

Update

Giving Young Kenyans a Brighter Future



Happy kids receiving a soccer ball

East African Adventures Continue...

After almost a month in Kenya we returned to Nimbin tired but happy. Each year we visit an extremely poor community in remote Kenya to check on projects funded by our charity Kenya Kids International (KKI). The purpose of these visits is to meet program beneficiaries and monitor projects with our Kenyan partners, the Agolomuok Support Group.

This trip, we stayed a couple of kms from the town of Sori in a 2-bedroom unit at St Camillus Mission Hospital, run by 3 Catholic priests. This was a great move as we now had a base where we could hold meetings, use (generator) power at night when there were power outages (which was daily), a spare bedroom for people to stay and a big bonus was to have our own cooking facilities. No more deep fried food.

As the area is experiencing a prolonged drought the roads were extremely dusty which put a stop to the idea of walking into town to



Rob standing with our 2 university students Sara on the left and Sharon right.

buy our supplies. Instead we travelled by motorbike taxi called a 'pikipiki'. Often both of us together with the driver.

Student Sponsorship graduates

This year marked a milestone for the student sponsorship program as two of our students recently commenced University studies. Another 17 bright needy students are attending secondary school because

of the generosity of their Aussie sponsors. Just \$40 per month covers school fees, textbooks and uniforms for secondary students.

Special Needs

We visited 9 families of students who we hadn't met previously. During our visits we always check to see if there are any additional special needs. On one such visit we met the mother of one of our students who informed us a younger child was fitting 3 times a day. The boy was diagnosed with Epilepsy at age 4 and was now 12 years old. He had never been treated, as the hospital they attended didn't have any drugs for Epilepsy.

We promptly took the boy and his mother to a different hospital to see a doctor and obtain the necessary drugs. Subsequently we heard the fits had stopped completely.

First Fruits Program

A new initiative being trialled this year was a microfinance project to improve the income of those in need, such as widows or unemployed. It is called the First Fruits Program.

Some beneficiaries were given a goat

www.kenyakidsinternational.org.au

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PO Box 20260, Nimbin NSW 2480 Australia



Pherdinand (RHS) diagnosed with epilepsy now on medication



Rikki holding the First Fruit of our FFP



One of our retail beneficiaries in the FFP



Principal from Obondi Primary School introducing us to the students

week. This is an extremely important program as the area has been in drought for 4 years and food is scarce. The District Education Officer informed KKI the school was the most improved school in the region in 2018 because of the feeding program.

This year KKI began supporting a second feeding program at Obondi Primary School with 380 students receiving breakfast and lunch each day. Unlike Agolomuok this school doesn't have access to water so cannot successfully grow crops or vegetables. KKI is exploring ways to improve Obondi's water supply and hopes to enlist the help of another charity in digging a well at the school.

to breed from while others were given interest-free loans to buy products to sell.

A total of 7 families took part in the trial over a 6-month period and then met with us to discuss the pros and cons of the project.

From this meeting we learned people need to be trained in goat care and small business skills. We presented this idea to the participants and it was warmly welcomed.

Early in 2020 we will organize a business training course for our beneficiaries and also others in the area who would like to start a small business. Rikki plans to develop a workshop on goat care with the District Veterinary Officer's input.

All future Beneficiaries of the First Fruits Program will need to complete a business workshop before they are given any funds.

Feeding Program Extended

For the past few years KKI has been supporting a feeding program at Agolomuok Primary School. Over 400 children receive breakfast of millet porridge and lunch of beans 5 days a

Days For Girls

One of the issues affecting adolescent girls is how to deal with their periods. Each month they miss school lessons and stay at home as they don't have sanitary pads. This is a big problem but an international charity has a solution. Days for Girls is the name of the charity and it has a local branch in Lismore.

Days for Girls volunteers make reusable sanitary pads from cloth that can be washed and reused. The sanitary pads are assembled and placed in a cloth bag together with a pair of undies and given to girls in 3rd world countries. KKI was given 100 kits and we took 40 of these to Kenya for our female sponsored students and other girls at Agolomuok Primary School. We will take more kits to distribute each time we go to Kenya.

Shipping Container Distribution

Way back in January we sent 32 boxes of clothes, sporting equipment, books and teaching aids to Kenya in a container at no cost to KKI. A week or so after we arrived we collected the boxes from Nairobi and brought them to Sori. We were able to distribute the remainder of the clothes to the most needy families of sponsored students.

One mother came to collect some clothes for her family but was overwhelmed by the quality and choice. She needed the help of a friend to choose some clothing for each family member; she has 9 children. The clothes were given to KKI because they were "seconds" but the Kenyans considered them as good as new. Everyone who was given clothing went away encouraged whilst expressing their appreciation for this valuable gift.



Mary a widow with one of her 2 children and goat donated by the First Fruits Program

Apart from distributing clothing to families, we gave the Agolomuok Primary School



Some of the participants in the Days For Girls Program



Students from Agolomuok Primary School proudly wearing donated soccer uniforms

teaching aids and textbooks, sports uniforms, skipping ropes, soccer boots and balls. All of our sponsored students also received a soccer ball and the smiles on their faces showed how happy they were with this gift from Australia.

Macalder Mine Babies Home

About an hour away from Sori is the Macalder Mines Babies Home run by some Catholic Nuns. The Nuns grow a lot of vegetables, which are used to feed the children at the orphanage. They are also trying to raise enough money to buy a milking cow so the children can have fresh milk.

