



Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife

November 2020



Adapting To These Uncertain Times

For the first time in 10 years, I couldn't make my summer trip to Kenya in August. I really missed visiting the villages, meeting with community members and catching up on activities there. But Samuel gives us updates through email and during regular Zoom meetings that have enabled us to address the needs created by the Covid-19 pandemic in a timely way. Through the generosity of our donors, FKSWS has been able to provide food, masks and soap to 95 of the most needy families in the villages every month since April, and to address other urgent needs.

Of course, NECOFA's and FKSWS's other activities in Kenya continue. In this newsletter, I'll share photos and information from a report that Samuel has just sent and tell you about an exciting new 2-year project at Kachiuru funded by a new partner organization in the Netherlands.

As always, we are grateful for your continuing support, especially at this very difficult time. I am touched by your concern and care for the many Kenyans whose lives have been greatly affected.



Sharon Guyo Mendwa
Kachiuru Primary Class 8



News from Samuel Regarding Covid-19's Impact in Kenya



Muzamil Adan
Kachiuru Primary Class 8

"Officially, Covid-19 arrived in Kenya in March but we have learned that the disease arrived earlier. Many people don't agree with the current statistics because the rate of testing has been very low. In the last 3 weeks the infection rate is said to have decreased to under 5% of those tested, but the testing rate also decreased so many of us think there is a deliberate effort to keep the infection rate low in order to justify further opening of the economy, schools and political activities. Official records as of 11/3 indicate that 57,093 persons have been infected with the disease and 1,039 have died. We at NECOFA greatly appreciate the Covid-19 interventions provided by FKSWS and well-wishers that target the most vulnerable families in the communities we work with in Kenya. The families and their leaders have expressed their gratitude for the support and asked me to convey the same to FKSWS donors."



The School Situation in Kenya

Schools closed in Kenya in March and in July, education officials announced that they were canceling the academic year and students would have to repeat it. Education experts believe Kenya is the only nation to have gone so far as to declare the entire school year a total loss, and to order students to start over. At that time, classes were not expected to begin again until January 2021, the usual start of Kenya's school year.

But Samuel says that "The President's address to the nation on September 28th disappointed many when he did not give clear direction(s) on the reopening of schools. The Ministry of Education had said that schools would reopen soon and had instructed teachers to report to their schools on Monday, October 5. But many parents were unwilling to send their children to school, citing insufficient infrastructure and preparation for the safety of their children. There is much

confusion on this and other issues. Some kids are back in school but Covid-19 infections are on the increase again with the Ministry of Health indicating they may have to advise the government to revert to closure and lockdowns. Nakuru County is among the places where infection rates are high and the people don't even seem to care. You hardly see people wearing face masks now and I fear we could be courting disaster."

2021 FKSWS Scholarships

FKSWS currently supports 128 students who will be starting this year over! Regardless of the uncertainty about the reopening of the schools in Kenya, we hope that children will be able to return to classes before too long, with the proper protections in place. **If you've been sponsoring a student(s) we'd really appreciate your continuing sponsorship for the 2021 school year!** We'll hold the funds until schools reopen and make sure that the children have what they need to return to their classes safely.



Helping Students Remain Engaged In Learning



Revision sessions for class 7 students at Kachiuru

teachers from the community. Parents of students from other schools in the area have requested the school committee to allow their children to benefit from the initiative, too, and the committee accepted these students beginning on October 1st on the condition that they, too, abide by all terms and conditions on Covid-19 protection. The Endonyio Sidai committee sees this mix of students to be an opportunity for their students to learn, share and compete with other students. FKSWS provides a small stipend every other month for these dedicated teachers.

The school committees at Kachiuru and Endonyio Sidai have initiated informal classes for students in Classes 7 and 8 as an ongoing strategy to help them do well on the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, the national exam all students take at the end of Class 8. The marks students receive on this exam determine their placement in secondary schools, with higher marks allowing entrance to better schools.

At Kachiuru, two teachers hired by the community lead the revision sessions which begin at 9 am and end at 1 pm with a 30-minute break at 10:30. One-on-one sessions for individual students provide extra help when needed. The students, who have been guided on how to protect themselves from Covid-19, wear facemasks and at Endonyio Sidai, sit at a safe distance from each other. Hand washing stations are located outside the classrooms.

