



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter

Winter / Spring 2021



Coping with Covid in Kenya

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This newsletter edition will feature the impact of Covid 19 on life in Kenya and our community projects.

Report from the field

Covid 19 took most of the world by sudden surprise in late February of 2020. Countries coped to varying degrees by implementing restrictions, quarantines and emergency measures. It caused chaos, suffering, illness, death and the up-ending of life as we have known it. It continues as we write this edition of the 2021 Winter/Spring Newsletter. Our SFA team was on the ground in Kenya visiting the projects in late February and had only just returned to Canada as countries began to lock down their borders in March. Kenya has been coping with all of the above.



In the rural areas where SFA works the impact has been sorely felt. Kenya has a population of 51 million and yet has only 537 ICU beds for those who need them and 256 ventilators nation-wide. Three quarters of those essential medical services are located in Nairobi and Mombasa. The Kakamega region where we work is a nine hour drive away from Nairobi.

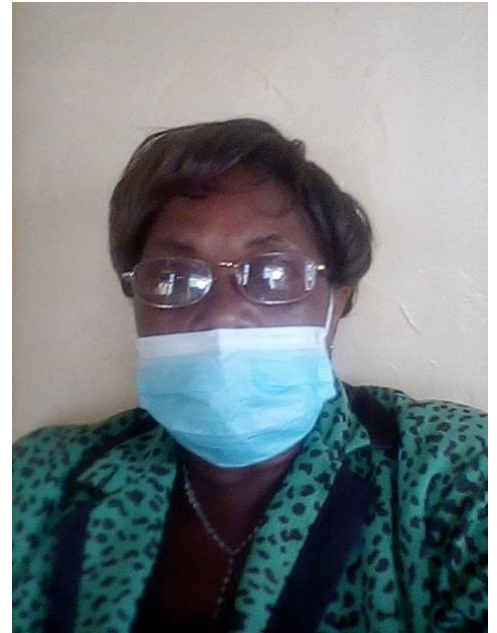
As a result there is a higher mortality rate in this rural area. There is a lack of fuel for ambulances, a lack of testing and of tracing, resulting in overburdened referral hospitals according to Chibanzi Mwachhonda, Secretary General of the Kenyan Medical Practitioners, Pharmacists and Dental Unions. (Reuters)

We have the good fortune to have a hardworking dedicated team in Kenya. Susan and Esther are working in the midst of all these challenges to do the best they can for our sponsored students despite their own fears of being part of the “at risk” category medically. On the following pages we will share their challenges and those of our students in their report.



EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATE 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR; REPORTED January 26, 2021:

by Susan Nanjala
(edited to respect privacy of individual students)



Following Covid19 outbreak in our Country in March 2020, Schools and all education institutions closed indefinitely on 18TH March. The whole nation was thrown into confusion, despair and fear of the unknown. Strict measures were put in place with hope that the spread could be curbed and learning could resume within the shortest time possible, but that was not the case. As days and months went by, Covid19 morbidity /mortality rates increased causing more fear in the nation, families and individuals. The students' break went on until October 2020 when the government decided to reopen Universities and Middle level colleges, primary grades 4&8 plus high school Form 4's being candidates.

A number of infections and deaths were reported in the opened institutions but the government and the Ministry of Health was able to control the spread. The affected institutions were closed for two weeks. Learning resumed again after the two week break once the schools were fumigated.

Since the Corona Virus was not being eradicated, the W.H.O advised that Nations should learn how to live with the Virus the way we have lived with Hiv/Aids and other Communicable diseases. This prompted the government to announce the reopening of all schools 4th January 2021.

Families and school going children went through a lot of challenges including gender based violence, early marriages, teenage pregnancies, substance drug abuse and alcoholism. Some families separated. Workers lost their jobs after the industries they were working in foreclosed. Suicide was rampant among adults and children. Psychological problems increased due to economic challenges. Some private schools closed too and they have not been reopened.

Because of the whole confusion during the Covid break, we were prompted to take inventory of our SFA/CCTD Sponsored Students.

We continued with our follow up checks through phone calls with families and our ground coordinators. After school opened we were also able to speak to some students once connected by caregivers or ground coordinators.

The students did not have an easy time to be at home for that long period of time. Some could not relate well with their parents/guardians/caregivers forcing them to move from one family to the other. Some have still not been found. Some parents/ guardians/ caregivers had not known the behaviors / characters of their children. By being together for that long period of time, parents found out that they could not control the children at home. There was also an issue of parents being analog versus the digital students, causing a gap.

