



Bringing Power to Watamu - A report from Hannah Karanja- Briggs about bringing the press to Watamu

DAY 1 Sat 14th May

We (my husband & I) met the journalist Alphonse Gari, who you may already know, in the Dongo Kundu area where he started his interviews with the local businesses at the roadside. We wanted this to be about the regular citizenry who are faced with unnecessary extra social economic problems due to poor services by utility providers especially KPLC. The insecurity after night fall because we have no lights at home or on the street, the inability to earn an income because everything we do needs power in one form or another, children who have to get up to go to school at 5am in the dark and who come back home and are unable to study because there's no light, ... the list goes on. Basically, a forgotten citizenry under siege! And YET Watamu is a world class destination!

We proceeded to interview the local businesses at the Turtle Bay junction and Dr Erulu at Watamu Hospital. Nicki Parrazzi met us briefly at Turtle Bay junction where a large crowd gathered to voice their concerns on camera to Alphonse. She directed us to Dawn's house where we documented the heart-breaking hardship she and the foster children endure during outages. From there we went onto Jiwe Leupe where we met Abdallah who gave us an in-depth interview on the power situation. Alphonse documented leaning poles, hanging transformers, low cables... everything you need to invite a fatal incident. We stopped filming at about 6pm because we ran out of light.

DAY 2 Sun 15th May

On Sunday we met Alphonse Gari at 10.30am at Timboni. We drove down to the busy Al-Noor store and there we got a huge crowd. Muktar agreed to go on camera and so did Munawar. Citizens driving down the road stopped and gave interviews. Interestingly enough we saw a suspicious car follow us with a man speaking on his phone. Shortly afterwards a KPLC land cruiser slowly crawled by and surprisingly the crowd took no notice of them. Anymore it looks like KPLC does not serve the community at large and they are angry. One man wondered where they were going and another retorted "kwa matagiri "which got me wondering about the same. Where were they cruising to at 10km?

From Al-Noor we went to the old fish market and a community leader there spoke on camera about the effects of electricity on the trade. The residents gathered with us at the beach and then insisted on going into the village to show the us the dangers they are faced with every day.

The first street we got to had a live pole and line on the ground and children playing around it. I called Henry but he didn't answer so I sent a picture to Nicky asking that she gets hold of him. I also sent Henry a direct WhatsApp pic of the same. About 5 min later he called me to say his team where on the way. The main issue here is that residents were not able to get KPLC on the line to report. Many stated they have no credit to call them and therefore no way to report. There were 5 other poles down in this neighbourhood. All this around the corner from exclusive holiday homes. I have to admit it was embarrassing to see fancy homes next to a community left behind. At the very least I thought they'd help report these types of problems as a social responsibility on their part.

From here we proceeded to get on tape the power line coming out of the roof in the Savanna Bar. Jaap, the owner of Tannes Tavern called and asked if he could be included in the interview. This was great for us.

By 3pm we were done and Alphonse returned to Malindi to start his work. It will go out in print and film and he will let me know dates and times and we will share it once it's live.

What can you do?

We need you to report every power outage to KPLC either on their app or by dialling *977# with your account number. Please also report if you see broken lines or poles in your community so that KPLC can be alerted to the power failures.

What are we doing?

The watamu association is continuing to collect data and advocate for the community.

In the press:

The coverage from the various news channels following the journalist visits can be seen below can be seen through the attached links below.

<https://youtu.be/G6yl2VQad4U>

<https://youtu.be/qC8s45mv0zQ>

<https://youtu.be/UdLs2Wg-Msw>

<https://youtu.be/KLH94jeMgpc>

<https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-05-13-watamu-frequent-power-blackouts-affecting-image-of-renown-tourism-destination/>