



Kenya Education Endowment Fund

- Empowering Young Kenyans

www.kenyaeducation.org

Email: keefcan2010@gmail.com

KEEF Newsletter #21 May 2021

Kakamega update

For most of 2020, schools were closed and Kenyan students were offered a variety of online learning options, modified schedules, and a range of other adjustments to the traditional school calendars.

A major commitment was made to open schools on Jan 4, 2021. On that date, Form 4s (graduating students) began their final term (Term 3) and they began National exams about March 19. A report on their strong exam results is on page 4.

Students in Forms 1, 2 & 3 began Term 3 on May 10 and their year will end on July 17.

On July 26, **all students** in Forms 1-4 will begin the new 2021 school year, which is projected to end on April 3, 2022.

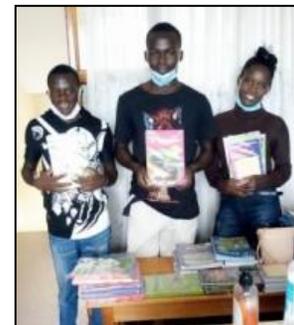
Supporting our students

As we reported in August, we have helped our students to stay connected to their studies and keep hopeful that their schools will eventually re-open. Sarah Nabongo (Kenyan office manager), the KEEF Kenyan board and some KEEF alumni have been in regular contact with our students.

Early in 2020, the KEEF Canada Board established a **Pandemic Emergency Fund** to support needy students to cope with the disruptions caused by Covid-19. Our sponsors and supporters were very generous in their support, and the fund peaked at approximately \$7500. One of our priorities was to provide revision books to our graduating Form 4 students. These senior students typically spend their last term revising (i.e. studying) for the upcoming national exams.

With schools all closed during much of 2020, these Form 4 students could lose their year. With the help of our long term supporters, our workshop facilitators, and KEEF Kenya, we delivered revision books first to each Form 4 student, and then to some of the younger Forms. Some of our funds were put toward masks, hand sanitizing stations, some food baskets for the neediest families, and funeral support for two families who lost parents.

More photos on page 2



Students receiving revision books

School fees are due in June

Because schools were closed for much of 2020, school fees have been a bit confusing for sponsors and KEEF. We hope this explains the situation:

- Most sponsors paid fees in December 2019, to cover the year Jan.-Dec 2020. Early in 2020, schools were closed, but Fees paid were carried forward and covered from Jan 4, 2021 to July 17, 2021. **[Note that this was for the 2020 year]**
- The 2021 school year will begin on July 26, and fees are due in June or early July. Fees remain unchanged at \$600 per secondary student.
- If sponsors are not sure of their fee payments, contact us at keefcan2010@gmail.com, or contact Dick Glassford at glas4d@telus.net or by cell at 604-970-3446

Revision books and masks



Hand sanitizing stations – soap deliveries



Soap deliveries.

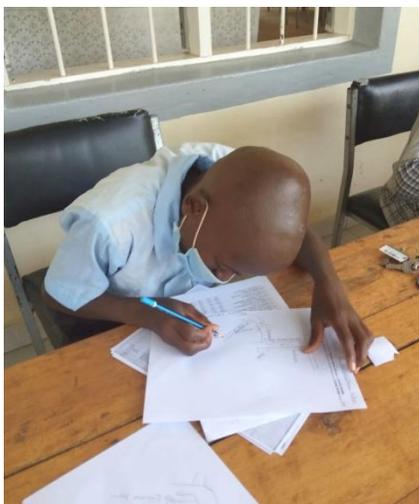
At our 2020 Zoom AGM in November, two doctors in attendance suggested we deliver soap to schools, especially where access to clean water was difficult. Our reliable volunteers, along with Sarah, made sure that happened.

Planning for 2021

Life goes on, and for the first time since KEEF began, there were no agents from Canada on hand to work with our Kenyan supporters on the interviews and selection of new students for 2021. Fortunately, with Sarah's initiative and the guidance of experienced educators such as Grace, Thomson and Anthony, the planning and training went very well, and Sarah has just sent us a list of the successful candidates for 2021.



Alumnus Brian Bateta assists a candidate to draw a map from the KEEF office to his home



Excerpt from Sarah's report to KEEF, April 16:

I would like to bring to your attention that today we had a meeting with the two interviewers that Grace proposed. Thomson was the chair for the meeting.

The two interviewers were: -

1. Peter Azizi- He is a retired teacher, 56 years of age. while working as a teacher he was a commissioner for scouts in the former Western region.

2. Phydalia Esenerwa - she is also a retired teacher, who is currently at home doing farming. She worked with Grace and has been a teacher in the municipality in all the years she was a teacher. Interviewers were satisfied with the training and said that in case there is anything they don't understand they will find out as it's a learning process.



