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Supai! from Future Warriors Project

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SUPAI! from Sianga, our President

Supai! Welcome to FWP's first edition! "Supai" means hello in Maa, the language spoken by Maasai. Being the first edition, I feel it is my role to introduce you to Maasai people, so our editor gave me a little more space to tell the Maasai story – please read on!

The Maasai are my people – we live in the most remote places in Kenya and Tanzania, among native wildlife. Many of you will have seen our images on advertising for African safaris or in documentaries – we are the tall people wearing red, living in the wilderness with our cows, goats and donkeys, often seen jumping.

Our culture has not changed in many ways for hundreds of years. While many tribes disappeared after colonialism and independence, we have preserved our way of life.

Today global warming and loss of land are the biggest threat to our livelihoods. Our villages are in some of the driest places in Africa and our livestock are suffering and dying through drought.

Our children, families and communities are going without food, cannot access clean water

and are suffering malnutrition.

Many young people are changing their lives completely to support their families. We younger Maasai do not mind change. But change should bring a people forwards, not destroy them. Young Maasai people want to have more control over our destiny and to choose how we respond to the challenges ahead.

In this issue you will be introduced to Supuk Kitotoi, one the first Maasai Warriors who made his way from a remote Maasai village to Arusha city and endured many hardships finding a means to support his family. Supuk's story is so familiar to me. These days there is a constant flow of warriors to the city in search of new opportunities. I am sure you will find Supuk an immensely brave character who has paved the way to a challenging new world.

Future Warriors Project is all about Supuk and the challenges he has faced. We want to find a way to give young Maasai who are prepared to take enormous risks for others new opportunities.

By the time you read this, I will be in Tanzania ready to start the FWP Business Opportunities for Maasai project pilot. Through this, nine Maasai warriors just



like Supuk will be given the opportunity to start a business. This is a rare opportunity for these warriors to move forward, create a new life for themselves and their families. I am proud to have led FWP to this stage, and can't wait to start.

I hope to see many of you on my return, and I am sure I will have many inspirational stories to share.

Sianga

PS—Read more about our projects on page 2!

Read about Supuk on page 3!



Tanzanian Maasai live mainly along its Northern border

- **What is it about Maasai shoes?** Get your own pair and support FWP —see page 2!
- **Get Involved!** Volunteer for FWP in Tanzania or Australia—see page 4!
- **Contact us, book us as a speaker or make a donation—** see page 4!

Our projects—update from Tanzania

◇ Business Opportunities for Maasai (BOMA) project

What is it?

- Business start-ups for Maasai Warriors who have been forced to look for work in Arusha city
- Mentoring from successful business owners
- Action-learning brotherhood (they reflect on strengths/weaknesses together)
- Warriors must demonstrate:
 - * need
 - * business plan
 - * commitment to supporting their family



BOMA is supporting Maasai who earn piecemeal salaries in the dangerous role of night watchmen in Arusha

A big thanks to our sponsors for the BOMA project: Pine Rivers Daybreak Rotary Club, Glenn Harris and XL Nation

UPDATE—Excitement in the FWP camp! Sianga, our President, has just flown to Tanzania to kick off the BOMA pilot project. Nine Maasai warriors from Kiserian village will be selected to receive business start-ups in teams of three. First up for the project is meeting town-based warriors and inviting them to construct their own ideas for a successful business.

They will need to communicate their plans to an independent selection panel who will recommend the best plans and teams to receive a start-up grant. These warriors will have experienced hardship and make a big commitment to supporting their families back in the village, just like Supuk Kitotoi, who you can read about on the next page. Good luck!

◇ Maasai Hub

What is it (or what WILL it be)?

- A Maasai community and social enterprise hub in Arusha
- A place where Maasai will:
 - * get an orientation to the city
 - * access training, business opportunities and new pathways
 - * learn and discuss contemporary issues, such as climate change, gender equality, health and HIV

UPDATE—where to start on this important project! Sianga is in Tanzania investigating existing buildings in Arusha that FWP could use to start a hub, while we raise funds to buy land and build. We are hoping to start “small” on this project at the end of 2011. Watch this space on Sianga’s return!



