

JARIDA LETU

 *Kesho Kenya*

Quarterly
Newsletter

April 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Kesho Kenya

Working in Corona times

P. 3

SHINE project expands

Welcome, new partner schools!

P. 4

Youth Development

When dreams become reality

P. 5

Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu project

Retaining girls in school through bursaries

P. 6

Safeguarding

Stories of impact

P. 7

Basic and Secondary Education

Activity Snapshots

P. 8

Tackling CSEC project

In the media and in the field

P. 9

Behind the scenes

Making our resource center more beautiful

P. 10

A new initiative to help orphans

Changing the way we care

P. 11



KESHO KENYA

Working in Corona times



The first case of Corona virus in Kenya was reported on 13th March 2020 and the initial sectors to be affected were education and industry. The president immediately urged all learning institutions to prepare for an indefinite closure and for employers to allow their employees to work from home. Even for us, a decision to work from home became inevitable especially because one of the initial first cases confirmed as positive came from Kilifi. We have since set up necessary measures to work from home for all staff and the departmental heads are regularly checking up on their teams to ensure everyone is well, safe and healthy with their families.

Appraisals over the phone

Not being in the office does not signify closure of our services. We have had to restructure and restructure to ensure continuity of our activities and services even as we work from home. For the first time, we had to conduct appraisals over the phone to get to know how our students fared both socially and to establish the impact of the pandemic on their families and provide curated support to each of the families.

Enlighten parents and beneficiaries

Through phone calls we have sensitized the parents of our beneficiaries on the importance of staying safe, observing high hygiene standards and ensuring that their children stay at home and participate in various learning programmes offered on radio and TV. We understand that a large number of our beneficiaries live in remote communities and do not have access to this kind of information and for them, we are providing literacy and revision materials to ensure continuity of learning.

Staying in touch

Our field officers are not able to hold community related events in keeping with the safe distancing and public gathering requirements. For this, we have formed Whatsapp groups where parents access academic content developed by teachers to share with their children. Such platforms enable us to connect and get feedback from teachers and parents on how best we can support to ensure continuity in our delivery of services.

Providing relief food and services

Together with Mission Inclusion, Oliff's family and other partners, we are channeling resources to provide a very focused support – food, seeds and literacy materials - that would target the needs of 95 high-risk families with a cumulative number of 541 children who have slipped back to vulnerability during this challenging time. Our safeguarding team is on call ready to provide psychosocial support to our children and women who through this pandemic, have been exposed to domestic violence and other family challenges. As you can see, it is not business as usual for Kesho Kenya but this is the new normal. We meet virtually at least one a week to share progress, challenges and weekly plans.



SHINE PROJECT EXPANDS

Welcome, new project schools!

SHINE (Students acting for Honesty, Integrity & Equality) is a *NORAD* funded project that aims at empowering students to act with and demand integrity in their school communities. The lead partner in Kenya is *Integrity Action* that only works with organisations with dynamic safeguarding policies.



secondary schools.

The project was working with 15 secondary schools within Kilifi County in 2019 and this year, took up 30 additional totaling to 45 secondary schools. The Ethics and anti-corruption commission regional office in Malindi re-affirmed their continued support and partnership for year 2020 and we hope this partnership will contribute to a greater impact amongst our young people in

After identification of the new schools, our project team paid courtesy calls to the school administrators to inform them about the objectives of SHINE and discuss how they will implement the various activities. The reception received was very positive as principals were interested in having the project implemented in their schools.



Creating projects and updating publicly on their progress

Every school then formed integrity clubs and identified a patron, who is a teacher to head the clubs. Those school clubs identify problems and with consent from the school heads, come up with projects to curb existing problems. The progress of these school projects is uploaded and publicly visible in a development check app. The patrons were then trained by our team members on how to use the development check tool before each of them being issued with a tablet to work with.

The integrity clubs are headed by monitors who are also students. They too were involved in our trainings. They were enlightened on integrity, what SHINE meant and how to identify projects and upload them on the development check tool. The young people were so excited and eager to learn about the project.

