



# Kenya Education Endowment Fund

- Empowering Young Kenyans

[www.kenyaeducation.org](http://www.kenyaeducation.org)

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KEEF Newsletter #14 March 2015

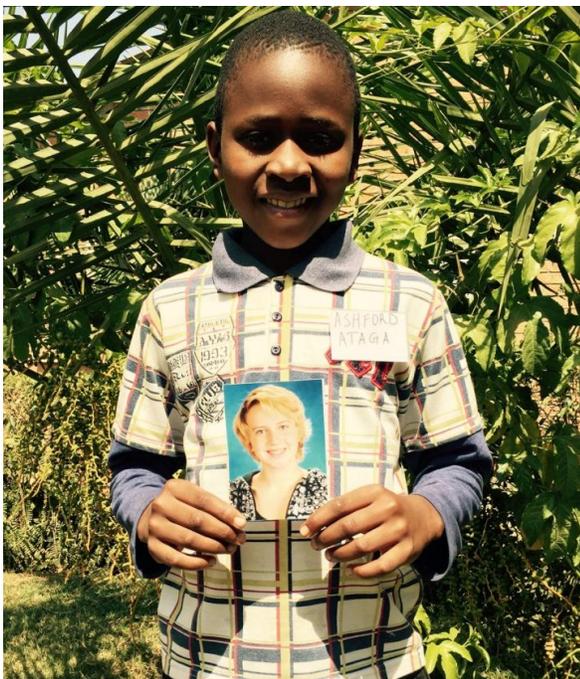
## Ashford's Story

Janice Trenholme

At Christmas in the Kootenay mountains, my sister told me that, as a Christmas present for her granddaughter, Zoe, she wanted to sponsor a student in her name. (I thought this was wonderful, but I could not help wondering if – being a teenager -- her 14 year-old granddaughter might prefer a new coat or something else for Christmas).

When Zoe learned of her gift from her grandmother, she surprised us all, and proclaimed that this was by far the most amazing gift she had ever received in all her life (who knew?!). So off I went to volunteer for my third time in Kenya with my partner, Dick Glassford (also a KEEF Board member), intent on finding a great student for Zoe. And find him we did!

Of all the 140 or so students we interviewed, Ashford came right up to me, shook my hand warmly, and confidently thanked me for the work



we do to help educate poor children in Kenya. This stood out, because most of the children we interviewed were shy and understandably very nervous, given that what is at stake for them is either getting a scholarship or continuing to live in poverty.

I asked Ashford about his family and he explained that he and his siblings live on a small plot of land with their aging grandmother. This is not uncommon, as in many Kenyan families the middle generation of parents has died of AIDs or other diseases. Ashford explained that his grandmother tills the soil on the neighbour's plots as well as her own to try to feed her grandchildren.

When I arrived back home from Kenya in late January, I was anxious to talk to Zoe. I reached her father one evening, and he explained that it might not be the best time to speak to Zoe, as she and her mother were both in tears (they had just received Ashford's letter and the picture of him proudly holding up Zoe's picture!).

I tell this story for two reasons: 1) It alone made my entire trip to Kenya more than worth the effort, and 2) I hope that it inspires others to give the gift of education, in the name of a relative or friend, to a very bright and needy Kenyan child who otherwise has no hope of attending school.

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## Form 4 KCSE Results

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education is based on the final exams of all Kenyan students at the end of Form 4 (Grade 12). Students who achieve a strong B+ or higher average will receive “call” letters from universities inviting them to register. These “calls” can be very attractive to students who may be persuaded to attend universities that have very high fees, and KEEF assists and counsels students to make reasonable decisions.

We are very pleased to report that the KEEF graduates of 2014 scored very high averages and many students are expecting call letters.

Here is a summary of the averages of the 31 Form 4 KEEF students at the end of 2014:

- 1 straight A (A plain)
- 11 A minus
- 11 B plus
- 3 straight B (B plain)
- 2 C plus
- 1 straight C (C plain)
- 1 C minus
- One student’s results missing

The score required for “direct entry” to university has not yet been announced, so students must wait to see if they will be called. In Kenya you are a direct entry student with lower course and housing fees, or a self-sponsored student with much higher fees and no guaranteed housing on campus.

