

press kit

SUMMER 2010

KOMAZA

VERB: TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND ENCOURAGE GROWTH [Kiswahili].

[our vision]

Higher incomes and healthier environments across Africa's dry lands, driven by an innovative, financially self-sustaining social enterprise.

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[financials]

Need financial information? Just contact us at engage@komaza.org, and we'll be happy to provide you with audited financial statements, IRS Form 990, annual budgets and other documents.

[a new paradigm for development]

Sustainable forestry delivers incredible profits to large companies, but the economic potential of trees has been out of reach for Africa's poorest farmers. They have been unable to unite the full value chain required for profitable tree farming.

That's where KOMAZA comes in. We have found a way to turn rural farmers' unproductive, fallow land into a source of income, allowing Africa's poorest families to lift *themselves* out of poverty.

We're a non-profit that thinks profitably.

Guided by locally driven, market-oriented solutions, we apply the principles of the business world to the needs of Africa's farmers.

By reducing burdensome start-up costs, helping smallholder farmers grow more productive, high-value crops and connecting them with new markets, KOMAZA aims to transform the forestry value chain to make it work for the poor—a new paradigm for development that replaces aid and charity with investment and entrepreneurship, and has the potential to generate large-scale and lasting change for those who need it most.

[our progress]

5

planting seasons

102

employees

430

acres

1,000

farmers

288,740

trees planted

[frequently asked questions]

WHAT IS KOMAZA?

KOMAZA is a non-profit social enterprise that creates sustainable economic opportunities for smallholder farmers living in East Africa's semi-arid regions. Working through a village-based network of field staff, we partner with rural farmers living on less than one dollar a day to help them plant and maintain small-scale, income-generating tree farms. We call it microforestry.

We are a registered 501(c)3 charitable organization in the United States and an official non-governmental organization (NGO) in Kenya. KOMAZA is incorporated in the State of California.

WHEN WAS KOMAZA ESTABLISHED?

KOMAZA was formally established in 2006 when we planted our Kilifi Demonstration Farm (June 2006). We began full-time operations in early 2008.

HOW DID KOMAZA START?

KOMAZA was founded by Tevis Howard, a 26-year old American with a vision for using market-based mechanisms to help communities overcome rural poverty. As an undergraduate student at Brown University, Tevis engaged in a variety of scientific research projects, and in 2002 his academic pursuits brought him to Kilifi, Kenya to conduct malaria immunology research. He frequently returned, splitting his time between Kilifi in the summer and Providence, Rhode Island, during the academic year. As Tevis spent more time in Africa, he began to better understand the root causes of its social and economic problems. He soon realized the remarkable potential of microforestry. That's how KOMAZA was born. Tevis has since dedicated his efforts to growing and strengthening the organization and currently serves as its Executive Director.

WHAT'S WITH THE NAME?

It's a Kiswahili word meaning "to promote development and encourage growth." We're not sure why we capitalize it.

WHERE DOES KOMAZA WORK?

Our organization is based in Kilifi, Kenya (GPS: -3.62150, 39.85000), a small coastal town on the Indian Ocean. Our field-based tree farming operations take place in rural towns and villages throughout Ganze District in Kenya's Coast Province, including: Ganze, Dungicha, Palakumi, Kauma, Jaribuni. We will expand to two new locations in October 2010: Bamba and Vitengeni.

We decided to focus the initial implementation of our microforestry model in areas with dry, semi-arid climates. In these regions, poor agricultural conditions have left families that have several acres of unused land with few options for productive farming; traditional food crops often fail due to frequent drought and infertile soil.

WHAT DOES KOMAZA DO?

We help rural farmers living in extreme poverty plant and maintain small-scale, income-generating tree farms. KOMAZA is building a complete, vertically integrated forestry value chain—from seed to market. We work directly with smallholder farmers and provide them crop inputs and tools on credit, such as drought-resistant seedlings and fertilizers; ongoing agricultural training and support; post-harvest processing; and market access opportunities.

Microforestry is one of the few sustainable development interventions that can be highly successful in semi-arid areas, where most traditional food crops fail due to low, erratic rainfall and poor soil conditions. It's a low-risk and high-profit investment ideally suited for the environments where our families live. By integrating poverty alleviation with environmental conservation, KOMAZA's model eases market pressure on indigenous forests, restores degraded landscapes and creates a sustainable source of income for Africa's poorest farmers—the majority of whom are women—to make investments in their families' future.

WHO FUNDS KOMAZA?