Phydalia, Peter and Grace

2020 National KCSE Exams

In spite of all the disruptions to time tables and schedules due to Covid-19, the Form 4 KCSE exams (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education) were completed by mid April of 2021 and we received the results in May.

Our Form 4 KEEF students did very well this year. Thirty seven of 39 graduates scored an average of C+ or higher, which qualifies them for direct entry into university. That means that they will have subsidized fees, are eligible for a government student loan and can live on the campus for at least one year with minimal costs for accommodation.

The top scoring graduating student each year receives the Marie MacKay Scholarship, a \$600 award from the Marie MacKay Endowment Fund. This year's winner is Marksudi Opaka from Mwitoti Secondary, followed very closely by Leonard Amoo Omudeke from Koyonzo Secondary.

Congratulations to all students for successfully completing secondary school and best wishes to them all as they pursue post secondary options.

Another KEEF University Graduate

Dickson Obwere, April 2021



Congratulations, Ezekiel

Ezekiel wrote this letter to KEEF last December.

Hello KEEF family,

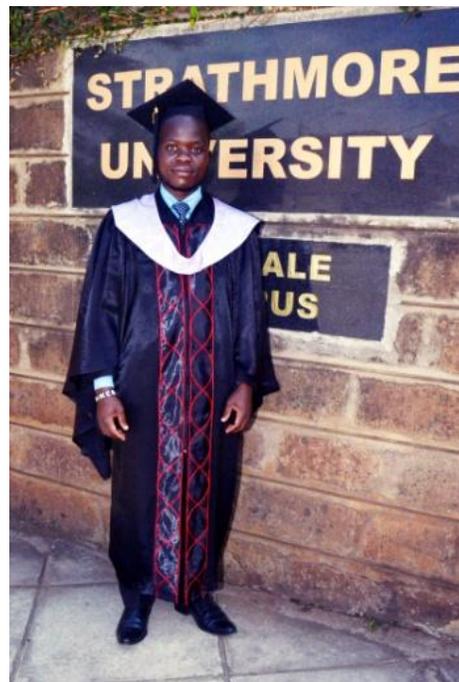
I am excited to inform you that I graduated with a First Class Honors in Actuarial Science from Strathmore University last week on 3rd December 2020.

This is a culmination of my 8.4.4 education journey. A long journey, but now completed thanks to the immense support I got from you. I must appreciate the financial support you have accorded me from joining Form 1 in 2012 until recently to help me meet the graduation-related expenses.

Words can't explain how indebted I am to the KEEF fraternity! Thank you very much.

With many thanks,
Ezekiel Otsieno

On a sad note, Ezekiel's sponsor – since Form 1 - passed away suddenly in January 2021. We extend our sincere condolences to the family.



Ezekiel Otsieno Dec. 2020

Thank you, Donors and Kenyan Volunteers!

By Alinda Ware and Janice Trenholme

[We printed this 'thank you' article in our Nov. 2020 newsletter, but we can't thank them - and any others we may have missed- enough, for all their efforts].

KEEF is very fortunate to have capable alumni and board members teaming with us in Kenya and helping our students during this pandemic. Without their assistance we would not have been able to keep in touch with and support our secondary students.

Sarah Nabongo (our competent Office Manager in Kakamega) organized Kenyan board members and workshop facilitators to phone the students at least 3 times, to encourage and mentor our secondary students since the schools closed in March.

Through their calls we learned the challenges students were facing, which enabled us to assist with donations from our emergency fund. Thank you Sarah, and all the volunteers who have helped so far:

Anthony Napali - Organizer of the Kenyan team of our high school workshop facilitators. He and Alinda have planned them together since they started in 2008.

Brian Bateta - KEEF scholarship beneficiary in secondary and post-secondary

Consolata Agidza - CHES high school scholarship beneficiary and KEEF post-secondary beneficiary

Edwin Osundwa - KEEF high School scholarship beneficiary

Grace Lidede - retired principal and member of KEEF Kenya Board of Directors

Harun Mbehelo - High school teacher

Japeth Ungadi - KEEF scholarship beneficiary in secondary and post-secondary

Ruth Aleyo - CHES high school scholarship beneficiary and KEEF post-secondary beneficiary

Thomson Mate - member, KEEF Kenya Board of Directors. He has been an important part of KEEF workshops since they started

**Thank you, donors and the Kenyan team,
for your invaluable service!**

Interested in Supporting a Post Secondary Student?

Globally, post secondary education is increasingly vital, including in the rural communities we work with in Kenya. Secondary graduates with strong marks will be "called" to an institution and their expenses will be significantly reduced.

