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JARIDA LETU© is the official newsletter of Kesho Kenya and published to share our progresses.
Editorial

Dear reader,

Hello! We’re excited that you’re reading our First Quarter of 2021 Newsletter. We are happy to share with you the exciting work we have been doing despite the challenges we are all facing in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are cognisant of the fact that the pandemic has further alienated hundreds of families and pushed them into vulnerability, which has eroded some of the gains, we have made so far. With your continued support and the resilience of our families we are sure to bounce back and ensure our families live a life of dignity and our children are thriving in safe spaces with access to quality transformative education. Thank you all for the support and for walking with us during these turbulent times. Together we shall overcome. Find below some of the inspiring work our team has been executing and the powerful stories they are leaving behind them.

Evans Odhiambo. Executive Director

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SHINE Project

Success stories, challenges, and recommendations

End of March 2021, the SHINE (Students acting for Honesty, Integrity and Equality) project ended. We wanted to learn more about the successes and sustainability of the project. We therefore held a stakeholder's forum with school heads and patrons to listen to their stories of impact, what went right, what went wrong and what the schools learnt from each other. Here are some testimonials:

"The project has impacted positively on the discipline of the school and all learners. Students hold regular meetings, write articles on motivation and academics." Mnarani Deputy Principal.

"The club is doing well; the members have designed talking trees which carry the values of integrity. There was something cocking in the school but it’s through the integrity club members, they acted by talking to the principal who took action." Bahari Girls’ representative

"Students now have the tendency of correcting each other on bad behavior by introducing the Tabia Mchwara bulletin. Discipline increasing due to monitoring among students themselves." St. Thomas Deputy Principal

"Cases of indiscipline have reduced; and integrity club students have become responsible, and they help bring calm in school." Takaungu representative

"The school had a problem of water shortage but students from integrity club were able to approach a meet supplier for the school who bought them a very big water tank. Integrity club members also advocated for the table serving system for the form fours to save them time wasted in queuing during meals." Lutsangani Deputy Principal

Linking project schools to Children Department and Ethic and Anti-Corruption Commission

To ensure sustainability, we linked all the 45 integrity clubs with the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission of Kenya. Additionally, we developed an offline monitoring tool and a scoreboard which the integrity club members shall be using in their monitoring services. The scoreboard will help them identify the needs on a monthly basis and collaboratively work on them. We also linked the schools to the Children Department representative for them to work together in addressing any safeguarding concern that may arise.
SECONDARY EDUCATION

Salama’s second chance after pregnancy

Salama (name changed) is a Kesho Kenya beneficiary who in 2019, at the age of 17, had to drop out of secondary school due to pregnancy and the related social pressure – a rare case among the students we support. A home visit was conducted in 2020, and she said she was ready to report back to school. Because she was the mother of a young child, she could not visit her former school as it was too far from home. She was tasked to look for a school nearby which would be favourable to her.

As orphan teenager the sole breadwinner for her family

But the COVID-19 pandemic queered her pitch, and all turned out differently. The now 19-year-old orphan had to take care of her two younger siblings and her own child because her grandmother who previously took care of the family, was absent for a long period. She became the breadwinner of the family by selling vegetable at her kiosk. Making it difficult for her to go look for another school that she could transfer to.

Back to school – a dream come true

Our Secondary Programme Officer stepped in to assist Salama so that she could report back to school. She managed to link her with CREAW organization who provided her with psychosocial support. Salama was given a grant to support her basic needs. She was taken to a secondary school in her area to request for admission and the Principle accepted. Salama is now a Form 2. She uses the part of grant the to pay a lady who takes care of her siblings and son.

Salama is very grateful for the support she received. She is grateful for being given a second chance to access education and fulfil her dream of studying to the tertiary level. She is an active participant in class. Her grades have improved, and she is working hard to perform even better.
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

“Put in practice what you learn at Kesho”

We can choose to use our background to wail and complain or we can use it to create a beautiful story. One example is Purity Kiponda, a former Kesho Kenya beneficiary and now a vibrant member of our youth group. She is the epitome of a well-rounded person. Purity received financial support to help her complete her secondary education, and later enrolled at Pwani University to pursue a degree in Education Special Needs (Visual Impairment option). Currently, she is awaiting graduation.

Passing knowledge forward

Purity has participated in our Resource Centre enrichment events and trainings, gaining expertise in entrepreneurship, life skills, and Sexual Reproductive Health. She has been able to facilitate similar trainings for youths in other organizations within Kilifi County such as Moving The Goalpost, Upendo Children’s Home, Kickstart; Bamba, and others, thanks to the knowledge she gained.

Expanding her business during Covid-19 pandemic

When COVID-19 hit, many youths were left idle, clueless, and helpless, particularly those still at universities, as all learning institutions were ordered to close. This was however not the case for her. She expanded her poultry farming business and has kept up to 200 chicken that she now uses to feed her family. Aside from that, she founded Puree Detergents, a business that manufactures and distributes detergents, which she also supplied to Kesho Kenya.

