The official Kesho Kenya Newsletter
Editorial

“Kesho was founded on the principle that there is an essential difference between simply touching a child’s life and fundamentally changing it over.

Over the past 11 years, we have learnt that it is indeed possible to take a child who has been defiled, orphaned or infected or affected with HIV and truly actually help him/her not just survive but thrive.

Our comprehensive approach has integrated psychosocial, educational and social services to stabilize an environment around a child and ensure their well-being and success.

We are continually encouraged and impressed by our children who after going through our program, are changing their communities in their own little ways and as a collective, we have a firm belief that we will transform our county.

In 2019, we will be expanding our work to reach out to children in Kwale county to replicate our sustainable community based development model that represents our belief that quality education and a safe space is every child’s right and not a privilege.”

With warm regards,

Evans Odhiambo, Executive Director
In Kilifi County, many pupils in upper grades of public primary schools are not able to read fluently and understand a single paragraph in English or Kiswahili. The “Tusome” (Let Us Read) project had the objectives to; improve passion for reading, fluency and comprehension among class 1 to 3 pupils in ten public primary schools and to sensitize parents on the importance of having a reading friendly environment at home. What did we achieve? Looking back, we can say, the project was very successful.

Some statements worth hearing include:

**An Idea Was Born: Community Reading Sessions**

Searching for an avenue to reach out to more children, the idea of holding community reading sessions was born. On World Literacy Day, 500 children came to Kilifi library to read, participate in spelling competitions, do word puzzles and practice story re-telling. Adults joined and volunteered.

"I like the concept of accessing literature through stories. Reading stories is better for the children than sitting at home and watching cartoons and TV." An attending parent
Esther Dzendere is a woman who never gives up. Who would have thought that she would be fulfilling her heart’s desire in her thirties? The saying “Better late than never” fits in this context.

She is such a multi-tasker as she looks after her ailing mum, takes care of her family, goes to work and still finds time to attend adult literacy classes at Kesho Kenya for two hours a day. With her hands this full, Esther still managed to be the best student and was awarded for being the best overall learner during the World Literacy Day celebrations for adult literacy.

Working to meet ends instead of going to school

“It is God’s doing for me to be position one, as I would sometimes miss classes for about a week if work is overwhelming and I had limited time to finish up. I’m very much grateful to Kesho Kenya for the unending support they have offered me in pursuing my education old as I may be”, Esther says.

After Esther lost her father at a tender age and her mother fell ill making her unsuitable to work, she lost all hope in acquiring an education. She and her siblings had to drop-out of school, find work so as to make ends meet. She always wished she could read and write since she would then be in a position to manage her own business, keep records and give the correct change to customers. When she heard about Kesho Kenya’s adult literacy classes, she did not hesitate in enrolling for the classes.

My wish is to sit for the Primary school exam"

Currently in class four, Esther can read the Bible and newsletters from her children’s schools. “I also can analyze my children’s school report forms and I have benefitted from the Kesho Kenya Street Business School program where I acquired entrepreneurial skills. My wish is to sit for the primary school national examinations. I’m working tooth and nail to make this dream come true.”
16 years - the prime age when teenagers become indifferent towards education as they want to explore the world. For some, it’s all about trending dance moves, songs and having fun. That is however not the case for Sylvia Dama who is an excellent student with A grades from one of the Elite National schools in Kenya.

Sylvia’s story in her own words

“I aspire to be a pilot and am working really hard to make this a reality. I recently attended a camp on Aviation in Nairobi. The participants interacted with various captains from Kenya Airways, such as Captain Denis who is an Aviation Lawyer. They learnt various flight modules such as flight planning, air laws and many more – all was very interesting. “

“During school, I also met other role models personally. For example people from the NGO Akili Dada Kenya; an international award-winning incubator cultivating leadership among African women. And Wandia Gichuru, Founder of Vivo Active Wear. They really inspired me and the other girls to be creative and come up with community give-back initiatives.”

“My family background pushes me to work extra hard.”