Not getting bread? Let's build our own bakery!



done, and they now do their own baking and have fresh bread every day.

The old clubs were not left behind in activities as we visited them every month and supported where required. We were happy to see students solving problems pro actively for instance, Chumani secondary where students were not getting their bread in time and would arrive to school when it was stale most times. Integrity club members advised the administration to construct their own bakery which was



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

When Dreams Becomes Reality



Recently we had esteemed visitors coming to check-on us in the office; one among them was Rachel, a top student and former beneficiary who now studies on Scholarship at Hillsdale College in the USA. She says: "No one in my family line had ever finished secondary school. I guess they all knew education was important but how to get there was one impossible riddle.

Kesho financially supported me through my high school education. It not only made my dreams a reality but also the dreams of the whole community. I am sure many young girls and boys are motivated when I tell them I go to school in the USA. The "nothing is impossible" norm has been validated or at least I can say I'm a living testimony.

Resourceful trainings

At school, I serve as the coordinator of the International Students Mentorship Program and the Resident Advisor to a freshman dorm on campus. These roles give me the opportunity to serve as a mentor and a support system to the students in school. I qualified for these opportunities because I underwent resourceful trainings at Kesho Kenya like leadership, first aid, reproductive health and many others. All these trainings equipped and developed my social life. I consider my experience with Kesho Kenya exceptional; it is one that has formed the foundation of all that I am today."



"When I count my blessings, I count Kesho Kenya twice"

"I have nothing to reward you or to repay you back, but the One who is in heaven, He will reward you more than you expect. May His precious hand be upon your life and protect you forever and ever."

"Because you have given my son a free education and you came into our life with sponsorship, you have created homes for the homeless, hope for the hopeless and even gave vision to us."

The other visitor we were pleased to see was Essa. After his secondary school exam, he worked in our office as a graduate assistant. After his gap year, he joined Kibabii University to pursue bachelor's in arts Commerce; business, commerce and economy. He graduated in 2019. He came to the office with an appreciation card (see image). We are so moved and grateful!

"Kesho did not only pay my school fees but also moulded me by equipping me with various life skills that enable me to thrive in this very competitive world. Kesho offered me trainings that have not only helped me in selecting my university course but also discover

what I'm passionate about and that is bringing about positive change to my community. Kesho Kenya has helped me grow into an independent thinker. Whenever I count my blessings, I count Kesho twice and cannot thank them enough for the impact they have had in my life."



WASICHANA WETU WAFULU PROJECT

Retention of Girls in Schools

“Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu” (WWW) means “Let our girls succeed” and is a holistic project funded by *UKAid under the Girls Education Challenge Fund*. The aim of this project is to ensure successful retention and transition for girls in primary school to secondary schools or other learning pathways. WWW works with 55 primary schools, 11 secondary schools and 4 TVETS in Kilifi County.

399 bursaries to offload financial burden

We conducted various activities during the first quarter of 2020. Vetting committees at each partner school were to decide who will get one of our 399 WWW bursaries for 2020 incoming form 1 students. Selection was based on the level of vulnerability. The committees consisted of the head teacher, club patron, BOM representative and Community Health Volunteer. The bursaries help in offloading financial burden for families and ensure that the girls stay in school throughout the term.



After the identification, our team then conducted household visits to assess if those listed really deserve the bursaries. Through assessment forms, our team asked about the family’s income and number of dependents the breadwinner has and the number of meals a day the family can afford. They also assessed the living conditions which advised their decision whether a family deserves the bursary or not.

Feedback from parents and the impact of grants offered to communities

In all our efforts to impact our communities, we also love feedback since we want to know where we are doing well, areas to re-strategize and improve on. Therefore, we formed accountability social forums which constitute of parents' representatives and community facilitators from each school. The groups are to hold school administrations accountable for their previous years’ set targets. We therefore had feedback forums where we were pleased to learn that parents now understand their role in their children’s education and that girls’ transition rate from primary to secondary school has greatly improved.