Volunteer and mentorships

She occasionally volunteers at our Resource Center, assisting with student assessments during school holidays and mentoring students to improve their academic performance. She also assists in the facilitation of Sexual Reproductive Health trainings.

“She is the epitome of a well-rounded person. Purity received financial support to help her complete her secondary education, and later enrolled at Pwani University to pursue a degree in Education Special Needs (Visual Impairment option). Currently, she is awaiting graduation.”

Purity thinks that Kesho is more than just providing financial support to students. She advises fellow alumni to take advantage of the organization’s numerous skill-building activities and training opportunities. They should show up when called upon and put what they have learnt into practice on a personal, family, and community level. She urges students who are still in school to understand the mission of Kesho Kenya in depth to become open minded and independent thinkers which will as a result help them become prosperous in future.
WASICHANNA WETU WAFAULU Project

How an IGA start-up kit has impacted Celestine’s life

In 2020, our Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu project supported 16 TVET beneficiaries with Income Generating Activity (IGA) start-up kits. This was in a bid to kick start individual businesses that would generate income. The kits included fabrics, sewing & overlock machines for tailors and blow dry, dryers and other essentials for hairdressers. To assess their progress, we visited Celestine and other beneficiaries with established tailoring businesses in February 2021.

Celestine’s business has been booming since its inception in November. She sold out the materials she had and restocked “I have very many customers and my mentor advised me to bring lesos and sell to them so as to get additional income since they sell very quickly. “The stock you see I brought in last week and now only few pieces are remaining.”

As last-born daughter supporting the family

Before becoming a beneficiary of the IGA Start-up KIT, Celestine’s life looked very different. She is the lastborn in a family of 5. After completing her tailoring course at Gahaleni polytechnic, she stayed for 2 years at home since she did not have funds to start her own tailoring enterprise. She sought for a casual job at a nearby shop which brought in very little income. Things changed when Wasichana Wetu Wafaulu (WWW) came in, and the start-up kit boosted her business.

Celestine earns so well that she managed to construct her parents a brick house out of the savings she got from her business. “I have invested like Ksh 20,000 to buy sand, cement and metal for the house. My father does the construction.” Her parents are farmers and the father who spoke to us says, “am very grateful for what my daughter has done. I don’t have a job and same for my wife. Our last-born daughter really supports us as a family.”

Saving up for further expansion

“My role model is my sister who teaches me how to sew men’s clothes”, says Celestine. “After I have learnt I will get my own place.” She has also started to mentor other girls in her home area. “I have a girl who asked me to teach her how to sew. This was after I stitched a dress for her, and she was impressed.” Celestine's plan for the future is to go to Malindi, buy another sewing machine and employ somebody to work there. She is already saving up for that course. She advises other young girls to emulate her and join TVETs to get expertise.
SAFGUARDING

The school which has shown great initiative

Since inception of the School Safeguarding Policy project, we had never worked with a school that has shown great initiative like Kibarani School for the deaf. Kibarani being a school for students who are abled differently, caught our attention on the strides they made upon learning that we would be engaging them for a period of one year and how we would work together. Out of their personal initiative, they formed Child Right clubs that were previously not existing in the school. A committee of four teachers was also formed, where two teachers were selected to be patrons of the newly formed club. Student representatives were selected to lead the other students on how they would be discussing child protection matters during the scheduled sessions.

Discuss children rights, forms of child abuse, right reporting mechanisms

By the time our safeguarding department was setting foot in the school. All structures were in place and everything was up and running. We had a session with the headteacher and Board of Management on what the school safeguarding policy guideline entails, how they can conduct risk assessments for the school so as to come up with mitigation measures. We have so far managed to train one patron among other school patrons on guidance and counselling to enable them offer psychosocial support to students while in school. When schools re-open, we are planning to visit the school and have child protection sessions with them. We shall discuss children rights, forms of child abuse, right reporting mechanisms and many other related topics.

Create a safe space for children

School Safeguarding Policy project under our safeguarding department has been working with over 58 primary schools within Kilifi County since 2018. Its aim has been to create safe spaces for children and put-up structures that ensure preventive, responsive and support measures for dealing with child protection and safety issues in schools.
BASIC EDUCATION

Learning as an adult is nothing to be ashamed of

Aisha was denied an opportunity to go to school at a tender age due to sibling rivalry. “For me joining the Adult Literacy Class was a dream come true. I had to overcome endless obstacles. I dropped out of school in class four when I was just eleven years old.” With the help of her sister and Mama Zena, Chair to the Board at Kesho Kenya, she joined class early last year.

Aisha wants to get an education that will enable her to get a well-paying job. “I have been doing casual jobs from a tender age whose pay was meager. I was also insulted and disrespected at the workplace. Besides, such kind of work generally makes you a slave always depending on others with nothing of your own.” On her first day of class, she felt like a young girl who has her first day in school. She was shy and a bit nervous. “With time I adapted and was comfortable learning.”

Attending class without giving up

Aisha desires to get educated because she was denied this opportunity when she was young. Even when the government ordered schools to be closed in March 2019, she would come to the Kesho Kenya resource center to read by herself. “If I stay at home there is nothing am gaining”, she says. This is what wakes her up every morning to attend class without giving up. “My sister also supports me at home with schoolwork. She encourages me to keep studying to achieve my goals. I sometimes fall sick, and I have stomach ulcers. But all this does not prevent me from continuing my studies.”