“I emanate from a humble family of three siblings. We were all raised by a single mum who could not afford to pay her secondary education school fees. Kesho Kenya came through and offered me a scholarship. My family background pushes me to work extra hard so as to change it.”

“In school people come from diverse backgrounds. Some are even picked up by Porsche cars. But that doesn’t bother me as I always tell myself, ‘You create the highest, grandest vision possible for your life where you become what you believe.’ I believe that our existence is a sign that this world requires change and that our lives continue.”
Rachel Mbuche Kiti has awed many by her tremendous achievements. In Primary School, she attained very good marks but her family could not afford to take her to Secondary school. Lucky for her Kesho offered her sponsorship. Rachel scored an A minus and thus was the top female student in Kilifi County.

On March 2017, Kesho introduced her to Zawadi Africa Educational Fund which empowers exceptional girl students in Africa to secure college opportunities abroad. Kesho Kenya guided her through the applications and college selections in where she was accepted at Hillsdale College in Michigan State.

Rachel in her own words: “It is now two months in Hillsdale College! I would like to thank Kesho Kenya for the support is has accorded me to be able to pursue my undergraduate studies in the USA. A wonderful opportunity I highly appreciate.

I am doing well with my class and everything is set. I joined the International Students Club and it has helped me in terms of making my transition smoother. Together with my fellow Kenyan students, I prepared Kenyan dishes and sold it to campus students and professors. I have had opportunities to explore and interact with professionals who graduated from Hillside College.

Moreover, the community is so friendly. I have had fun time and made friends. I have a good relationship with my professors. So far, I have nothing to complain about. Thank you once again!”

Rachel Mbuche Kiti
Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu – this means “Let our girls succeed!” The DFID funded project implemented in eight Kenyan counties seeks to improve the learning outcomes for girls, increase transition to desirable pathways and promote sustainability of the strategies employed.

In the second year of implementation by Kesho Kenya in Kilifi County, Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu project has reached to 55 project primary school communities and awarded 228 students transiting to secondary school and 28 students in TVETs with bursaries to support their learning. 800 students attended community theme days conducted in April and November where students came together to discuss on the themes “My education - my obligation” and “My education - my success”.

Poem by students from Kiwandani primary presented during Theme day on 2nd November 2018

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Whose responsibility?
Whose duty?
Ooh yes, education,
education as a process.
I, I, I say I, the learner,
it is my duty to undertake education.

As the earth rotates, so it does education
it does not have an end, neither does it despise age.
Learning can begin right from a tender age,
a child can acquire knowledge.
Youth, even an adult can sit and learn.
OOH EDUCATION, MY OBLIGATION

Education separates truth from fallacy,
once obtained it brightens someone’s life
It changes the life style of someone
and improves the well-being on an individual.
I need to strive and get education since no pain no gain.
OOH EDUCATION, MY OBLIGATION

Education brings association
Education triggers assimilation
Education brings succession
Education eradicates confusion
and misconception
OOh EDUCATION, MY OBLIGATION

Boys and girls, let’s embrace education
It is the only key in life, which can make us go places.
Be called honorable in fantastic occasion,
let’s inculcate and obtain education,
to better our future life.
OOh EDUCATION, MY OBLIGATION
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 Owned up to their respective characters which convinced the jury.

**Revival of Edutainment**

After the previous Edutainment team flopped, the Kesho Youth Program officer decided to revive it, make it more vibrant and be a source of income to its members who are mostly college students. Luckily, a lot of young people showed interested and joined. Now the group has 13 members - even more than before.

**How they do it**

The edutainment team chooses a topic based on real issues affecting the community, like teenage pregnancy in Kilifi County. Then they draw a story of a cast which summarizes the situation in all aspects. Everyone is given a specific character, and they embody it with their own words. To create humour, they exaggerate action and movements and make funny comments – and people cackle up while passing powerful transformational messages.

**Where we are going...**

Their aim is to be an officially structured and registered group and to be more involved in educating and entertaining the community, partner with more private sectors and thus to attain maximum visibility possible in Kilifi and beyond.
Purity Shika Kiponda is more than a conqueror despite all challenges she’s faced. Once struggling to proceed to secondary school and university due to financial constraints, the young woman is now successful in the broiler chicken industry.