## Have You Considered a Post Secondary Scholarship?

KEEF students require financial assistance to complete secondary school, and without continued support few will be able to attend post secondary institutions. The KEEF workshops provide some strategies to develop entrepreneurial, business and employment skills, but even direct entry students have a difficult time finding the funds to complete a post secondary program. In Kenya, as in Canada, education beyond high school has become more and more essential.

If you are interested in supporting a post secondary student, please contact us by email at [keefcan2010@gmail.com](mailto:keefcan2010@gmail.com) or phone Peg Klesner at 604-926-3018

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Alinda Ware presents graduation certificate



Watching the presentations



Form 4 leavers Handel Onacha and Brian Madasio

## New Student Orientation

Dick Glassford

For the fourth year in a row KEEF agents and volunteers facilitated a half day workshop for the new 2015 students and their parents or guardians. This workshop is so important because it sets the stage for the next four years of schooling for the students.

Students are asked to write their biographies and have their pictures taken for their sponsors. In addition, students have to *(Continued over)*

sign a contract which commits them to maintaining a C+ or better average for 2 out of 3 terms each year. Parents/guardians must also sign the contract and are provided with a copy to ensure they understand the importance of their students working hard for their scholarships. Most students excel in their studies as they are so appreciative of the opportunity of attending high school.



L to R: Alinda Ware, KEEF Agent from Comox; Thompson Mate; Grace Lidede, former school Principal; and Sarah Nabongo, KEEF Administrator, presenting to the students.

The Agents and Volunteers talk with the students and their families about their sponsors, the importance of giving back to their families and communities whenever they can, KEEF's expectations of them, and how they can help and support one another at school.

The workshop provides the opportunity for students to meet one another and for their parents/guardians to ask questions and meet other families. It truly is a wonderful venue as everyone is excited and looking forward to the beginning of high school the following week.

### Recognition of Sarah Nabongo

The KEEF Board would like to recognize the ongoing work of our Secretary-Administrator in the Kakamega office. Sarah has proven not only to have the skills to do a fine job, but she also makes an extra effort to work with our KEEF students and families, and to provide the Board with the necessary information we

require to manage our society and communicate with donors. Sarah is also an essential part of workshops, interviews, special events and other KEEF activities – thank you, Sarah!



Sarah in the office and serving lunch at Bondeni

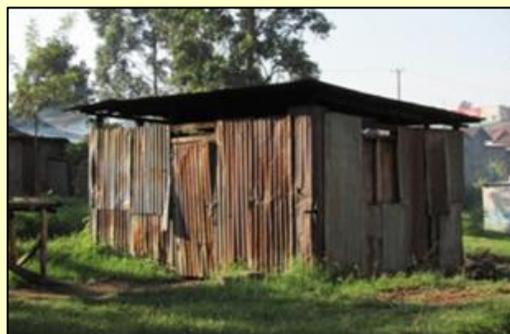


### A Bondeni Thank You

Dick Glassford

Sarah Nabongo, KEEF'S Kenyan Administrator, and I had the distinct pleasure of being invited to Bondeni Primary School for a lunch in January. The lunch was to honour Global Change For Children (GC4C) and KEEF for all the assistance they have provided Bondeni School over the years. What we didn't know was that both Sarah and I had to "work" for our lunch by helping in the kitchen and serving some of the 660 students their yummy meal of githeri, a mixture of beans and maize.

GC4C provided the funding for the new kitchen and KEEF managed the project to ensure the end result was an efficient and functional kitchen for the school. The old kitchen was small, with no ventilation and barely able to serve the school population.



Former Bondeni kitchen

*(Continued over)*

After the students were fed the class Prefects supervised them back in the classroom, which allowed the teachers to meet in the staff room to have their meal. Sarah and I made a short presentation to the teachers and then ate the traditional Kenyan lunch meal. After lunch I whispered in Sarah's ear, "When do we get ice cream?" I guess I said it a little too loudly, as Margaret, the Principal of Bondeni, quickly replied, "Why not?"



