officially launched, Nipe Fagio's priority for the coming year is to get the residents of the Kivukoni area actively involved in the campaign. This will involve establishing an effective waste management system through collaboration with government, municipal, corporate and private stakeholders.

Sustainable solutions will rest on truly understanding residents' needs and desires and communicating them up effectively. And after Kivukoni comes Mikocheni. And after Mikocheni comes Manzese. And so on and so forth until Dar goes from being the 12th dirtiest city in the world to being a global example of how rapid population growth can actually lead to better things.

*By Spicy Feather Duster*