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THE EDITORIAL

Strategic Plan to empower young people

Dear Reader,

Looking back, I can only conclude that 2019 was a very good year for Kesho Kenya; a year of expansion, milestones, growth and development.

Most notable, after a great deal of shared thinking, consultation and refinement, Kesho Kenya published a new Strategic Plan that will guide all of our work for the next five years.

This plan is Kesho Kenya’s fourth Strategic Plan but is, crucially, the first Plan to bring specific focus to our development objectives. With Education, Protection and Gender Equality at its heart, the Plan sets ambitious development goals and defines how Kesho Kenya can best contribute to fighting the injustice of poverty.

It focuses on empowering young people to participate in decisions that affect them, giving them the opportunity to secure better educational outcomes and platforms for communities to rise out of poverty. Such major long-term goals demand a coordinated approach, as set out in the new Plan.

By working more closely with a broad network of partners, we will ensure that our efforts are aligned to have the maximum impact, to help improve the lives of the most disadvantaged, with a particular focus on women and girls.

We seek to influence the policies and practices that affect the lives of children and the most vulnerable communities through our credible solutions, strong voice on safeguarding and gender equality, women’s right and thought leadership.

The strength on Kesho Kenya now lies on the clear guidance of how we will work through to 2023, striving to build and improve sustainable practices in our work in all areas.

Evans Odhiambo, Executive Director
“SHINE” PROJECT

Problem-solving instead of rebellion

For consecutive years, Sokoke Boys High School has been famous because of the annual strikes which saw it record poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) for years. Now the school is involved in SHINE project – and everything changed.

SHINE means Students Acting for Honesty, Integrity and Equality. The students are organized into Integrity Clubs to identify problems existing in their school communities, initiate possible solutions and inform the public on their status through an app called Development Check Tool. Problem-solving focuses on giving students the chance to be pro-active and going into dialog – instead of opting for violence, strike or looting because they feel they are not noticed or heard.

From outsider to outstanding

End of 2018, Kesho Kenya introduced SHINE project in 15 Secondary schools in Kilifi County. 20 more schools will join in 2020. In September, Sokoke Boys High School was awarded the best in SHINE infrastructure project 2019 and also the outstanding integrity club of the year 2019.

Principal Mr Laban Mwangemi said they talked the students and guided them on how to solve different problem which they took positively. "We wanted them to identify a problem then find the solution to it. This opened doors to students who came in my office with different ideas to solve challenges we were going through,” he said.

Boreholes, tree planting and other projects

One example is 17 year old Juma, a form three student at Sokoke. He approached Mombasa Women Association and requested them to drill a borehole for the school to stop the annual water shortage which forced the students to go trek long distances and fetch water in the villages. "Our taps would run dry for months and students would protest about that. The donors only asked me to get an official letter from my principal. I approached him and discussed it with him and he gave me a go ahead and supported me all the way.” Now that the school enjoys access to free water students can now concentrate on learning.
“Debating is in my blood”

“I am passionate about debating, says Mapenzi, one of our beneficiaries. She recently emerged position 3 at a national debate competition. Here is what she said in an interview with Kesho Kenya. Watch the video on YouTube: http://bit.do/interview-debating

**How do you feel when you speak in front of a large audience?**

“It is normal to be nervous but I love composing myself. When I speak to a crowd of over a 1,000 people, I assume nobody is watching me. I also think of people who have made it in life, I get encouraged, start speaking and then all my fear disappears.”

**Why debating?**

“I am very talkative and I like English. When it comes to debating and I see how people express themselves and are talking in front of others, I want to be the one doing that. Who knows, maybe one day, I will be the president of Kenya because of my public speaking skills.”

**What are the tricks you use to get attention?**

(Laughing) “You talk unique. You speak at your best. You use all the styles that you can, e.g. acting or making people laugh. When you start speaking, do it with all your passion. You have to know how to talk to the audience and who they are.”

**What was your most memorable event?**

“It was when I went to St. Thomas for the national debate. All the big schools were participating. At the end, I was position 3. The other event was when I was elected school Vice-Chairperson of Kilifi County. It feels I can be a leader in the future.”

**How does debating contribute to your life?**

“It can support me to be more than I think about myself. I can be a lawyer, a teacher, a social worker, the president of the country. I feel like I can also make a career from debating. I want to be a lawyer, a lecturer, a journalist and a motivational speaker.”

**Who motivates you?**

“Actually, Kesho Kenya. When I came to Kesho Kenya I was shy. Through the trainings they offer and the smiles I get from staff when I am in the resource center, I am motivated to work harder so as to make Kesho Kenya proud. I thank them for moulding me into who I currently am.”
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

“Success is not for the chosen few”

For Adam, this is so cliché but true. He worked for one year as a graduate assistant at Kesho Kenya. He describes his experiences and personal growth as following:

“I came home after my final exam not knowing what the future held for me. All I wanted was to do something constructive that would keep me occupied. I learnt of the Graduate Assistant position at Kesho Kenya. I threw in my application to try my luck.