While the sponsored children were in school, parents were relieved from providing them with lunches but this changed suddenly when schools closed. It was not easy for parents to provide for food and other basic needs. Prices of basic commodities shot up given that there was a lock down and curfews. Parents felt that children were better off being at school where they respected their teachers more than their parents.

Some students especially boys looked for casual jobs to do and others did the boda boda services (driving motorbike and scooter taxis) It made them become money centered and therefore had little or no time to read/revise.

Due to idleness and less supervision some girls who involved themselves in sexual activities found themselves pregnant as in the case of two of our students. All these challenges occurred because of their confused state of mind and being unsure of what the future holds for them. They were totally disoriented. Some students were lucky to be involved in online learning which occupied them. However not all students were able to access online school. We tried to link them with internet café sites but the price was very high and became unworkable. We attempted to print work for them but the cost of printing tripled again not working. We are continuing to meet as we go forward.



Sponsored Students Receiving their New Supplies



Benedict's Story.... A New Chapter Begins

When we first thought to start our education sponsorship program in 2010 it was in response to a great need for assistance for families who hoped to educate their children but couldn't manage the fees. In Kenya education is "free" but each student must provide their own uniforms, the necessary school supplies such as pencils, exercise books etc. & pay all exam and test fees. For many families this was out of their realm of possibility. When struggling to feed and house a family, education costs are an added burden and often out of the question.



Our administrator Susan brought this to our attention and asked if there was any way we could help. Susan worked up a budget based on what the cost was per student and we came home very excited and determined to find a way to help. Thankfully it did not take long before we had a very dedicated group of enthusiastic donors willing to take on the challenge. The first year we committed to sending seventy-five dollars per student and we started with twenty-seven students enrolled in our program. In discussions with Susan it was agreed that we would pledge to see these eager student through their primary education – Grade 8. Once a student achieved this level they would be eligible for an apprenticeship program for any number of trade courses. We all thought this was a lofty goal. Many students were very behind academically for their age group but they persevered – as did their sponsors who supported them regardless of how many years it took them to progress each year. As our students achieved their Grade 8 successfully it became apparent that they were anxious to continue. Once again our wonderful sponsors agreed to continue through High School. Such confidence and support was enthusiastically received by the students and we now have 6 graduates who are pursuing post-secondary education!!

Benedict is one of our graduates. He has struggled academically on & off throughout his primary & high school experience but he put in the time and the effort needed to graduate. Benedict has experienced a very difficult home life with little or no support for schooling. He is now working hard to realize his dream of continuing his education to become a priest!



It was an exciting time for Benedict preparing for this new chapter in his life. Thanks to the generous help from his sponsor and a modest sum collected and donated by his own parish, he was on his way!

Our administrator Susan accompanied him as he went shopping for all the items he would need to begin his new studies. They decided to shop for second hand items in order to make his funds go further. By the end of the day he was able to purchase some clothes and shoes and a suitcase to hold them.

We are very proud of Benedict and all that he has achieved. We all feel like his surrogate parents as do his “Canadian Family” who has supported him all the way! Benedict is currently registered at St. Augustine's Missionary Congregation for Catholic Priests where he will be studying for 9-10 years.

Benedict is in our prayers & we wish him well as he travels this path.



To date we have assisted over eighty students since we took on this challenge. We appreciate all of our dedicated sponsors who have maintained strong bonds with their student(s) through their annual letters and photos. This by far exceeded all of our expectations.

“MIGHTY OAKS FROM ACORNS GROW”



Thank you – Asante.



Kicker Junior Academy Update

While in Kenya in 2020 Michele & Wendy had the pleasure of spending time with the students and staff at Kicker Junior Academy – and it certainly was a day of celebration. We are so fortunate to have so many wonderful people who cross our paths every day and this was no exception. We were there to commemorate the installation of the water tank which now provides water to the school.



The project was completed on time and on budget thanks to: **Peter Roeser-Ott** our Project Manager, **Jasmin Ott** the financial wizard and **Joash Ligami** the principal of Kicker Academy! They all enjoyed waving the Canadian flag in appreciation for our partnership.

All of our colleagues have thankfully remained well during this difficult time. Joash reports that all staff members are well. The students are happy to be back learning with their friends. We hope that in the not too distant future, when we can do in-person fundraising again, we will be able to return to this school to complete another proposal for a much needed kitchen for preparing the mid-day meal.



Indulusia & Shamoni Well Updates

We are pleased to share that both of our recent well installations are functioning despite challenges. Unfortunately some regions in Kenya are still experiencing drought conditions. The dry spell has been triggered by lack of significant rain for the last 12 months. The water tables in affected regions have gone down drastically. The Kenyan government says the situation is likely to get worse if climate change delays the rainy season in March. Climate change is already having a huge effect on Kenya causing both floods and drought.