The classes at Endonyio Sidai are also taught by two



Students at Endonyio Sidai



Young Women Making a Contribution



Sofia Adan

Sofia Adan

In February, Sofia was preparing to begin her second year at King’s Medical College where she’s training to be a professional health worker. When schools closed in Kenya, she began volunteering at the Dispensary in Isiolo, the town where she lives, while waiting for school to resume. She continues to volunteer there, learning a lot on the job, and looks forward to returning to school. Sofia recently visited her college and was given materials to study in preparation for the next course in her program. Now when she’s not working, she spends 2-3 hours a day studying these materials. After completing the second year of studies, Sofia will register with the government and be eligible for further training in public health. Samuel says her course is very important for the country and especially Sofia’s county, which is part of a program in 4 counties piloting Kenya’s proposed Universal Health Coverage Program.

Irene Lechingei

We met Irene in 2015 at her home on Kokwa Island. A high school graduate and a member of the Ilchamus community that lives at and around Lake Baringo, she was helping at the dispensary on the island and wanted to become a health professional. In 2016, with assistance from FKSWS, Irene graduated from college at the top of her class with a diploma in Community Health. After graduation, she returned to the Kokwa Island dispensary and assisted the nurse there, working with pregnant mothers and helping to deliver their babies.



Irene Lechingei

In September, Irene sent us this message:

“ I have a good news to you and John. I got a new job at Ministry of Health as a Public Health Assistant. They have deployed me to a dispensary near Eldume. Thanks big! Am humbled for the diploma course you supported me in. I can't take it for granted! May almighty God pour unending blessings to you and your families. I got more skills and knowledge working with you. Am humbled. Thanks big! Am praying to God to see me through. I wish to extend my hands to help others the way you help me and bring a bright future to my life. Am happy and I don't know how to appreciate you. You are my mentor and you mean a lot to my life and the Ilchamus Community.”



A New Vision for Kachiuru

John and I often meet interesting people at airports, especially on our trips to Kenya. In January, at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, we had difficulty finding a table in the KLM lounge where we could sit and eat our breakfast. When a booth suddenly opened, we grabbed it, feeling a bit guilty because the table could accommodate several more people. Minutes later, a man and his son approached and seeing the open space, asked if they could join us. In the 30 minutes we spent together, we learned that their names were Arnauld and Camille, that they were Dutch, and that they were on their way to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. We also discovered that we had common experiences in travel, careers and international work in Africa. Arnauld asked for FKSWS contact information and before we left Kenya three weeks later, he wrote to ask for more information about our work. In February, Arnauld and Camille invited FKSWS to write a proposal to their family foundation, Stichting Ruimte, for a project in Kenya. In May, they granted FKSWS \$10,000 over two years for an exciting initiative that is now in its initial stages at Kachiuru.



Meeting of the elders, led by Samuel, at Kachiuru

The purpose of this project is to work with the Kachiuru community to create an effective system and structure for self-governance and management of their resources. Over the past 15 years, FKSWS has helped to build a basic infrastructure in the community consisting of the school, the dispensary, the cattle dip and bore hole. These valuable additions to the community have transformed life there for many in the areas of health and sanitation, education, the protection and welfare of livestock and the potential for income. But coordinating and managing these assets has been a challenge for the residents.

The first goal of this project is to work with the leaders of the community to create a Community Based Organization (CBO) registered with the government that will function as an organizing body, with sub-committees to take responsibility for and management of the various resources. A second goal is to bring together community leaders and stakeholders (officials from both national and county governments, social service organizations, agencies and churches and others who have a responsibility for and interest in the well-being of the residents) to meet each other, to discuss the challenges there, to explain what the project hopes to accomplish, and to agree to work together in various roles and with specific responsibilities.

Covid-19 has created challenges to the plan, but in spite of that, two rounds of community assessments have been completed, and Samuel was able to bring together community leaders and stakeholders for initial meetings at Kachiuru in September and October. On September 29th, Ms. Christine Mwendu from the Kenya Social Services Department conducted a training at Kachiuru attended by 18 residents on the formation of a CBO. There have also been trainings on hygiene, handwashing and preventative health care.