Sarah and I immediately excused ourselves from the table and ran to the local supermarket and bought 30 ice cream cups for the staff. When we gave out the desserts to the teachers, the look on their faces was priceless. They laughed and thoroughly enjoyed their unexpected treat. Who would have thought a little sarcastic comment could make 28 teachers smile and enjoy something that they don't have very often? A small thank you to the hard working staff at Bondeni.

More recently, GC4C has allocated funds to Bondeni Primary School to upgrade the library that GC4C established in 2010. GC4C has also continued to support water projects at other locations in collaboration with KEEF.



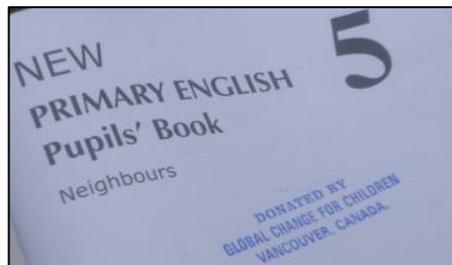
Principal and the new Bondeni kitchen in 2013



Madam Bonziana, in charge of the Library, and Madam Kisongoji



Stamping the books



Margaret stirs the Githeri

## Vancouver Foundation Update

When we opened an Endowment (i.e. trust) Fund account at Blue Shore Financial in the summer of 2013 in order to reach the \$10,000 required to be accepted by the Vancouver Foundation, I envisioned it taking years to reach that goal. Thanks to hard work by our fund raising committee and your generous donations, the goal was reached in December of 2013!

The intention of the fund is that while the capital invested by our donors will always remain in the fund, the earnings will provide an ongoing source of scholarships to students.

Since then the fund has grown to \$26,011. Donations can be made to KEEF or directly to the Vancouver Foundation in the KEEF name. Donors can also make gifts of publicly traded securities – contact the Foundation for details. Just go to [www.vancouverfoundation.ca](http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca) and follow the links to search for the Kenya Education Endowment Fund.

Marie Mackay

## Bicycles for Day School Students

Most of our KEEF students live in conditions so terrible that in order to succeed they need to attend a boarding school. But there are students who need to stay at home in order to support their families with daily chores. Some of our students are the eldest members of their families and are required to be close to home. Getting to and from their secondary school can be very difficult without some



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form of transportation. To assist these students, KEEF provides a bicycle which allows them to make it to school and back. One of our new students, David, lives 3 kilometres from his school, and now with his own bike, he can get to school and be home in time to help out the family.

This year we presented 6 bikes to happy and excited students. The cost of a new bike, tuned up and ready to ride, is around \$100. Donating to KEEF and stipulating you want some or all of your donation to go for bikes will ensure we continue to help those students who have long distances to get to school.

## Looking for a Sponsor



KEEF receives numerous donations each year allocated to “Student Support.” We sponsor a few students to attend “day schools” which have lower fees than boarding schools. In spite of the

obstacles that many of these students must overcome – in their home lives and also regarding the quality of some of the schools – KEEF students regularly achieve extraordinary results.

One such student is Ezekiel Otsieno, now beginning Form 4, who has been the top student in Koyonzo Secondary School for the past five terms. Ezekiel achieved straight A’s in 6 subjects and an A minus and a B plus in the remaining two subjects.

Ezekiel will no doubt do well in his final year, but his opportunities would be much improved if he were fully sponsored at a boarding school.

In his letter to Student Support, Ezekiel writes:

*“... I have been travelling to and from school amid so many challenges but then nothing good comes easily. I have endured them all with great zeal and desire to prosper. This I do to maintain my track and ambitions.*

*During this holiday, I do help my folks to carry out some relevant chores, participate in community work if any and also set aside time to carry out personal studies which go a long way to boost my academic capability.*

*I also visit friends and other important persons from whom I extract pieces of valuable advice. This enables me to fit in the present day society at whatever cost.*

*I endeavour to utilize every opportunity for future prosperity and societal revival.”*

**[See pages 7 and 8 for details of how you can help]**

## KEEF Workshops –Are They Worthwhile?

Alinda Ware

### November Lifeskills Workshops

KEEF offers three workshops to the students. In November, after the school year has closed, all the students from Forms 1 to 4 (Grades 9 to 12) gather at Mukumu Boys' School for 2 ½ days for the lifeskills workshops. The facilitators are mainly KEEF Kenya Board members and KEEF graduates. Topics include assertiveness, reproductive health and healthy living, first aid, study skills, résumé writing and money management. Kenya's education system focuses on passing exams. Most students are drilled to answer exam questions but not trained to problem solve or think critically. We are trying to help our students become self-sufficient, critical thinkers and responsible citizens who are able to be flexible in Kenya's difficult job market. Are these workshops worthwhile?