We were able to give the Babies Home a box of clothing and a box of toys that we collected in Australia and sent in the shipping container. The Nuns care for a maximum of 35 babies and children but are seriously under staffed. With little time to spare the orphans are socially and emotionally

deprived. However a couple who are friends of the Winsome (Lismore's Soup Kitchen) provided funds to allow the Nuns to employ someone to play with the young children 2 mornings a week.

Seline has been employed by the Nuns to play with the children and we met her while we were there. Seline has divided the children into 4 age appropriate groups and spends 2.5 hours each week playing with the children in each group. We look forward to seeing the positive results of organised play in helping the children's emotional and social development.

If you would like to contribute to the Babies Home please send your donation to KKI.

Plan to Visit Projects in Kenya

We plan to return to Kenya for 3 months in 2020. If you'd like to join us to visit the projects and maybe go on safari in the nearby Maasai Mara National Reserve,



Toys distributed to the babies



Choosing clothing for the family

KKI appreciates the generous support of Lennox Head Football Club, Football Far North Coast, Bluegum Promotional Products and Clothing, Nimbin Hills Real Estate and the many generous individuals who donated goods for Kenya. A big THANK YOU to everyone.



Pandamonium reigned as students tried to score a pair of soccer boots

give Rob a call on 0409 413 248. For more information check out our KKI website www.kenyakidsinternational.org.au and see how you can help in **Giving young Kenyans a brighter future.** Rob & Rikki Fisher



So you think you are doing it tough

By Rikki Fisher

My lunch



Infidelity is the main cause of 1 in 4 people contracting aids in this area and the stats are actually quite good, as it was as high as 1 in 2 people 25 years ago. Two of the married siblings had moved back home with their 3 children and the tales continued...



Above: Martin.
Left: The Ochola matriarchs - Sharon 3rd from right, Sheila, right of her. Below: Monica playing with my hair.



Let me introduce you to the Ochola family. They live in a small town on the shores of lake Victoria, in an out of the way place called Sori in South West Kenya. I first met the Ochola's through the sponsorship program of our charity Kenya Kids International (KKI).

Sharon, one of 10 siblings, was a bright girl. Her father Elle was physically disabled from a motorbike accident and unable to work, after which her mother, overwhelmed by the situation, left him and the kids to fend for themselves.

Sharon had finished primary school but her father didn't have the necessary finances to send her to High School. KKI found a sponsor for Sharon in Lismore. She has now graduated from high School and is currently doing business studies at university. **That's the good news.**

We recently visited Kenya to check on our projects and during this time I purposed to spend some time with this family. I met with Sharon and five of her female siblings who were home at the time. They were so hospitable, sharing with me the little they had. I was given a fish to eat and when I asked if they would also eat with me they declined saying, "No it is just for you".



I felt uncomfortable with this but ate out of respect for them. I explained, "I don't eat the head or tail" and they asked "Why not?" What could I say, we have so much food we don't need to eat the worst bits and throw them out. Fortunately for me I was told the fish head was a delicacy and one of the children's favorite. Nothing went to waste, the head and tail was consumed by one of the siblings. Now finished, they presented me with another fish. I thought, Oh dear, do I have to eat this one too? With 9 pairs of eyes watching, I did the same.

Spending time with Sharon and her sisters I learnt what life was like for a woman in Sori, from their point of view. The way men treated women was a topic they spoke animatedly about – women raised the children, earned the income, did all the housework, carried heavy loads, fetched water, etc. Often they were beaten and commonly their husbands were unfaithful.

Monica, Sharon's older sister studying Banking and finance at university had to leave recently as one day she came back to her flat to find it had been ransacked; everything had been stolen including her laptop. She couldn't afford to replace the contents and was forced to come home.

Later I was told by Calvance, one of our volunteer workers, he had seen Sharon's younger sister Sheila walking around the town of Sori begging for money as she was about to go back to high school and she didn't have the required fees. Sheila did get back to school, but only a week later the Principal sent her home to find the balance of the fees. This is not uncommon as people in this area are extremely poor.

Later I met Mark, the only male sibling of the Ochola family. He walked me back to Sori to catch a motorbike taxi. While we were walking he shared with me that he also had to give up his course at Uni. He had been fortunate enough to complete two terms of a computer-programming course, without a computer, but now in his final term he had to have one. The family couldn't afford to buy a computer so here he was back home again.

I was struck by Mark's attitude; it wasn't one of "Woe is me for I am badly done by" or blaming outside forces. He wasn't even depressed about his situation. He just accepted that this is how life is when you are poor. And to add a little more stress to the mix, while still in Kenya we got a phone call to say the father Elle, had been hit by a motorbike while waiting to cross the road and was in hospital.

And we think we are doing it tough.



Both Mark and Monica need funds for a computer, University and boarding fees to get them through University. If you can help contribute to this need fill in the coupon, give Rob a call 0409413248 or make a donation through www.kenyakidsinternational.org.au

Make a difference this Christmas by giving young Kenyans like the Ochola family a brighter future

1. Please join me up as a member of KKI so I can help the poor

Joining fee: \$5 (a once only fee) Annual Membership fee: \$25 Total \$30

2. I believe in the power of education to change lives

Here is my gift for the Ochola family \$60 \$25 \$100 Other \$ _____

3. I want to donate to Macalder Mine Babies Home \$60 \$25 \$100 Other \$ _____

4. I want to sponsor a student like Sheila Ochola and lift them out of poverty

Monthly gift \$40 or Annual gift \$480 (sponsorship commitment for 4 years)

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