Sianga models his shoes for Rotary

The story of Maasai shoes...

Everywhere I go there is one question I am always asked—tell us about your shoes!

These days Maasai shoes are made out of recycled motorbike tyres. But it wasn't always that way—rubber-tyre shoes have only been worn for about 10-15 years. When I was a boy, our shoes were made out of cow leather.

So where did this trend come

from?

The story goes, a warrior was on a long trip droving livestock. He got a bit bored and spotted a motorbike tyre in the bush. With time on his hands, he thought “What can I do with this?”, and he fashioned a pair of shoes.

They were so hardy and comfortable that he became the envy of all the Maasai in his village and everyone wanted a pair.

These days everyone wears them, and there are different variations for men and women.

Want some? Order a pair for \$15 and Sianga will bring some back for you. All profits will support FWP. Email: sianga@futurewarriorsproject.org with your address, details of the length of your foot in cm, whether you would like a men's or women's pair and we will send you some! ■

Warrior Supuk Kitotoi braves a new world for his family

“My mother fed the seven of us children by walking 30 km day to fetch water and exchange it with other families for food. It was really hard...”



Meet Supuk Kitotoi, the first Maasai Warrior who left his home village for Arusha town

Supuk—to start with, which Maasai village are you from?

I am from Kiserian, near where Sianga (the President of FWP) is from, but I also grew up in Ketumbeine which is near the Kenyan border.

How was life growing up?

My father died when I was young, leaving three wives and their families to take care of themselves. He had no cattle so we had no way to support ourselves. My mother fed the seven of us children by walking up to 30km a day to fetch water and exchange it with other families for food. It was really hard.

What made you decide to come to Arusha?

When I got older I started looking after other people's cows and goats in exchange for food and shelter. Sometimes if a goat had twins I would be offered one (this is a Maasai custom), and soon I had a small herd of goats. I felt like this was the biggest help to my family in a long time and that led me to think about getting a job so I could buy more livestock for my family. I heard a rumour that

there were jobs in Longido, a Maasai town on the highway near the Kenyan/Tanzanian border. But when I got there it really wasn't much bigger than a village and I ended up doing the same thing as before. That was when I heard about Arusha and decided to go.

How was living in Arusha when you arrived?

It was hard for so many reasons. At that time there were no other Maasai warriors in Arusha so I was very lonely. I lived on the streets for four months, but managed to get food by helping other people with their work. I was then offered a job as a night watchman. I worked a 7-day week for less than \$15 per month. I had no accommodation. I lived and slept in the same clothes for such a long time. I worked at night and slept under a tree during the day. I had no friends so it was a really lonely time.

Only \$15 per month! How could you help your family on such a meagre salary?

I sent half of my salary home. I spent one year working in that job, and one day my boss's friend offered me a job for \$20 per month so I took that and stayed for 8 months. The same thing happened and I was then

offered another job for \$30 per month. In 2001 I got my current job guarding the Rickshaw Safaris office. They offered me \$40 per month with a chance to get a salary increase each year. They gave me a small storage area to sleep and cook meals in—it seemed like a dream come true! I now earn \$80 per month, which makes me one of the best paid warriors in town.

Why is being a watchman such a dangerous job?

We are only armed with our traditional Maasai weapons. If you get attacked by a gang of thieves with guns, you don't have a lot of options. Often the best strategy is to hide, but this can be difficult as the owners of the property you guard might think you conspired with the thieves. In my time here I have met warriors who have been killed, seriously injured or put in jail for (allegedly) conspiring with thieves. Every night you put your life at risk. I have been lucky.

Other warriors in town look up to you — why?