These initial meetings have given Kachiuru residents information about the benefits they should be receiving and guidance on how to advocate for themselves with the various stakeholders. They've also had the opportunity to voice their issues to the officials whose responsibility it is to provide assistance to them. Equally as important, the community has been challenged to identify and take on its own responsibilities. Trainings will continue as the sub-committees are formed and begin to function.



The leadership team at Kachiuru after their first meeting. Samuel is on the far right.

This is an exciting time at Kachiuru and FKSWS looks forward to working with Arnauld, Camille and Stichting Ruimte as the development there unfolds. The community is eager to move forward, with Samuel's guidance, towards a new vision for Kachiuru.

At the end of the first meeting, the leaders agreed that they will hold hands and work together to ensure that services to the community are delivered properly and satisfactorily in Kachiuru. They will continue to preach peace and unity in the area.

Jitihada zako ziende vizuri!
May your efforts go well!



Fruits for Schools

In August 2017, students at Kigogo Primary School planted 100 fruit trees to create a fruit orchard on the school grounds as part of a project sponsored by the Eugene Metropolitan Rotary Club. The intent of the Fruits for Schools effort was to teach the students and their parents about planting and sustaining a fruit orchard as part of a strategy to supplement the families' limited diets. After receiving instruction from Gilgil Rotary Club member Daniel Wanjama, the children planted mango, orange, avocado and guava trees and passion fruit plants. Since the planting, each child has been responsible for caring for the tree they planted. To address the issue of minimal rainfall in this arid region, the grant also included a roof water catchment system and a large water tank to collect what rain does fall during the rainy season. The final addition was a fence to surround the garden to keep out the goats and other animals looking for a snack. The project has been a huge success, and a second grant, supported 15 Rotary Clubs in Eugene has been submitted to the Rotary Foundation to replicate the effort at 6 additional schools

2018

2020



Gilgil Rotarian Daniel Wanjama tells students about planting trees



All students in grades 5-8 planted a tree that they then cared for



Two years later, passion fruit on the vine



Rotarian Eva Muhahala admires the blossoms on a mango tree



Member of Parliament Margaret Wangari (in polka dot blouse) visited the garden in 2019



Mary Wambui



Mary's guava tree 6 months after planting



Learning on the Job

Annet Lemukut joined the FKSWS scholarship program in 2009 when she was in Class 5 at Kokwa Primary School. In 2012 she left the program to have a baby but she was determined to continue her education and returned to school as soon as she was able. Upon completion of Class 8, she passed the Kenya Primary School exit exam (KCPE) and then attended Kisima Girls High School in Maralal, graduating in 2018 at the age of 19.

Annet's plan was to go on to university last year, but there was a wait of several months before the new school year began and so in the meantime, with FKSWS's support, she enrolled in a training program to learn how to repair cellular phones. When Covid arrived in Kenya, Annet was forced to stop her training, just a few months short of graduation. If all goes well, training will resume in January and she will complete her studies. In the meantime, Annet has decided that she really enjoys this work and would like to start her own repair business. FKSWS will help her with the set up. We'll know where to go if we have a problem with our phones when we're in Kenya!



Annet Lemukut



My name is Safia Happi. I am a mother at Kachiuru. I say thank you for the good food that you gave us. It's very good. I'm so grateful. I have 10 people in my house and many challenges. Thank you.



My name is Dida Mato Gallo. I live in Kachiuru. During the Corona time, we received the food, oil and soap. I'm praying for you, that God will protect you and give you more. I'm very grateful for the food. Thank you.



My name is Isabella Mukohoti. I live in Kachiuru. I am a mother and the school cook. During this time of Corona, there are a lot of problems. I'm so grateful that the food was given so that no one would miss food. Everyone got some. We are so grateful because no one else remembered us except you, our donors. Thank you.

Hayo ni yote kwa sasa!

That's all for now!

Please consider making a donation to help with...

✳️ **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)

✳️ **Covid 19 Relief...for food, soap and masks**

...or make an unrestricted donation in any amount to help with the greatest need...

Thank you!!



Caroline Wairimu
Kachiuru Primary Class 8





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