



Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife

November 2022



The Heart of the Work

In 2022, we lost two dear friends and members of the FKS_W/NECOFA team. In the June newsletter I noted the passing of FKS_W founding member Roz Slovic. Since then, our partner Samuel Muhunyu, the Director of NECOFA in Kenya has also left us. I remember him, below, with his words and mine, in a communication between us last year at just this time.



Samuel and students planting trees at Michinda Primary School January 2007

December 24, 2021

Dear Samuel,

The year will be ending soon and John and I send our best wishes to you and your family for the holidays. I also want to express my gratitude to you for all you've done during the last two years of the pandemic (and even before) to maintain our joint support at a high level for the residents in our partner communities.

I hope that John and I will be able to join you soon in person in the activities of NECOFA and FKS_W in Kenya. For now, Happy Holidays and may you enjoy good health and happiness in the coming months. Thank you again for all you do to create possibilities for so many to have a better life and for being such a wonderful partner.

Gwen

December 24, 2021

Asante Gwen, for the compliment and I further confirm that I intend to continue holding "fort" for all of us until and beyond your next visit. Allow me to add that our partnership's work has enabled me to rediscover myself and further strengthened my values. Working and touching families directly especially the young ones is very satisfying. Unlike our other projects' activities, these FKS_W ones engage me 24/7 which in "Sheng" means all hours of the day and all days of the week and it makes my rest periods more meaningful.

In my visit to Kirepari and Kokwa just before Christmas I received a very sweet surprise gift in the form of a goat. The Kirepari community, especially women, had contributed money for the purchase of the goat which was handed over to me by Grace and some women. It is an understatement to say that I was overjoyed and ensured that the goat became part of our extended family's Christmas meal. I wonder how else I would have been so emotionally delighted!

On the other hand, working with you guys has been very wonderful to me and our relationship is beyond a work relationship. You are part of my life. I wish you guys a prosperous 2022.

Samuel

"Our focus should be on the communities we work with. Our team has the obligation of empowering the "beneficiary community" to be part of the team and later to take the leadership. I am aware that nurturing this community leadership is a long and tedious process, but it should be the ultimate goal and endeavor of our partnership."



Samuel with Sian Mulwa at Thika School for the Blind April 2022



Introducing FKS^W's Partners at NECOFA

Since the end of July we've been working closely with our colleagues at NECOFA to continue the activities of the partnership and to maintain the level of support needed by the various programs and projects in the communities. Our NECOFA colleagues have been an integral part of our work all along and their involvement is critical to the partnership's continuing effectiveness. I've asked three of our most involved colleagues at NECOFA to introduce themselves and to talk a bit about their roles and about the changes they've seen in the communities as a result of the NECOFA/FKS^W partnership. We're so very grateful to all of them and so appreciate of their collaboration and their friendship!



Lucy Mathenge

My name is Lucy Mathenge and I work as Administrator at Network for Ecofarming in Africa (NECOFA) and with Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife (FKS^W). I joined NECOFA in 2006, the same year that the 2 organizations joined hands in partnership towards community development projects in Kajiado, Meru, Isiolo, Baringo and Nakuru Counties. Since then, I have been the personal assistant to the late Mr. Samuel Muhunyu who, until his demise, was NECOFA's Director. I am proud of this position. It has been a golden opportunity to have a person who mentored and shaped me to who I am today. I miss Mr. Muhunyu every day.



Working with Madam Gwen Meyer and John Neumeister has been an added advantage to me in learning about community development. I've been actively involved in implementing the projects funded through FKS^W and have helped to ensure positive results. I appreciate FKS^W's passion and tireless fundraising to improve livelihoods of the less fortunate here through education, community health, food security, water and sanitation. I thank the directors for assuring us and our beneficiary communities that the NECOFA- FKS^W partnership will continue despite losing Mr. Samuel. We will work together to realize Samuel's big dreams. Asante sana.