The well at Indulusia Primary School is functioning despite dry conditions.

The Shamoni Community well is facing reduced water levels and the water can only be pumped early in the morning before it runs dry.

Our reliable contractor Steven will soon be working on deepening the well a little in the hope of increasing more access to water.

"There are four basic and primary things that the mass of people in a society wish for:



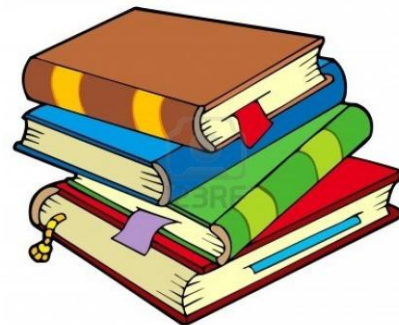
to live in a safe environment,

to be able to work and provide for themselves,

to have access to good public health

to have sound educational opportunities for their children"

- Nelson Mandela



How Canadians are Helping in their Own Way



Thanks to you, SFA is making a Difference:
One Child at a Time, One Community at a Time



SFA would not be able to realise the wonderful projects taking place without the help of many Canadians who are finding ways to get involved. We thank them for sharing their ideas and their time and talents in many simple and creative ways. We are proud to introduce some of them to you today on the following pages. THANK YOU!



Thank you to The Alexander von Humboldt International German School



We would like to acknowledge Alexander Von Humboldt International German School for the recent fundraising effort of the students and the staff members. Suitcases for Africa had been chosen as the school's charity of focus for 2020. In collaboration with Darlene & Wendy the teachers prepared a module of learning for the students to explore a little bit of what life is like in Kenya.

Among other things they learned about our educational support projects and community well projects.

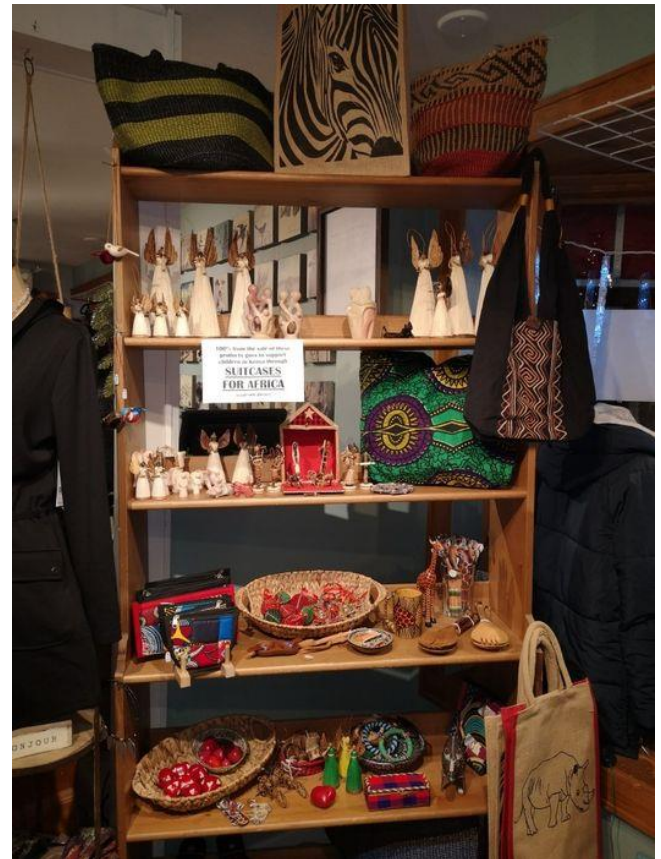
Thanks to their imaginative and varied activities they were able to raise over \$1,000!! This is an amazing accomplishment considering social distancing and all the limitations of the pandemic that we are living with. The money will go towards our next well project and our education program.

Asante Sana
Thank You Very Much



Teacher Kerstin Trense is flanked by Wendy & Darlene.

Thank you Soko, Pointe Claire Village



SFA would like to thank Michele and Gordon at Soko in Pointe Claire Village for hosting our Christmas sale of Kenyan gifts. It was great having a bricks and mortar location for people to visit and purchase items during our Christmas fundraising.



Corpus Christi Parish Virtual Indoor Plant Sale Fundraiser



We would like to thank Corpus Christi Parish and a very kind anonymous parishioner for organizing a virtual plant sale to help us raise funds for our ongoing projects despite Covid challenges this year. The plants were propagated and carefully tended over several months, sold online and delivered while maintaining social distancing. Brilliant!