Career options

Sarah, the KEEF secretary, writes:

*"Workshops have really played a great role in moulding the boys' characters. For example, the assertiveness topic has helped most of the boys gain confidence - this is because most students come from villages where they are not exposed to many situations. So the workshops have really helped to mould these young boys."*



Interview practice

Students say:

*"I can cope with an emergency situation when help is needed." (First Aid Form 3)*

*"I was aggressive and now I will change." "Encourage me to be firm on my decision." (Assertiveness Forms 1 and 2)*

*"I have learned how to wash my hands and clean my body, hence I will practice and not get diseases. The presenter was brave and did not hide anything." (Reproductive Health Forms 2 and 4). The presenter was a young woman who is a clinical officer and a KEEF post-secondary graduate).*

Incidentally, sometimes we have a girl sponsored in secondary school so she would also attend the workshops.



Diana, Form 1



Samson, KEEF Grad & Facilitator

*"We were able to learn how to manage money, increase our income and the need for saving." (Money Management, Form 4).*

### January Orientation Workshop

In January we have the Form 1 (Gr. 9) students come to a local school with a parent or guardian. These are our new students and their high school year begins in February. They have the opportunity to meet each other, see who will be attending the same school and write their autobiographies. Students and their parents/guardians learn what KEEF offers, what they must do to maintain their scholarships and they sign the contract stating the above. Everyone enjoys a cookie and soda and heads home eager to start high school.

Sarah writes:

*Form 1 workshops have really lessened my job at the office, as this gives the parents a clear picture of what KEEF requires of them and their roles as parents - unlike previous years when parents thought it was the sole responsibility of KEEF to walk the education journey in the lives of their children. Form 1 boys know what is required of them as students, so there is no conflict (for example when a discontinuation letter comes). I think all parties know they have failed in one way or the other. Parents now also know that KEEF*

sponsors Form 1 to Form 4, before some of the parents thought it was the responsibility of KEEF to sponsor them in post secondary.

### Form 4 Leavers Workshop

After the results of the Form 4 national exams are out (usually in February), we call in the graduates – the Form 4 leavers. This is the last time we see them as a group. They receive a certificate, a membership card to our KEEF alumni and encouragement and Ideas on how they can search for bursaries and assistance to post-secondary. This is a difficult time for many as direct entry to university (high B and above) costs about \$1000 a year and for students with C+ and B- even more. Colleges are also expensive. As a Form 4 leaver it is hard to find a job that pays over \$30 a month. Many work as untrained teachers for about \$10 a month.

Sarah writes:

*The Form 4 workshop has played a role in sensitizing and imparting a sense of responsibility to graduates. Now the boys know that they should be prepared to join university by engaging in activities that can earn them shillings, which they save and use to join university. Unlike before when a boy got a calling letter to join the university, the first stop was at the KEEF office expecting to get more for him to join the university.*



The Trust Toss

Alinda has been organizing and raising funds for workshops for well over a decade in Kenya. We thank her and all the organizers and presenters for these efforts and also thank donors for your support. Alinda estimates the cost of all three workshops (5 ½ days) totals about \$30 per student. As a KEEF board member I can definitely say to our donors and supporters that these workshops are very worthwhile and deserve your support.

Don Reimer

## Become a KEEF Sponsor: How Can You Help?

KEEF seeks donations of all amounts to assist in our work. The board members and overseas agents of KEEF are volunteers, and **100% of your donations** will go directly to support students, unless you direct them to special purposes such as workshops or operational expenses. We raise funds through special events to cover our low operational expenses.