Being selected among finalists after a very tough interview gave me confidence and hope for the future. Green in the employment field, I did not know where to start or how my life here would turn out. Fear of the unknown engulfed all over me as I kept wondering how I should proceed. Things weren’t easy at first I say but I had to shift from my comfort zone, be bold and ask for clarification where instructions were not clear.”

Building my confidence

At an instant, I was required to go in the field and talk before the students of Bahari Girls Secondary School. I was so scared and didn’t even know what to say besides being flushed the whole time. Eventually, I managed to surpass the stage fright and shared with them Kesho Kenya’s overview. From then, I visited more schools and this made me bolder, built my confidence and improved my public speaking skills as well as way of articulating issues in matters youths.

Making community a better place

Kesho Kenya has given me a chance to connect with my community and make it a better place, see the world from a different point of view and provided me a sense of purpose. It is the perfect place to give a hand and help the community.

I have always wanted to be a pilot. But now I am going for Community Nursing because I admire the life where a person will always be connected to his community bearing in mind that the world cannot change on itself, it needs people with great goals and holding themselves accountable for it.

Find more success stories in our Kesho Kenya Blog: https://blogs.keshokenya.org/
Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu” (WWW) means “Let Our Girls Succeed.” It is a holistic project specifically designed to remove cultural and socio-economic barriers that have prevented or made it difficult for primary school girls in Kenya to transit to secondary schools and other alternative pathways. Girls in project schools form one on one mentorship clubs where the mentor is a peer who went to the same primary school and is currently in the next level of education. What are the benefits of mentorship? We interviewed Zawadi and her mentees to learn more on how it has impacted their lives.

Zawadi says: “Initially, I was very shy and did not know how to connect with my mentees. By being a mentor in the Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu project, I have been able to understand how to overcome my challenges and help others to overcome theirs.”

Yasmin explains: "My academics were wanting before the mentorship. I talked to Zawadi who helped me to come up with a timetable which included study time, household tasks and time to play. Shortly after, my grades improved."

Mary remembers: "My sister has been my biggest derailer. She had discouraged me from going to school and working hard. My mentor linked me up to the right people who encourage me from time to time on the value of education."

Mwaka says: "Mentorship has given me friends with whom I can sit down, discuss our academic performance and how we can improve. We are all in the same group and thus we have bonded."
SAFEGUARDING

Activity snapshots

What is one to do when a pupil in primary school elopes with a man? As we went to Uyombo Maweni Primary to conduct a child protection training, the head teacher afterwards called us aside, informed us about of that incident and that the parent had reported to him. We advised the head teacher to inform the parent of the pupil that she should report the case to the nearest police station and see what action they would take. The parent did not report. As we went back to Uyombo Maweni for our 2nd child protection training, the same head teacher gave us a pleasant update on the story: The parent did not report the case. But as the girl got report from the other pupils that Kesho Kenya had come to their school addressing the issues of child protection, the girl left the man’s house and returned back to school. She feared that Kesho Kenya would take action. It’s been six months since the incident occurred; the girl is currently going to school and continuing her classes.

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Our annual counselling training at Uyombo Maweni on school safeguarding policy for teachers left its traces. When Gloria Tsuma, one of the teachers from Nyari Primary, returned home she immediately implemented the knowledge she got from the training. Furthermore, she urged the pupils to form child rights clubs so as to help them share issues amongst themselves and come up with possible solutions. The pupils took it positively and followed her suggestion.

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During mobilisation of our second child protection training in Milore Primary we contacted the head teacher to schedule a date for the training. He was very happy and told us that the 1st child protection had brought positive impact to the pupils. Cases related to child abuse have dropped. Students started speaking openly about issues they are facing at home and at school. And the children came up with songs corresponding to the theme being “Watoto Wetu Wajibu Wetu”.

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.
BASIC EDUCATION

Shukrani - one of our 2019 KCPE heroes

“I was expecting over 400 marks but I am still grateful for the 383 marks I scored in my KCPE exams,” bubbles out Shukrani who is a beneficiary of Kesho Kenya. She emanates from Kilifi County and is the pupil with the highest KCPE result at Basi Primary, a school located in the outskirts of Kilifi town. Kesho Kenya has supported the now 15 year old girl since she entered school in 2010 all the way to class 8 when she sat for her final exam in primary school.

Support all the way to class 8

Raised by a single mom and being the seventh of eight siblings, Shukrani’s childhood was not easy. “If it was not Kesho Kenya I would not have gone to school for my mother did not have the money”, she says.

The support was not at all limited to school fees. “I was provided with school uniform and stationery, bedding and food.” She benefitted from trainings, mentorship and visiting the resource center to join diverse activities during the holidays. “The trainings helped me to open up my mind”, Shukrani says. “I know who I am, my rights and how to take care of myself. As class prefect in her primary school I profited a lot from what at learnt at Kesho.”

