



Kenya Education Endowment Fund

- Empowering Young Kenyans

www.kenyaeducation.org

Email: keefcan2010@gmail.com

KEEF Newsletter #10 March 2013

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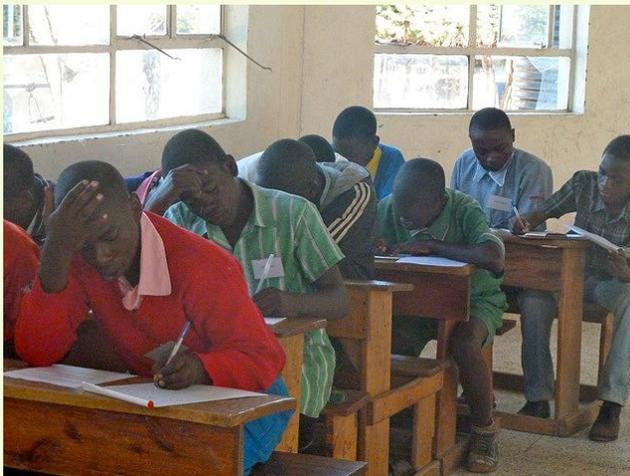
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New Students for 2013

Alinda Ware has just returned home from her annual six-month journey to Kakamega, Kenya. She was joined for two and a half months by Annemarie Robinson. These are some highlights of their reports.



Hello All,

Feb. 16, 2013: The interview process for selecting new students is over. Annemarie, Grace Kavinguha, and I interviewed about 90 students to choose those that would be sponsored. Geoffrey Masaka (university student) had the boys draw the map to their home. Sarah, our new secretary, was busy in the office. There were many heart-rending situations and, of course, a few students tried to get a scholarship even though they had money.

New Secretary & KEEF Agent



Sarah Nabongo, KEEF Secretary Sally Gellard, KEEF Agent

KEEF needs to ensure we can provide the necessary support to students and maintain communications with schools and post secondary institutions on a year-round basis. Because we are not always able to have volunteer agents in Kakamega, the KEEF Board has hired a secretary for the KEEF office. Marie McKay and Alinda have known and worked with Sarah for several years, and in January Board member Dick Glassford interviewed Sarah for the position.

Sarah writes:

My name is Sarah Nabongo and I am 32 years old. I have been married for six years and now am a mother of two, a girl Tessie 5 years and a boy Adrian 5 months old.

I hold a certificate in Secretarial Studies from Imara Commercial and Secretarial College, Kakamega.

All the students fit KEEF's two key academic criteria: position 1, 2, or 3 in their final three years of primary school and a minimum score of 370 points on the national Standard 8 exam. We raised the bar to 370 as the scores were higher on this year's national exam, the KCPE (Kenya Certificate of Primary Education).

We sent verifiers out to about 50 homes and about 45 were very needy scoring 1 or 2 and a few 3's on a scale of 10 (1 being extremely needy and unable to go to school without help). Then came the horrendous task of whittling that down, keeping a few extra for the "Let's Hope" pile. One boy we had chosen got a scholarship from Equity Bank and that drew a cheer from Annemarie and me. Now we could pull one more out of "Let's Hope!"

We have been able to provide 18 new secondary school scholarships for 2013 – **thank you, Canadian sponsors.**



Orientation of new students

We called the boys and a parent/guardian to come in on Monday, Feb. 19 to discuss how we can all work together. We used the analogy of the 3 legged stool. One leg the parent, one the child and one KEEF - any leg breaks – *shida kubwa* (big problem). Grace and Sarah, who speak Kiswahili, both participated along with Annemarie and me. We were tag teams! The boys, parents and KEEF reps signed the contracts, boys wrote their autobiographies, we took photos, answered questions, handed out the uniform slips along with sodas and cookies and then - *kwaheri* (goodbye).

I have lived in Kakamega since the year 2000.

I knew of KEEF when I joined Sheywe Guest House as a secretary to the Director where I met Marie Mackay and we had a good working relationship during that time. I would help with translations to parents and students who could not understand her, and also take information when the two agents, Alinda and Marie, were away.

I started working in the new KEEF office in February, 2013. I am glad I was given this opportunity to work with KEEF and help needy Kenyans get an education.



