



engineers without borders  
ingénieurs sans frontières  
Canada



## New Developments

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### Strengthening Communities

Engineers Without Borders is strengthening communities through our work both overseas and in Canada. Our overseas volunteers focus on community building for sustainable development, and volunteers in Canada encourage their communities to get involved in international development through outreach, fundraising and education events.

#### Overseas: Growing trees for life in rural Ghana

*Ben Best an EWB Junior Fellow from the University of Waterloo Chapter, spent 4 months volunteering in northern Ghana last summer. He worked in partnership with Africa 2000 Network, a UN-founded organisation.*

There has been little rain so far this year and the water is getting muddier by the day. I sometimes wonder about bathing when I can't see the bottom of the bucket. The maize stalks bow to the harsh sun instead of standing tall and healthy. **Yet it is here, in this village, that I have fallen in love with the people and the way of life.**

The village of Kukpehi has about 450 people. Farming and animal rearing are by far the dominant economic activities, with the usual crops of maize, yam, rice, okra and soy beans. There is no electricity save two small solar panels which provide lights for the mosque (and adult literacy classes during the evenings). The community's water source is a small groundwater collection basin about a kilometre from the village.

I've been lucky enough to spend time living in Kukpehi, working with the people on a new agroforestry project. Agroforestry is the intercropping of trees in farmers' fields. The benefits are many, from reducing soil degradation to providing firewood. By helping the community start its own tree nursery, we are adding a new source of income for the villagers. **My role is to act as a project facilitator using my organisational experience as an engineering student.** The initiative is community-driven—I'm here to help get it off the ground.

Our approach in working with the community is to focus on their **strengths and assets**, rather than their needs and problems. The goal is to empower community members so they consider themselves capable citizens, not clients who need help from aid organisations. This simple change in perspective will make a world of difference in the success of this project. Africa 2000 Network has been a champion of this approach for years, using it to build relationships and facilitate community-driven development.

**The Kukpehi community identified the environment as an asset that needs to be both preserved and developed.** The tree nursery will supply seedlings for the village and several surrounding communities. After the project has been running for some time, valuable seedlings such as mangoes will also be raised and sold to generate even more income.

Right now, people come out every day to work in the nursery because the rains are late this year and the men are not out in the fields. However, I am not sure how the arrival of the rains and the increase in farming activity will affect community participation. To address this issue, there will be a general meeting to create a work schedule. **Concrete planning and goal setting will be integral to the success of the project**, allowing community members to measure their progress and celebrate their accomplishments.

Kukpehi is off to a great start. Community ownership and drive are crucial to the sustainability of this project, growing more than trees, but also a sustainable future for the people of Kukpehi.



# At home: Over 100,000 people celebrate the end of poverty

Unsuspecting public transit users in cities across Canada had a different kind of commute on March 1, 2007. Engineers Without Borders members from across the country reached over 100,000 people in one day with the message that **extreme poverty can be eliminated, and Canadians have a part to play.**

The scope and scale of the day made for a hugely successful event: **32 EWB chapters in 9 provinces** participated, reaching out to their local communities and asking them to play their part.

In major Canadian cities, this message was driven home through the distribution of 75,000 newspapers, called the *Canadian Horizon*.

With the striking headline 'Worldwide celebrations: end of extreme poverty declared' commuters were stopped in their tracks before they realized that the paper was post-dated 2025. The paper described how, in the next two decades, individuals, corporations and governments could end extreme poverty.

**EWB Day** is marked annually during National Engineering Week. On this day, EWB members across the country devote themselves to one day of coordinated public engagement. EWB Day 2007 saw **hundreds of volunteers across the country** interact with Canadians on public transit, in workplaces and on university campuses across the country.

EWB's public engagement activities influences individuals—the way they shop, work and think—as well as public and corporate policies.

Kimberly Bowman, EWB's Director of Outreach, notes, "Public engagement inspires people from diverse backgrounds to come together as a community and work on something we can all agree on—the need to eliminate extreme poverty."

Join the thousands who have already logged onto **www.PlayYourPart.ca** and learn how you can help end extreme poverty.



## Highlights:

- Parker Mitchell, co-CEO of EWB, presented at the **World Bank's Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation.** The speech served as an opportunity to share our development knowledge and demonstrate our continued recognition as a leader in the development sector.
- George Roter and Parker Mitchell, EWB co-CEOs, will be recognized in April with the **Public Policy Forum's prestigious Young Leaders Award** for EWB's leadership in public policy and civic engagement.
- Last January, over **500 delegates** from across the country and around the world gathered in Calgary at the sixth annual **Engineers Without Borders National Conference.**
- **Eight new long-term volunteers** headed overseas at the end of February for 13-14 month volunteer placements. They are working in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Zambia and Malawi.
- **42 EWB Junior Fellows** are getting ready for a summer overseas. They will depart in May, after a week of training in Toronto, to spend 4 months overseas.