KOMAZA is funded by the generous support of private foundations and individuals. Early-stage funding was provided by multi-year grants from the Draper Richards Foundation and the Mulago Foundation. Recently, The Peery Foundation and the Jasmine Foundation have joined our growing network of supporters. A full list of donors can be found at www.komaza.org.

WHAT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SO FAR?

Since beginning full-time operations in 2008, KOMAZA has planted over a quarter-million drought-resistant trees with 1,000 smallholder farmers in villages throughout Kenya's infertile, drought-prone coastal region. These tree farms are replenishing hundreds of acres of semi-arid land, sequestering atmospheric carbon, curbing Africa's dangerously high levels of deforestation, and will soon generate unprecedented amounts of income for families living in rural poverty.

We also operate three experimental farms with more than 180 research plots across 25 acres in order to further refine agricultural practices for dryland farmers.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES KOMAZA EMPLOY?

As of mid-2010, KOMAZA provides full-time employment to approximately 100 individuals, from former management consultants to local agronomists who have decades of on-the-ground experience and strong relationships in the communities we serve. Over 90 percent of our positions are filled by Kenyans.

WHAT CROPS DO YOU PLANT?

With just a half-acre of trees and an additional acre of short-term crops, KOMAZA can help farmers overcome rural poverty and conserve their environments. As part of the standard 10 to 12 year harvest cycle, farmers are first offered short-term crops – cowpeas and green grams – that provide an instant boost in nutrition, offer an immediate source of income and enrich the soil. Farmers then plant two varieties of fast-growing, drought-resistant trees – Eucalyptus and *Melia volkensii* – that restore degraded landscapes and offer unprecedented lump-sum payments when harvested. By working with forestry experts and conducting ongoing R&D, we're always exploring new crops to add to our farmer package.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE A 'SOCIAL ENTERPRISE'?

For several decades, we thought that the most efficient and effective way to reduce poverty in developing nations was to provide direct aid in the form of food, clothes, infrastructure, medicine, and technology. While aid still plays an important role in development today, we believe there is often a better way through market-based approaches that give people an economic voice.

We're a registered non-profit, but we behave and function more like a business – a business that also pursues social and environmental bottom lines. We are scrapping the idea of handouts to “beneficiaries.” Instead, our microforestry model empowers some of the world's poorest farmers to act as producers of high-demand wood products. We are bringing them completely into the process and designing a social venture around them, which we believe is scalable (i.e., KOMAZA will eventually expand to reach hundreds of thousands of people) and financially sustainable (i.e., KOMAZA will not be perpetually dependent on charitable contributions or grants).

Tree farming is an inherently front-loaded investment with long-term, but very attractive, returns. For KOMAZA, donor funding and other methods of outside financing are necessary in the short and medium terms as we expand and build capacity, but we must ultimately become independent of philanthropic support. We have built this into our revenue model since our inception—at scale, KOMAZA will be able to completely and indefinitely fund its own operations and their expansion.

Here's how it works: KOMAZA farms generate substantial income when harvested. Farmers receive most of this income to reward their hard work. KOMAZA also receives a portion of this money to recover our costs and retain a small profit. We earn income from the project to make our organization sustainable in each community. By achieving per-farm profitability, KOMAZA will become a financially self-sustaining, permanent partner for development. And by reinvesting in program expansion, KOMAZA will become self-scaling—expanding to eventually reach farmers throughout Africa.

[founder and executive director]

Tevis Howard



Tevis Howard is the Founder and Executive Director of KOMAZA, a non-profit social enterprise established in 2006 and based in Coastal Kenya.

As an undergraduate, Mr. Howard's academic pursuits frequently brought him to Kenya, where he conducted malaria immunology research at the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust Research Labs. As he spent more time in East Africa, he acquired a deep understanding of the social and economic problems facing this extremely impoverished part of the world. Upon realizing the remarkable potential and entrepreneurial spirit of the community, he launched KOMAZA (Swahili for "promote development and encourage growth"), to create income-generating opportunities for smallholder farmers living in Kenya's infertile and drought-prone regions. He has since dedicated his efforts to growing and strengthening the organization.

In 2008, Tevis was awarded the prestigious Draper Richards Fellowship for Social Entrepreneurship. With additional support from the Mulago Foundation and others, KOMAZA now employs approximately 100 staff and has worked through five successful planting seasons, establishing multiple experimental farms and planting over a quarter-million fast-growing trees with 1,000 smallholder farmers. He has also been awarded the Rainer Arnhold Fellowship and the Pop!Tech Social Innovation Fellowship for his vision and work with KOMAZA.

Mr. Howard graduated from Brown University with a Bachelors degree in Neuroscience.