Sally Gellard served as a CHES agent for 9 months in 2006 and has returned as a KEEF agent for about 5 weeks in April and May.*

*[*Canadian Harambee Education Society]*

Sally writes:

April 1, Easter Monday, 5 pm and the sky darkens, readying for today's downpour. I have arrived just in time for the start of the Long Rains. The fields around Kakamega are being dug in preparation for planting, which will happen during the next 2 weeks, coinciding with the April school break.

Sarah Nabongo has the challenge of orienting me to the matters of KEEF in order for me to be ready to meet the KEEF secondary school students when they report to the KEEF office with their Term 1 marks starting April 11. Alinda is here until April 7 so I am in capable hands.

I am staying at CHES House for the month. This seems to be a fortunate arrangement, both personally and for our respective organizations, enabling us to become familiar with the workings of CHES and KEEF, and further support each other in the vision of making education possible at the secondary and post secondary level for young people who would otherwise have little chance at further education.

Since my last times here, in 2006 and 2010, I am noticing a substantial increase in costs of school fees. Inflation is a factor in rising costs of most everything, from food staples to school supplies, to boda boda [*bicycle*] rides to shoes.

Easter Sunday was an occasion to remember for KEEF in Kakamega. Alinda and Sarah organized a successful



All students are expected to return in mid April to report their marks for term 1 and to write a letter to sponsors. We will mail out letters to sponsors and photos as soon as possible.

Primary Girls Receive Hygiene Kits

By Marie MacKay

Girls in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa often stay home from school when they are menstruating due to lack of sanitary pads. Families who are struggling to feed and house themselves don't have much left over for extras. This puts girls at a definite disadvantage when schooling is interrupted for 3 or 4 days each month.



With a gift of \$500 from the Soroptimist Club of North and West Vancouver, hygiene kits were put together for 100 girls in the Kakamega area.

The kits were made up of 8 washable/reusable sanitary pads, 2 pair of panties and a bucket and soap for washing the pads.

As the kits were being given out it was a time for talk about basic hygiene, protecting themselves from HIV and other issues that arose from the girls'

fundraiser meal at Sheywe, supported by the KEEF Kenyan Board (not affiliated with the KEEF Board in Canada). Besides the board members, this event attracted friends of KEEF, patrons, deputies and principals of KEEF-sponsored schools, past and present students, CHES agent Norm Filipenko, and interested community members. Most informative were the introductions, notably the KEEF-sponsored students who spoke eloquently about their ambitions and their recognition of the value of education for themselves and their country.

Speaking of Kenya, as of today, 2 days after the Supreme Court upheld the election results of March 6 and declared Uhuru Kenyatta the president-elect, all appears calm in Kakamega. The majority of local people seem accepting of this decision with resignation, and yesterday the interest seemed to have gone back to cheering for football instead of politicians.

I am only here for a short time to help out during the busy April mark collection period; however, I look forward to the opportunity of being part of KEEF and the work of providing educational opportunities for a few young people in the Kakamega area, thereby impacting the larger community. As I am witnessing during my return, the spin-offs of our involvement go beyond our imaginings.

As of April 2013, KEEF is sponsoring:

- 102 secondary students – this includes 1 young woman, Maureen, studying at Mwikhomo School for the Hearing Impaired,
- 35 post-secondary students at a variety of universities and colleges

Seven KEEF secondary school graduates have also received a "bridging" scholarship to assist them in the first term of their post secondary programs. Many thanks to the Chapman family who generously provided these scholarships.

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 students.

We encourage sponsors to support a student for a full year, and ideally, donors sponsor their student through

questions. Reports from previous years indicate the program has been successful in keeping girls in school without interruption.

[For the first time in many years, Marie was unable to return to Kenya in December for medical reasons. What Marie doesn't mention in her article is all the work she did last year as a retired nurse to assemble and distribute these kits and to meet with girls in Kakamega to discuss health issues.]

An Endowment Fund? By Marie MacKay

KEEF Has been growing year by year until we achieved the \$100,000 donation level last year. Much of this has been large donations for buildings such as the kitchen at Bondeni school and a classroom at Mwiya, but the number of sponsored students is increasing every year as well.

We would now like to begin a true Endowment Fund to ensure that in the future the work of KEEF will continue. In order to do so we need \$10,000 minimum (up to \$25,000 in some institutions). So if any of you are wondering what to do with that \$10,000 in your account please let me know!!! Realistically, I know this scenario is unlikely but it doesn't hurt to ask. However if you have \$10, \$100 or \$1000 we could get started on our goal and look to the future. More info to follow, or contact us at keefcan2010@gmail.com.

Volunteering for KEEF – An Unbeatable High!