John Munene

My name is John Munene. I am a farmer and a businessman, and I am also a trained Agriculture Engineer. I have a passion in supporting communities. I met Samuel Muhunyu, the executive director of Network for Eco-Farming in Africa (NECOFA) in 2003 when I attended a farmers' meeting organized by the Ministry of Agriculture Officer in my area. Samuel was among the facilitators. After the meeting, he invited me to his office to give me more information about NECOFA and I developed an interest in NECOFA'S activities. Later, I became a Board Member and then became Chairman of the Board, the position I hold to date.



Since 2006 the NECOFA/FKS^W partnership has benefited many communities in Education, Environmental Conservation, Health, Food Security and Nutrition and I have seen much progress and development. Schools supported by FKS^W are in areas of extreme hardship, where even getting a teacher is a big challenge because no teachers from other regions want to work in such areas. Other benefits from interventions by the partnership include health care through the establishment of a dispensary in Kachiuru, where people had limited access to a health facility. We are very grateful to Gwen and John and FKS^W because communities now have a better standard of living. Following the demise of Samuel, the NECOFA Board of Management appointed me as the Director of NECOFA, a position that I humbly accepted to ensure continuity of Samuel's great work and future dreams. I will do my best to keep his dreams alive and carry on his Legacy. Our partnership with FKS^W will continue as before and we pray that we will be strong as we keep on supporting the needy communities.



Jane Karanja

My name is Jane Karanja, the first-born daughter to the late Mr. Samuel Muhunyu. Since my graduation from the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy in 2009, I have worked with Mr. Samuel and NECOFA as Program Coordinator. In 2015, in collaboration with the local farming and forest communities, we established Terra Madre Tours and Travel, Ltd. of which I am the Managing Director. Following the demise of Mr. Samuel, I have a new role as resource mobilization and fundraising manager to ensure the continuity of Mr. Samuel's legacy. FKS^W is a major partner to NECOFA and the partnership has achieved much in promoting community education, health, environment conservation, food security and nutrition. We are grateful to Gwen and John and FKS^W for providing the much needed support for the communities. It is our prayer that we shall continue working together into the future as we keep Mr. Samuel's legacy burning! Kind regards,





Back to "Normal?"

Since early 2020, when the appearance of Covid, and then its subsequent spread, made travel risky, John and I were unable, until last April, to participate in the activities in Kenya that constitute our regular in-person involvement in FKSWS.

In January, we'll return to Kenya to resume our "normal" beginning of the year activities with Lucy and John. We'll travel with them for 3 weeks, visiting the communities and meeting with residents and school committees to make plans for the coming year. We'll also select new students to receive scholarships and consider requests for assistance with other projects.

Another welcome change is that the school year will be back to "normal," beginning in January and ending in December instead of the confusing schedule created to make up for the lost year in 2020. We're looking forward to 2023!



Boarders at Kokwa Primary School

Hayo ni yote kwa sasa!
That's all for now!



A student at Kachiuru and her mother

We are **SO GRATEFUL** to you for your continuing support for FKSWS and especially during Covid. Some of you have been with us for 19 years- since our first request for assistance in 2003 at John's and my wedding when FKSWS began. But, no matter when you began supporting our efforts, you are helping to make a huge difference in many lives and we so appreciate all of you!!!!

Through your generosity, people have been able to lift themselves out of poverty, recover from serious illness, send their children to school, or enjoy nutritious food that fills an empty stomach. Young people graduating from high school and/or college are able to earn a living because of the education they've received.

You can make an unrestricted donation in any amount to help with the greatest need or help us with funding for FKSWS's education program which continues to expand.

*** Scholarships for one year:**

- \$50 for primary school (uniforms, shoes, books)
- \$125 for boarding (room and board at school)
- \$500 for secondary (room, board, tuition, and supplies)
- \$500 for a student with special needs
- \$1000-\$2000 for a year of university study

Thank you so much!!



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