Challenges that motivate to work harder

Even though supported by Kesho Kenya, Shukrani also experienced challenges and dark moments. “Going home at lunch time to find that there is no food forced me to go back to school with an empty stomach. Then I used to doze off in class.”

On the other hand, the situation at home motivated her to work hard and give her best. “When I am adult I want to get a good job to change my family’s situation”, she says. She aspires to go to Moi Girls Secondary in Eldoret and later become a doctor. “My brother is my mentor, and my head teacher would motivate me to work harder.”
TACKLING CSEC Project

Bahati: escaping Commercial Sexual Exploitation

“Do not engage us in commercial sex. We are still students.” T-shirts with this quote were designed by Kesho Kenya for the Tackling CSEC project. This is the story of a beneficiary participating in the project:

Growing up as a young girl was not easy for Bahati. Being brought up by her unemployed, single mother who could hardly make ends meet for them was very daunting. Her mother’s poor status was really devastating that she had to move to the grandfather who could only support her with meals alone.

Her schooling became unaffordable for her family, and this saw her on and off school most times. This made Bahati lose hope of completing school and becoming a doctor. Bahati decided to join a company of naughty friends who introduced her to men who bought them goodies in exchange for sex. She got into a relationship with a bodaboda (motorbike rider) guy who would offer her free rides to school and even give her pocket money for her personal use.

Bad company

This life compensated her with what she could not get home; money to buy what she wanted. But it resulted to a defiant Bahati who could not listen to the advice offered by her teachers, parent and her elder sister who secured a scholarship to continue with secondary school. Instead Bahati moved out of home to stay alone with her “friends” whom she practiced CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) with.

New hope at the horizon

It is at this point when Kesho Kenya came to her rescue, and through counselling sessions with the Kesho Kenya counsellor, Bahati agreed to move home and go back to school. During her sessions she promised to change and be a good girl in school and at home. Bahati was given scholastic materials, uniform and a dignity pack to make her life more comfortable in school.

It has been 5 months of behaviour change for Bahati and teachers can’t hold back the joy of having the old Bahati back who used to love school and was an active pupil in the co-curriculum activities. Bahati joined the music club and even took part in the music festivals competition where she proceeded to the nationals and came position 3 in her soloist poem. Bahati awaits to join class 8 next year; she is hopeful of doing well and later joining a well performing secondary school and later achieving her dream of becoming a doctor.
When children are engaged readers, their literacy, learning outcomes, social and emotional well-being improve. “Tusome” means “Let us read!” For the second time, in 2019 the literacy support project took place at ten project schools, reaching out to 1,768 girls and boys and 34 teachers. The project’s objective is to improve passion for reading, fluency and comprehension among class 1 to 3 pupils in ten public primary schools. Furthermore, 500 parents were sensitised on the importance of having a reading friendly environment at home. The impact of the project from the teachers’ perspective:

“Reading culture cultivated”

“Availability of storybooks has brought about excitement among the children and most of them voluntarily come back to school in the afternoon to read.” Mr. Omar, Kararacha Primary.

“Our pupils have greatly enjoyed and benefitted from the activities. A reading culture has been cultivated. For the first time, parents did not complain when invited to school meetings. They really appreciate being involved.” Mr Baozi, Mkombe Primary.

“Tusome project brought together parents, children, teachers and the ministry of education. It has been an eye opener and we are determined to sustain the activities. Our children are reading and comprehending at a more secure level.” Head teacher, Zowerani Primary.

“Parents understand their crucial role”

“The pupils like singing and retelling stories. They look forward to Wednesdays’ sessions. We would like to continue with the reading clubs as the experiences have helped pupils to build their confidence and read more fluently.” Ms. Ruth, deputy head teacher at Ngerenyi Primary.

“The Tusome project has helped bring parents back to school. With the sensitisation sessions they now better understand the crucial role they play in their children’s learning.” Mr. Matole, deputy head teacher at Bahari Primary.

“It is shocking how three facilitators managed the clubs. Teachers were afraid that they would not significantly manage improving each child’s literacy needs. Using various stimulating approaches in the reading clubs fostered children span to participate in the activities.” said Ms. Yawa, Fumbini Primary.
2019 IN PHOTOS

Cheques handed over to new secondary sponsees
Winning team of the Tackling CSEC theme
Mama Zena enjoying Street Business School
Children at our stall during Kilifi Gold
WWW: Vetting income generating activities
New since May: Donate through our M-Pesa
Leadership training for secondary students
Pupils receiving their new school uniforms
Kesho Kenya at Gender Stakeholders’ Forum in Kilifi
Senator Christine Zawadi Fondo at a WWW training
Kesho Kenya team building exercise in Diani
Kesho Kenya’s website in a completely new design
Street Business School: group work on Business Plans
1-hour live interview on SHINE project in Mombasa
Our SHINE team in Kathmandu/Nepal
Edutainment group during one of many performances
Child protection training with fishermen in Kilifi
Dance performance during Family Fun Day
Consultative forum on children’s rights in Kenya
Friendly match against Kivukoni School.