We were able to offer grants to three community groups within Kilifi County. One of the groups is Dongo Kundu Community Based Organisation (CBO) who used up the grant to buy 100 chairs which they hire and use the money they get from it to pay up school fees for vulnerable girls in their community. They have so far helped three girls enroll to secondary school.



SAFEGUARDING

Stories of impact

In 2020, we continue to implement the School Safeguarding Policy Guidelines in schools within Kilifi County. In 2019, Bofa Primary was one of our project schools. We discussed with the students forms of child abuse, rings of responsibility, right reporting mechanisms and other child protection issues. The head teacher felt it was not enough to just enlighten the students and not do the same for their parents. Therefore, he invited us to conduct Child Protection training during a parents' meeting. We felt that this was an emulable initiative for other school heads.



Street Business School: When concepts turn into reality and flourish

You might wonder how our Street Business School is connected to Safeguarding. The idea behind is that when families are able to create an additional income, it stabilizes vulnerable households, also to the benefit of children. It's amazing and moving to watch how business ideas and concepts of our Street Business School members turn into reality and flourish. During mid-line surveys, we talked with women about their challenges, successes and the impact of SBS on their lives and families. Here is one example:

From a heavy spender to a house owner

Two years after the Street Business School (SBS) training, Jamila's business is still booming and keeps growing over time. She has gone from chicken, goat rearing to stitching seats, tables and chairs covers. She also sells bed sheets.

"I want to construct a house on my own land. I am not yet there, but I can say, almost there. My businesses have enabled me to purchase the land I have always desired and I'm planning to commence construction soon."

She joined the SBS classes after learning about them since she then did not know how to calculate her profit verses money for merchandise. She adds that she was a heavy spender; spent up all she got from the business. Jamila says that the secret to being successful in business is to be hardworking and patient as there are days where the business will do well and others where sales will go low. She explains that the corona pandemic has greatly affected her business as she is no longer able to sell chicken and goats. She can only sell bed sheets which are not doing well as everyone is staying at home and stocking food stuff just in case it becomes scarce. Nevertheless, she hopes to bounce back after the dust settles.



BASIC & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Activity snapshots

New Beneficiary Recruitment



final choice is made.

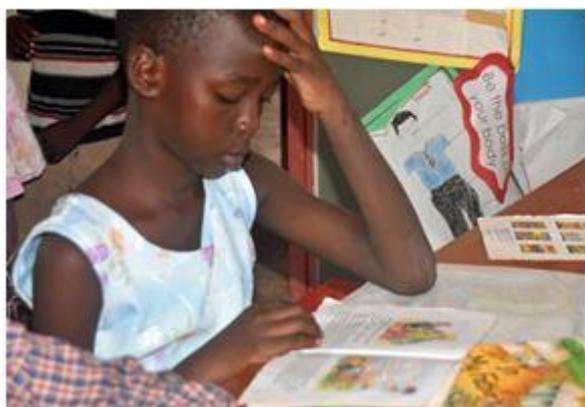
As usual, beginning of the year is recruitment for new beneficiaries in both primary and secondary school. 37 students from Kilifi County were lucky to benefit from our full and partial scholarship programme. Recruitment is done on merit basis and this year's cut off was 350 out of 500 marks. Applicants are usually given forms to apply and thereafter, those qualifying are called for interviews. The last step is a visit at the family's home to determine if what they wrote on the form corresponds to the real situation on ground. Then the

Charity Begins At Home

Sage's said that charity begins at home and this also relates to Kesho Kenya staff. One of our beneficiaries did not have the money to buy personal effects, transport to boarding school, uniform, shoes and bag. Kesho Kenya paid the school fees while staff members came together and individually contributed towards the boy's needs. It gave us a good feeling to make it happen for this student as he was still home as other students were in school continuing with their studies.