Plans for the future

Aisha wants to complete primary school and proceed to secondary. She could even imagine proceeding up to the university level if she gets the financial assistance. Thereafter, she wants to empower other women to access education in my community.

“I urge other women don’t wait. Seek if you want something, just like I sought for education. Be courageous because being afraid won’t help you. In addition, seek an education. Without it, life is very difficult. I wasn’t even able to load airtime on my own. Getting to a place was hectic because I couldn’t read. Thus, am very grateful to Kesho Kenya for giving me a second chance at life through education.”

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TACKLING CSEC Project

Mishi escaping Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Mishi was still in primary school when she was preyed upon and sexually exploited by boys and men in exchange for money and small gifts that the girl wanted but could not get at home. She kept this up until secondary school. The family’s main source of livelihood is a small business that involves selling local brew (mnazi) managed by the mother who is the sole provider of the family. While helping her mother, Mishi discreetly started a relationship with her mothers’ business partner. In September 2020 she got pregnant and had to open up about her condition to the business partner who refused to take responsibility.

A case in court and successful counselling

After reporting the issue to her mother, they sought help from Kesho Kenya. The 17-year-old girl became a beneficiary in the Tackling CSEC project. Her case was reported to the police, who started following up on the case which is currently ongoing in court. Different than in most cases, Mishi helped the police in apprehending the perpetrator.

Kesho Kenya and Terre des Hommes Netherlands offered counselling to Mishi and her mother after they learnt of the pregnancy. “Were it not for you I think my mother would have chased me away from home.” Instead, the mother supported Mishi through her pregnancy which gave the girl hope in life again. Asked about how she was feeling about the situation, Mishi said “I feel I have let down my mother because of this pregnancy. I spent days crying when became pregnant. My condition has strained my relationship with mother.”

Additional income and lessons learnt

The family is now able to generate additional income after benefitting from the IGA start-up kit that was issued in 2020 by the CSEC Project. “Through Kesho Kenya, my mum acquired skills in managing her business and was assisted to start a food kiosk where she makes daily sales of up to KSH 1,500.” Mishi wants to go back to school after the pregnancy. “My case has taught me a lesson and I will ask my peers to stop engaging in teenage sex and instead concentrate on their education. After school she would like to be a teacher because I believe I could instil good values in other children. I want to be a role model to girls in my community.”
CHANGING THE WAY WE CARE Project
Promoting safe and nurturing family care for children

Kadzo (name changed) is a 12-year-old and from a family of 5 children. She used to stay with her grandparents who were struggling to look after their own children and make ends meet. Therefore, they placed her in an orphanage when she was 7 years old. They hoped she would be able to access better nutrition and education for her to finish her studies.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Kadzo was among the children that were released from the Charitable Children’s Institutions (CCI). She went back to her grandparents’ home.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) through Kesho Kenya has been supporting Kadzo and her family for the past months. The Kesho Kenya social worker conducted child, family, and community assessments to identify what support Kadzo and family may need.

Cash transfer and Income Generating Activities to improve livelihood

CRS provided Kadzo’s parents with a cash transfer to cater for critical household needs together with livelihood training to enable them start up and maintain a business to generate income. They requested for Income Generating Activities (IGAs) kits to be used in building a small store which acts as a chicken coop and a storage area for their firewood that they currently are selling. All this is to boost the family’s economic status. Kadzo was also signed up in the National Health Insurance fund (NHIF) to enable her access quality medical services. Her grandmother, grandfather and the care givers’ child are also benefitting from this.

A cheerful child

During a recent home visit, the grandparents confirmed to having received the cash transfer which they used to purchase food for the household and items for Kadzo. The rest of the money was used to boost their firewood business and to start a chicken rearing business.

The caregivers noted a great improvement on Kadzo. At the start, she was very distressed on having to be back home, used to isolate herself, get lost in her own thoughts and refused to mingle with other children in the household. They noted that when we started engaging her, conducting follow up visits and giving the cash transfer, Kadzo has been cheerful. She says that if the economic status of the family can change and she was going to be supported together with her family to achieve economic empowerment she will not go back to the CCI.
JANUARY – APRIL 2021 IN IMAGES

Mama Zena at the BAF project launch

Students return to our Adult Literacy Class

Field visit with our partner organization Comundo.

Benchmarks visit at 3 CBOs in Kilifi County.

Attending a meeting on CP Emergency Guidelines

A CTWWC beneficiary gets his school uniform.

CTWWC monitoring visits at beneficiaries’ homes

Rinda Mwana project: identification of beneficiaries

Appraisals of our students in Secondary after the term

Visitors from Segal Family Foundation in our office

Tusome project for one hour live at Msenangu FM

WWW project: assessment on safeguarding policies

WWW team meeting with community health volunteers.

Kesho alumni participating in an Ajira Digital training

Social Accountability Forum in Gede

Distribution of solar radios for learning in the evening.

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