Generally there are two semesters per year and we estimate that \$800 to \$1500 per semester will cover expenses in first year, rising slightly in year 2 and beyond. Students are also eligible for student loans.

If you, or someone you know – perhaps a group of friends – would like to support a post secondary student, please contact us for more details.

In 2016 KEEF created the **Alinda Ware Post Secondary Bursary Fund** and as it grows, it will provide another source of support for students. Please check our web site for more information.

Options for donating:

[Check our [web site](#) for more information].

- **Mail cheques payable to KEEF to:**
Margaret Klesner
#904, 2135 Argyle Avenue
West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 1A5
Canada
- **Email an Interac e-transfer to:**
keefcan2010@gmail.com
- **Donate through PayPal**
- www.kenyaeducation.org/donate
- **Donate through CanadaHelps**
www.kenyaeducation.org/donate

Tax receipts will be issued by year end for all donations.

About KEEF

KEEF is a charitable organization, not affiliated with any government or religious organizations. **KEEF** was established to provide financial assistance to Kenyan young people to further their education and to develop skills that will empower them and their communities.

Volunteering – is it for you?

Dick and Janice recently had a brainstorm and asked members of the KEEF Board to write about their experiences volunteering, particularly in Africa. The articles below are in response to that request.

Over the Years in Kakamega, Kenya

From Peg Klesner

My special relationship to this town has grown over three ventures as a volunteer living near Luhya families, and working with students and schools in the surrounding area. In the 1990's I arrived as a newbie to live at Akatsa about 15 kilometers from Kakamega, near the local school, called Imbale. The first year was initially a real challenge as I adjusted to the local culture and practices with the help of another volunteer who had been there the previous year.

That year was special as I lived nearby a local school and the students would drop in on their way home from school to get acquainted and chat or "just for a drink of water." It took me at least 4 months to 'catch' their Luyhan accent as they spoke English with quite a different rhythm and tone. I was so pleased when I realized that I was finally able to decipher their remarks and questions. And there were idioms I had never heard like, "My sister is tarmacking."

Living in quite a rural area at that time, I also got quickly acquainted with riding on the local matatus, a small truck with a box in the back where passengers were urged to "Songa, songa, Mama!" Meaning nudge over and get jammed into your fellow passenger as there was hardly any space for newcoming riders. We were a long way from town and each school was widely separated from any other. There were at least 20 or more schools to visit whenever possible. We also took marks at the end of term at Akatsa, so many of the students came to us from great distances at the end of each term to have us review the quality of their in-class work. Then we had to package the results and send them back to be distributed to their sponsors in Canada.

Besides enjoying the challenge of a new culture I was touched by the kindness and the humour of the local people. Often when they got to know us and trust us they would share a saying that would capture that spirit. One of my favourites came from Beatrice Adah who weekly cleaned house for us and became a really good friend over time. One day she said to me, "You know, working for each of you agents is a bit tricky! I asked if she could explain it to me and she answered well, you know when you buy some eggs at the market? You have to handle them extra carefully (they come in only a small piece of paper in Kenya.) Well, until you know the nature of the new agent you have to behave rather carefully so you don't upset them

Written by Peg Klesner for CHES (1990), ACCES (1993,1994) & (1997). Now on the Board of Directors for KEEF (2007 to 2021)

Volunteering

From Dick Glassford Dick has served on the KEEF Board for over a decade as Chair and Treasurer.

I learned that about 50% of Canadians aged 15 and over did volunteer work in 2010. Why is volunteering important, why do people volunteer, and what benefits do they receive for doing so?

A lot of organizations do not receive government funding or are only partially funded and cannot afford to pay salaries to staff. These organizations depend almost solely upon volunteers to help them do their work. With most of us leading busy lives giving our time and energy without financial reward seems like a daunting task! With all the need from individuals, groups and countries who are far less well off than we are, it is refreshing to see so many people committing to volunteer.

People volunteer for a myriad of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge. When I started volunteering decades ago, it was for different reasons than I have today for my

continued volunteering. I originally started to help others at a young age because my parents thought it would help me grow up with a better understanding of other less fortunate people. Then kids came along and when they were in sports, there was a need for help on the playing fields. After that, my employer reached out to ask for help with a national fund-raising campaign. And if the boss asked for assistance, I had better step up and help! Other volunteering opportunities arose over the years and I helped where I could. Some were more onerous than others, some took more time than others. But in the end, positive results always made the time and effort feel worthwhile.