Resource Center Sessions



Students in primary school came to our resource center on Saturdays to read on their own and participate in literacy activities such as reading exhibitions, spelling games and words fishing which fine tune their reading and writing skills. Students were then to form STEM, chess and talent show clubs, but in March, we had to close down our resource centers because of the COVID-19 developments. We wanted children to stay at home during this pandemic and not be at risk of contracting the virus.



TACKLING Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

In the media and in the field



What pushes children in the Kenyan coast in commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC), who exploits them and what can be done about it? In this Daily Nation article affected children talked about their experiences. Poverty is the main reason a child engages in sex in exchange for money, gifts, and favors. Some were coerced by their parents, or peer pressure pushed victims from age 10 to 17 in the hands to locals like boda boda drivers or fishermen and tourists from Kenya or foreign countries. One of our social workers and the project counselor were interviewed on the situation and how Kesho Kenya supports the victims through our "Tackling CSEC" project.

Participatory Education Theater

Kesho Kenya team in Kwale facilitates Participatory Education Theater performances (PET) to create awareness about commercial sexual exploitation of children and show up good practices when confronted with it. When parents don't find enough time to supervise activities their children engage in, it might have negative consequences. Trying to make ends meet is important but forgetting to cater to children's needs might push them into commercial sexual exploitation. In the PET session, community members learnt on positive parenting and to pay attention to behavior change in children.



Learning how to generate income



Poverty is the main reason children get into CSEC. To mitigate this, our project team trains parents of vulnerable or exploited beneficiaries on Income Generating Activities (IGA), entrepreneurship and business skills. Parents or primary care takers of exploited children are then awarded with start-up kits to either start-up or boost their businesses. The project awarded 13 caregivers from Ukunda, Lungalunga and Msambweni with Ksh. 5,000 or its equivalent in merchandise for their respective IGAs. The individual recipients made the choice on what they would prefer in terms of the kits. Our team currently follows up on the utilization of these kits.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Making our office more beautiful



Turning our office into a light, clear and welcoming space is one of our goals for this year. The walls are freshly painted, the floor coating gleams. Phase one of the project is accomplished. We created a "Wall of Partners" to show those we collaborate with. Several images of our work in the field hang on the walls of our 3rd floor of our office. In Phase two we will put more images in the board room, 2nd floor office and create a "Wall of Fame" portraying outstanding beneficiaries who are doing well either academically or socially. The intention behind is to motivate other beneficiaries to be extra ordinary in co-curriculum activities and be exceptional academically.

Staff Capacity Building

Kesho Kenya encourages its employees to capacity build to ensure personal and career development in their areas of interest. This assures competency, professionalism, and increased know-how within the organisation. In the first quarter, we offered in-house trainings on a regular basis, e.g. on report writing and leadership. One of our own, Joseph had an opportunity to participate in a leadership training that was sponsored by Aiducation International. He got many insights on developing personal statements and how to be a good leader.



A NEW INITIATIVE TO HELP VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Changing the Way we Care

Kenya is committed to the protection of children's rights. With a strong cultural history of kinship care, or care by the extended family, Kenya is now moving away from orphanages toward reuniting children with families or finding a family for every child.



Catholic Relief Service with partners *Lumos* and *Maestral International* are working with the government, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in Kenya to begin the process of changing the culture of orphanages throughout the country. Kesho Kenya is involved in this initiative "Changing The Way We Care".

Children in orphanages are harmed in numerous ways

Research shows that children who grow up in orphanages are harmed in numerous ways. Not only are they more susceptible to violence, abuse and exploitation but their physical, intellectual, and psychological development is delayed. Once children "age out" of the orphanage system at 18, they are left alone and ill-prepared for life on their own, which often leads to unemployment, exploitation and homelessness. These are long-term costs to society and the children, who deserve so much more.

The initiative is working on helping families who, due to poverty give their children to orphanages because they are not able to provide food, shelter and basic education to them. The initiative will work directly with orphanage staff, giving them training and resources to reunite children with families. Additionally, it is planned to reunite children currently in orphanages with their families while preventing future generations from ever entering orphanage care.

For more information on the initiative, please visit the website <https://www.changingthewaywecare.org/>