While at Kesho as a volunteer, Purity learnt of the Street Business School Entrepreneurship courses. This was a turning point in her life. “The Entrepreneurship classes were so good. Module one, which was about getting out of the comfort zone, really challenged me.” She decided to immediately act and have an income generating activities, which would pay for her education.

Currently, she is a third year student at Pwani University pursuing her Bachelor of Arts, Special Needs. Purity depends on her businesses to pay her school fees and for her up keep. Besides chicken rearing, she makes liquid soap and detergents, sells out to individuals, and attends classes and volunteers at Kesho Kenya.

By the time she was attending Street Business classes, she was in a chicken rearing partnership with a friend who had the larger share. To multiple her income, she borrowed a loan of 60,000 KSH to buy 200 additional chickens. “I knew from SBS that life is about taking risks. Businesses are challenging and may take time before one starts getting profit.” They sell out chicken to individuals, businesses, private and public entities that pay in good in time.

“I knew nothing about chicken rearing but I have learnt so much to date. Her tip: “In everything you do, you should have passion and determination, find someone who encourages and supports you to do better, and then you will succeed.”

“In five years, I see myself on my own piece of land”, she says, “with ample space for rearing chicken and education wise as an employee of an NGO like Kesho Kenya. I would love to inspire girls into working hard notwithstanding financial challenges.”
At Kesho, in 2018, we had a lot of activities running. Especially in November and December, during holidays, numerous pupils and students flock in to do appraisals and participate in various activities and trainings we offer in our resource center. Sometimes about one hundred children are in the center. We wish that our dream will come true one day to have a bigger facility with a lot of space for all activities. In the moment, the financial means are not available.

**New staff members**

As you can see, Kesho Kenya team has grown a lot. In 2018, we hired the following staff: A Secondary & Youth Program Officer, a Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, a Communication & Administration Officer, and an Executive Assistant & Marketing Officer. Additionally, in September, a communication expert was sent to us by Swiss organization Comundo in collaboration with German AGEH.

**Activities at Kesho’s**

Twice each month, always on a Friday afternoon, our team members participate in in-house trainings, e.g. on child protection, photography, report writing, temperaments of personalities, first aid and security. As a team building activity we went for a weekend to Watamu which was focused on all kind of interaction which brought us closer together. We also had a friendly staff match against our incredible partner from Moving the Goalpost which was packed with a lot of fun and learning everybody.
2018... THE YEAR IN IMAGES

Stop child sexual abuse! Kesho staff and affiliates demonstrating in front of the Kilifi Governor’s office.

When all the toilets for more than 600 girls are destroyed and the water tank burst - Security assessment at a partner Primary school in Kilifi County.

Cluster groups at Jaribuni – empowering parents to generate income through farming.

Primary students getting creative at Kesho resource center

How has the term been? Appraisal time for Secondary students

Craft’s day for basic education pupils

Energizer time during the Kesho August prize giving day for Primary and Secondary students.

Gap year students (Form Four leavers) during our 5 days entrepreneurship and IT training.

Adult Literacy Class celebrating the price for having the best student in Kilifi County.
JARIDA LETU © is the official newsletter of Kesho Kenya and published to share our progresses.

Kesho Kenya is a safe space for children where we have no tolerance against any form of child abuse.

2018... THE YEAR IN IMAGES

The pupils of Matsangoni Primary School learning their rights and how to protect themselves while fulfilling their responsibilities.

A Kesho cluster group trained on child rights and later on skills how to make liquid soap and jik.

1 hour interview at Baraka FM in Mombasa about children’s right and right protection.

Children playing at Kesho resource center

Chess tournament at Kesho Kenya resource center.

First aid training for Secondary students at Kesho resource center

Group work on sexual violence during Sexual Reproductive Health training at our resource center

Future electricians and other young professionals show their work - Activity Day at Gede Vocational Training Centre.

Enrichment & basic life skill trainings for primary and high school students