

SATURDAY NATION

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ATHLETICS

Kelai helps feed poor in Turkana



Correspondent | DAILY NATION Commonwealth Games marathon champion John Kelai helps feed poor children in Turkana. About 4,000 children received bread, soda and bags of maize in some of the most rural needy areas of Turkana as part of a feeding programme by the Shoe4Africa sports charity.

By SUNDAY NATION CORRESPONDENT Posted Saturday, January 1 2011 at 21:42

The Shoe4Africa sports charity launched its Turkana Children's Feeding Programme over the Christmas holidays in conjunction with the Small Voices Foundation of New York.

The initiative saw about 4,000 children receive bread, soda and bags of maize in some of the most rural needy areas of Turkana.

Shoe4Africa ambassador and newly crowned Commonwealth Games champion, John Kelai, who comes from Katilu Centre, one of the villages serviced by this project, was on hand to pass out the food supplies.

Empowerment run

"We are glad that the kind sponsors have seen the real need the people of this area are facing. Getting even one meal a day is hard, so they have done a lot," said Kelai who will try for his third title at the Mumbai Marathon in two weeks.

The Turkana athletes came out in force to help distribute the food and also to take part in an empowerment run with Kelai and the Shoe4Africa team.

Mama Ajuma, mother to Kenyan supermodel Nancy Ajuma, who runs the Nawoitorong Women's centre and Lodge where the team was based, was also present and asked other donors also to recognize this forgotten area of Kenya.

"We do not have the resources up here and we have talent and potential, but we are needing development."

40-degree heat

Toby Tanser, Shoe4 Africa's CEO, said, after a midday run in 40-degree heat, that if he sees a commitment from the runners in the region to train that he will do his best to support a program to develop rural talent.

"John Kelai and Paul Ereng, the Olympic champion from 1988, really inspire the locals to step up, but the climate is against them. I have travelled all over Kenya but find Turkana to be one of the most needed areas of support in Kenya."

"I would be delighted if we can develop athletic talent here, and combine the sport with athletes helping run sustainable feeding programs."

Already Shoe4Africa is planning its 2011 event in Lodwar town.