By Janice Trenholme & Dick Glassford



In January, 2013 we returned to Kenya to volunteer a second time for KEEF. While we did

four years of high school. Although we ask for \$500 per year, with rising inflation many schools cost more, so sponsors often raise the amount to \$600.

However, partial donations are always welcome, which enable us to “top up” fees as needed. Smaller donations also enable us to provide some students with essential items such as school supplies or medical care. Our **gift cards** enable donors to make a donation of any amount to KEEF in someone’s name.

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. 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 and donate through **PayPal** or **Canada Helps**.

Gift Cards: View samples on our web site. We can send you blank cards, or mail them on your behalf.

For more information: Please go to the [KEEF web site](http://www.kenyaeducation.org) or contact Peg Klesner at lachaiaam@telus.net or Tel: 604-926-3018, or at the postal address above.

Meeting Brian

by Amy Yakimyshin

I went with a friend to Kenya for five weeks in October and November, 2012. We landed at Nairobi, stayed a few days with friends, went by bus to Mombasa for a week, and then flew west to the Maasai Mara for a three day/two night safari. We went to Nakuru where Lake Nakuru is the stopping spot for flamingos and pelicans when migrating.

We went to Kakamega in Western Kenya in the higher elevation where the temperatures are more moderate. I stayed with Alinda Ware who works from Oct. to April administering money donated to KEEF – Kenya Education Endowment Fund – to pay

not take in any safaris this time – as amazing as we had found them on our first visit – our second trip to Kakamega County was even more rewarding than the first!

A teachers' strike last Fall, and an uncertain political situation before the recent elections, cast some doubt on what work we could do in Kenya. It turned out, however, that because the students did not yet have their marks from the Fall semester (delayed by the teachers' strike), we had more time to visit them in their schools, speak to the teachers and principals about any challenges the students were facing, and request mentors for students who needed help.

On our rounds to the schools, we were also able to visit a "shamba," the family compound of one of our students. While the homes were made of mud and stick walls, with earthen floors, corrugated metal roofs (a relative luxury), fire pits for cooking with openings in the roofs for smoke to escape, they were absolutely pristine and stunning in their simplicity. As were the clothes of the family; we never did figure out how they do it, with no running (or hot) water, but the Kenyan people manage to do the impossible, always with a smile.

We recommend volunteering for KEEF to anyone who would like to learn more about KEEF's resourceful students and an amazingly beautiful country and its people.

Many KEEF students have battled starvation, long distances without shoes just to get to school, deaths in their families due to AIDS and malnutrition. Meeting them made us feel true gratitude for what we have in Canada, and the personal connection with these brave students enhances our lives every day. We both agree that working for KEEF is the most rewarding experience we have ever had. Contact any KEEF Board member to find out more.

Janice & Dick are KEEF Board members

for high school education for 100+ bright and needy boys. \$600 will pay the school fee, boarding, and uniform for the year. The volunteers who go to Kenya pay their own travel to and costs in Kenya. I was just going to visit and assist in the office. In 2011 I started to support a student and was able to go to his school and meet him. I really look forward to the letters and photocopies of his work at school.



Amy is a KEEF Sponsor, and Brian attends St Martha's Mwitoti Secondary School

Call for Volunteer KEEF Agents

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

KEEF (as of April 2013) has 102 students in secondary schools and 35 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 fare, 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.

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

KEEF Gift Cards

We have an easy way that you can send gift donations that directly benefit Kenyan students. Three gift cards are available:

A gift to the KEEF Student Support Fund – you can choose any amount to donate.

A gift of a solar lamp - Solar light is a priceless gift for those who live without electricity. \$25 per lamp.

A gift of a bicycle - A bicycle turns a long walk to school into a short ride. \$100 per bicycle.

You can request blank cards to send yourself or we will complete and mail cards for you. Please check the [KEEF web site](#) for details or contact Peg Klesner at lachaiaam@telus.net or Tel: 604-926-3018.

About KEEF

Our primary mission is to provide scholarships for students in Kakamega County in Kenya to attend secondary and post-secondary programs.

KENYA EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND (KEEF) has been 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 established 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 administrative costs are covered through sales of Kenyan crafts and other special fund raising events.

KEEF is also registered in Kakamega, Kenya as a Community-Based Organization.

Current Board Members of KEEF:

Shelagh Armour-Godbolt, Pamela Frydenlund, Dick Glassford, Peg Klesner, Marie MacKay, Susan Peake, Don Reimer, Janice Trenholme, Alinda Ware.