Over the last 5 years many warriors have come to Arusha looking for work and I have a lot of advice and experience to share. I spend a lot of my day time going around trying to find warriors who look lost and

confused and offer them support, a place to sleep and food. Often I have 4-5 warriors staying in my little storage area with me at any given time.

You and Sianga created an insurance fund for warriors. Tell me about that?

Sianga has always been a man of action and after we saw how many warriors were injured, sick or could not get home to family funerals, we decided to start a fund where every warrior in town contributes a small amount of money. It goes into a kitty for any Maasai who might need help. It's not a lot and probably doesn't cover every situation, but it helps.

How is your family faring now?

My family are now going well, and are expanding – I recently got married and am expecting my own child. But we have managed our money really well and have been very committed to tending our small herd of livestock. It is not enough to just get money, you need to keep managing it, and do the best with what you have.

How about the FWP Business Opportunities for Maasai project?

The project will open up chances that we just don't have access to. It will take the people who start the businesses into a new life and help them support their families back home. Knowing that the person managing the project understands us and knows what we are experiencing in life is so motivating for us.

Do you have a message for people who have donated money to FWP?

Of course I send a BIG thank you. You are welcome in my home any time. ■



Supuk's shelter, which he shares with homeless warriors

Get Involved! — Give your time to FWP

Volunteer in Tanzania

Want to make a difference in the lives of Maasai as well as have the experience of a lifetime? FWP is scoping volunteering opportunities both for our own projects and in Maasai communities in Tanzania to start late 2011/early 2012.

We expect opportunities will include:

- Teaching English to warriors in town
- Business and office assistance
- Project management
- Teaching in a Maasai village

Both Melanie and Sianga Kuyan have loads of experience with volunteering in Tanzania,

so you can be assured the program will be well managed and you will be looked after. Interested? Drop us an email now (see contact details below).

More details of the program will be available after Sianga's return (in June).

Give your time in OZ

HELP! We always need it! If you are interested in joining a FWP fundraising committee for an event to be held in October or November, or in fundraising on behalf of FWP, assisting with this newsletter, with marketing or in any other capacity, we would love to hear from you. Drop us an email or give us a call (see contact details below).

Listen to us!

Got a group of friends or colleagues who might be interested in our cause?

We would be delighted to come and chat with you. Sianga and Melanie are really keen to raise awareness of the Maasai people. It is also an excellent way for FWP to build its network and get more ideas. Please contact us if you are interested.

BIG THANKS

A big thanks to FWP volunteers, which is pretty much everyone involved! Special shout out to Darryl West (our web guru) and Annette Nicholls (Treasurer) for their support.

Future Warriors Project empowers young Maasai to build a sustainable future for themselves, their families and their community.

Make a difference— donate today

If you want to make a difference to the lives of young Maasai, donate money to our projects. You can do it online via **GiveNow**, do it by **bank deposit**, or by **cheque**.

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Donate now with your credit card using GiveNow

Click on this icon to donate using the secure facilities of GiveNow, or visit www.givenow.com.au/futurewarriorsproject.

If you want your money to support a particular project, please indicate this in the Special Message you can leave when you enter your donation details. You can make a one-off donation or set up recurring payments using GiveNow.

Bank deposits

You can also make a one-off donation or set up a periodic payment from your bank account straight into ours. Our bank details are:

BANK: Westpac
Account Name: Future Warriors Project Inc.
BSB: 034-264
Acct No: 299347

Please remember to email us at accounts@futurewarriorsproject.org with your contact details and a little bit of information about your payment (for example, please tell us if you would like to support a particular project so we can send you a receipt and message).

Cheque

Please make cheques payable to 'Future Warriors Project Inc.' and mail to:

Unit 30/155 John Paul Drive
Springwood
Queensland 4127 Australia

Don't forget to write us a note if you would like your donation to be put towards a particular project.

GOT A QUESTION OR IDEA

Don't be shy! Share it with us!

Our contact details are just above