Our web site has several options for donors, including:

- **Scholarships** Our prime purpose is to provide scholarships for secondary students at an average of \$600 per year, which includes fees and room and board. Ideally, donors will sponsor their student through four years of high school.
- **Student Support** Donations of any amount are always welcome and enable us to “top up” fees as needed, or to provide students with essential items such as school supplies or medical care.
- **Support for Workshops** or other operational expenses.
- **Endowment (i.e. trust) Fund** Established in 2013, this fund will grow for a few years until it can provide funds for scholarships while preserving the capital.
- **Gifts cards in someone’s name** See our web site for gift cards suitable for birthdays, weddings, holidays or other special events.

With an annual donation of \$100 or more, donors will be recorded as **Members** of the Kenya Education Endowment Fund, with the usual voting rights set out in the BC Society Act. We also have the category of **Supporter**, based on a minimum \$25 annual donation to encourage small donations, including gifts to KEEF on behalf of others. See our web site for details of gift cards. Both Members and Supporters will be included in our email contact lists.

**Charitable tax receipts will be issued  
for all donations.**

**Donation by cheque:** payable to **KEEF** and mail to:  
Margaret (Peg) Klesner,  
Suite 904, 2135 Argyle Ave.,  
West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 1A5

**Donation online:** go to [www.kenyaeducation.org](http://www.kenyaeducation.org)  
and donate through **PayPal** or **Canada Helps**.

## About KEEF

KEEF was established to provide financial assistance to Kenyan young people to assist them in furthering their education and in developing skills that will empower them and their communities.

KEEF was registered in 2004 under the Societies Act of B.C. and granted charitable status by the Canada Revenue Agency in 2006. # 845413145 RR 0001.

KEEF is a non-profit organization, not affiliated with any government or religious organizations. **All of the monies donated to KEEF are designated for educational purposes in Kenya.** Our very low operational costs are covered through sales of Kenyan crafts and other special fund-raising events.

Contact us at [keefcan2010@gmail.com](mailto:keefcan2010@gmail.com) or visit our web site [www.kenyaeducation.org](http://www.kenyaeducation.org) or Phone Peg Klesner at 604-926-3018

## Call for Volunteer KEEF Agents

Do you have an interest in visiting and volunteering in Kenya? This opportunity provides a rich cultural experience in an extraordinarily diverse country, combined with the rewards of making a meaningful contribution.

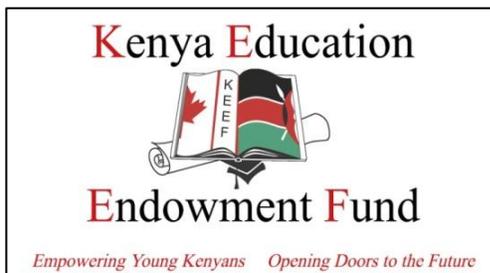
KEEF has about 100 students in secondary schools and over 40 students in post-secondary institutions in Kenya. Students bring in their marks, fee structures and letters to sponsors at the close of each term. Canadian volunteers help monitor the program.

Volunteers pay their own travel, housing and living expenses, but there are provisions for tax benefits under Canada Revenue regulations. To learn more about KEEF's activities visit our website: [www.kenyaeducation.org](http://www.kenyaeducation.org).

If you are interested in an adventure and a chance to make a difference in someone's life, please contact us at: [keefcan2010@gmail.com](mailto:keefcan2010@gmail.com)

Newsletter prepared by Don Reimer.

**Please feel welcome to share this newsletter!**



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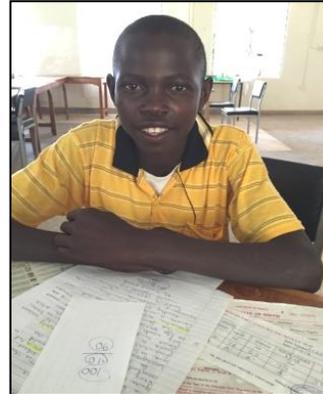
## Photo Gallery



Mike, a KEEF graduate speaks at a workshop.



Abel Eshitemi was the top student in Form 3 last year in his day school, with an A minus average. His fees are currently being paid by KEEF Student Support – we're looking for a sponsor for 2015, his final year.



Ready for the interview-student with all his documents.



Father and son at the interview.