Contact us at keefcan2010@gmail.com or visit our web site www.kenyaeducation.org

Student Workshops last November

At the end of November when schools had just closed, KEEF held the annual life skills workshops for all secondary students over a period of three days. Ninety-six boys – nearly 100 % - attended. The workshops were organized by Alinda, aided by former KEEF students, and were lead by Kenyan teachers. In previous issues of our newsletter we have described typical workshop activities, which include a mix of information sessions, physical and cooperative activities, skits and a variety of other challenges.

Many boys were surprised to discover who the other KEEF students were. Many did not know the boys at their school and had wished they had known they were KEEF students just for the sake of camaraderie. This is an issue we are addressing by encouraging schools to identify a teacher “patron” to act as the key communication and support link between KEEF and the school. We are also reducing the number of schools so we can ensure we have several students, rather than just a few, in each school.



We extend a great THANK YOU! To GC4C for sponsoring the 2012 workshops

Kenya Education



Endowment Fund

Empowering Young Kenyans Opening Doors to the Future

Photo

Opening of the Mwiya Secondary School classroom in March 2013.

This KEEF project was funded by GC4C, and supervised by Marie MacKay until June last year, and also by long time KEEF supporter Tatuli Mbasu who saw it through to completion.



Students are gathered on the parade ground to hear a few words from the guests and so they can thank the representatives of the donors.



Tatuli Mbasu, is decorated as thanks for supervising construction of the classroom.

Gallery



The deputy principal thanks GC4C for financing the construction of the new Mwiya classroom.



A student recites a poem thanking all those who participated in the construction of the new classroom.



Tatuli Mbasu turns the keys of the classroom over to the principal of Mwiya.



A traditional gift of a goat is given to Alinda as she is representing the donors, GC4C.

This photo of the classroom project was taken last October:



Deputy Head Jessica Musee in front of the new class-room at Mwiwala Secondary (Day) School. Jessica is a part time university student who is finishing her doctorate of education.

Newsletter prepared by Don Reimer.

Photo credits:

Alinda Ware, Annemarie Robertsen, Dick Glassford, Marie MacKay, Sally Gellard, Sarah Nabongo, Don Reimer

A note about layout:

Most newsletters are now read online rather than on paper. Because of the widespread use of mobile devices with small screens, we have formatted our last few issues in two columns, with continuous articles. In this issue the Contents are also listed by column.

If you have any suggestions or comments on the newsletter, please contact me at keefcan2010@gmail.com

Thank you for reading this far! D.R.

From the students...[Jan. 2013]

I had lost hope to reach Form 4 and final exams but I am here and strongly appreciate your sponsorship. *[This student placed first in a class of 32 students].*

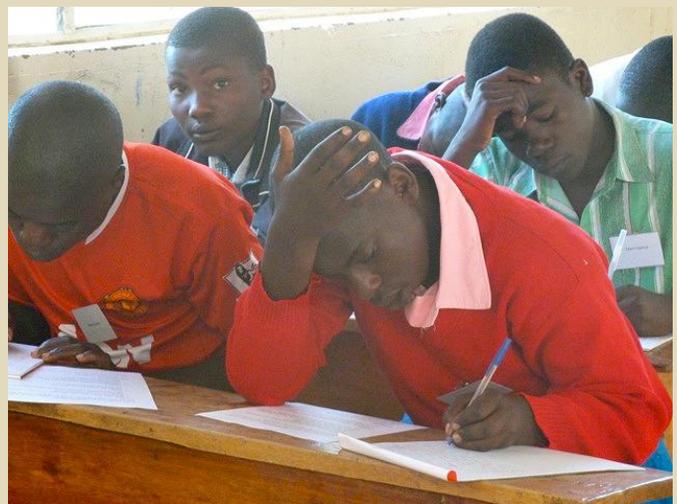
[After graduation] I would like to help my younger siblings, who have no able person to rely on for their education in the entire family.

I humbly thank you for the bicycle – it reduced my daily time going to and from school and the solar lamp and books made my study easy.

[I] am going to set up a discussion group over the *[Christmas]* holidays among sponsored students in my class.

Student Support *[funds]* enabled me to pursue my studies, despite family challenges.

In the holidays I help in the family's garden plot, growing *[vegetables]* to sell. I will always follow my mission that states education is the key 4 life!



Please feel welcome to share this newsletter!