Of all the volunteering I have done, the experience that has had the most profound effect on my life has been working with KEEF. It may sound corny, but it really has changed a lot of what I believe in, how I perceive things, and what is profoundly important in my life. Let me explain. It was not long after I joined the KEEF Board that I had an opportunity to visit Kakamega, Kenya. My wife and I were planning a trip to Africa to do some safaris, and one of the Board members suggested we make a detour to Kakamega while we were in Kenya to see what KEEF does with the students. We did exactly that and were introduced to a whole new experience of life in a developing country. National Geographic does a good job of showing the world what places are like in areas that we would likely never experience, but until we live this firsthand, we really cannot know how people experience life in Kenya. After coming off a week of nice accommodation and private safaris in southern Kenya, the contrast to what we experienced next was almost too much.

It didn't take us long to realize that this was an exceptional opportunity to observe, learn and assist children in Kakamega. We learned how resilient Kenyans are, how appreciative they are of help. We experienced things that we will never, ever forget. For example: children playing with bottle caps and other found items because there were no other toys. Kids playing outside with old

patched inner tubes and kicking a soccer ball made of rolled up plastic bags. What was amazing to us was the fact these kids seemed happy, did not appear stressed or anxious, and were constantly smiling. They had so little but appreciated what could be done with what they could find.

This is where the benefits of volunteering come in, and they are huge! The benefits of volunteering for those receiving help are clear. I am talking about the benefits to you. We know what our donations can do and how our money can go such a long way in Kenya. We know what our work with kids accomplishes, and how our support for the kids and their families makes such a difference, but this is about benefits to you from volunteering!

The organization you volunteer with gets a huge asset in having you on board, and you benefit as well – a win-win situation!

You would be surprised at what non-profit organizations require to keep going. Fund raising and getting donations are just part of the overall picture. Help with communication, social media, finance and banking, administration, receipting, and producing a Newsletter are some of them. For those who want to experience the thrill of going to Kenya, and you make a slight detour from Nairobi to Kakamega, there are many projects and functions to do. Including helping with the interviews for next year's scholarship recipients, assisting at the life skills workshops, helping Sarah, our Administrator in the office, and simply being there to show our support to the students and locals.

If any of this resonates with you, give any of the KEEF Board members a call or drop us an e-mail at keefcan2010@gmail.com. Everyone of us made the decision to get involved at some point, and none of us has ever regretted working with KEEF.

Vancouver Sun Run – a Virtual Global Event for KEEF

A unique opportunity arose for KEEF last winter when the 2021 Vancouver Sun Run was announced for the first time as a virtual event, due to pandemic issues. This 10Km event usually attracts over 40,000 people and is Canada's largest road race.

KEEF recruited participants across B.C. and Canada as individual walkers and runners or as members of "branded" teams. Ultimately, eighty KEEF volunteers - five teams with from eight to twenty-eight members and seven independents took part. We had representation in B.C., Alberta, Ontario, Quebec – and in Kenya, thanks to the Board of KEEF Kenya and the KEEF Alumni Group. Participants ranged in age from early 20's to 81. Check out our social media (Facebook or Instagram: Kenya Education Endowment Fund) for some fun photos and short items about our volunteers – including a brief video of the Kenyan team.

Although many long term Sun Run participants missed the hype of the big downtown Vancouver event, for KEEF this was a golden chance to "spread the word" about the work we do. Publicity went to newspapers and regional broadcasters from Vancouver Island to Quebec. KEEF's social media supported the "story". We were fortunate enough to receive a free display ad in the Vancouver Sun, featuring one of the KEEF Kenya participants and a full news article about the Teams on another date.

The participation of our Kenyan colleagues was a point of interest that helped us get more coverage in other Canadian papers.

The eighty volunteers enthusiastically prepared and participated, on dates of their choice in late April, in icy, snowy, windy, rainy and hot weather, depending on their locations.

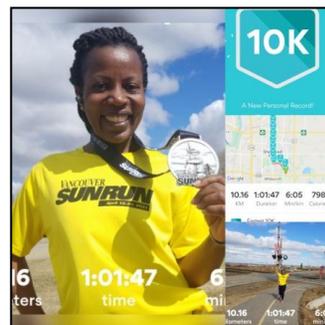
The articles sent out from KEEF explained that our goal was to fund a year of our Life Skills workshops for the students. Our initial hope was

to raise \$2,500 – our dream was for \$4,000. As of late May, **donations reached \$13, 047.**

We are astonished and delighted! We can fund more than 2 years of workshops and sponsor a secondary student at boarding school for four years. A pandemic "silver lining" story, indeed. With thanks to so many who participated, whether old or new friends of KEEF, and to all who supported them financially so generously!

Asante Sana!

KEEF's Team Kenya in green shirts



Above: Faida ran in Sherwood Park, Alberta



Alinda ran on Vancouver Island



Sarah and Consolata in Kakamega, Kenya



Clara ran in Delta, BC

Newsletter prepared by Don Reimer – feel welcome to share