Thank you also for the kind donation by the parish wardens and all those who shopped for cards and gifts from our virtual sales. There are still a few indoor plants available for purchase on our website or to be added to our Spring Perennial Plant Sale. More info will follow at a later date.

St. Barnabas' Church gets Creative



We would like to add St. Barnabas Anglican Church to our special thank you list for their unflinching support.

They have been part of our educational sponsorship team for many years. They have also been donors to our education support fund.

One of their strategies to raise funds is their occasional breakfast get-togethers. During these difficult times we appreciate everyone who gets creative to offer their support. Great teamwork!



SFA Fundraising Events



Unfortunately Covid 19 has seriously impacted our fundraising abilities. We can only hope that in the spring (May 22?) we will be able to host our annual plant sale if conditions permit.

We always enjoy the opportunity to get together and to see our friends and supporters. Traditionally this is a great opportunity to highlight our merchandise, delicious home baking and of course an extensive variety of plants.

Cross your fingers and wait for our update!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Join us in raising funds and awareness with your own ideas or events.
- Make a donation to support our projects. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations of \$25.00 or more.
- Purchase our donation cards (see below).

Looking for a Special Gift?

We have many Donation cards to choose from. For each card you can choose an insert describing the project you wish to support. Then give the card as a gift. We have had wonderful feedback from those who receive them. Select a project for clean water, education, bed nets or where most needed. See the following page for our 2021 inserts

Cards can be purchased for \$10.00 and up and are great as a gift for a birthday, a memorial, a hostess, a business contact, or for friends and family.

To purchase cards please call
Wendy at 514 - 992-5500

A selection of the All Occasion or Blank Note Cards available can be viewed on the following pages.

Choose your card/cards and the project/projects you wish to support.

BLANK CARDS

CARD 1



CARD 2



CARD 3



CARD 4



CARD 5



CARD 6



CARD 7



CARD 8



MORE CARDS



CARD 9 (BLANK)



CARD 10



CARD 11



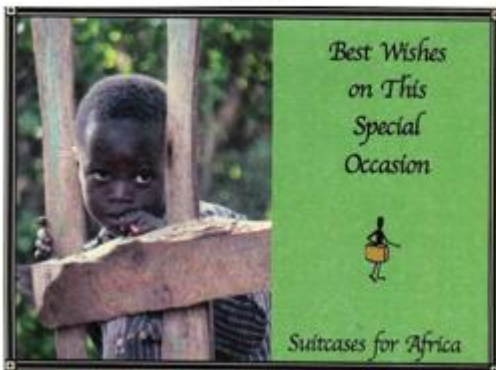
CARD 12



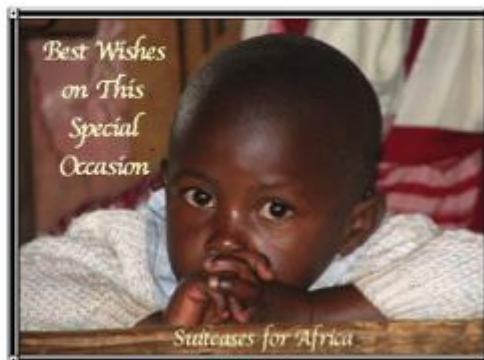
CARD 13



CARD 14



CARD 15

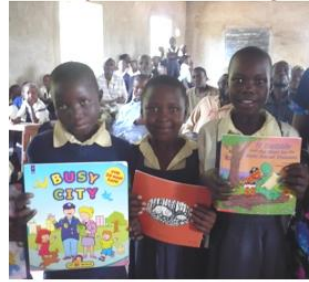


CARD 16

Card Inserts for 2021 SFA Projects

Choose a Project Change a Life

Your donation will
Provide Educational Support
In the form of uniforms, books and school
supplies at impoverished Primary Schools.



SUITCASES FOR AFRICA
Supporting Orphans & Vulnerable Children
through Education, Nutrition & Healthcare

Your donation will
Provide Children with Clean,
Accessible Drinking Water
Waterborne illness kills millions of children each year.



Best Wishes from
SUITCASES FOR AFRICA
Supporting Orphans & Vulnerable Children
through Education, Nutrition & Healthcare

Your donation will
Provide Children with Mosquito Nets
to Help Prevent Malaria
Malaria kills & disables millions of children
each year



SUITCASES FOR AFRICA
Supporting Orphans & Vulnerable Children
through Education, Nutrition & Healthcare

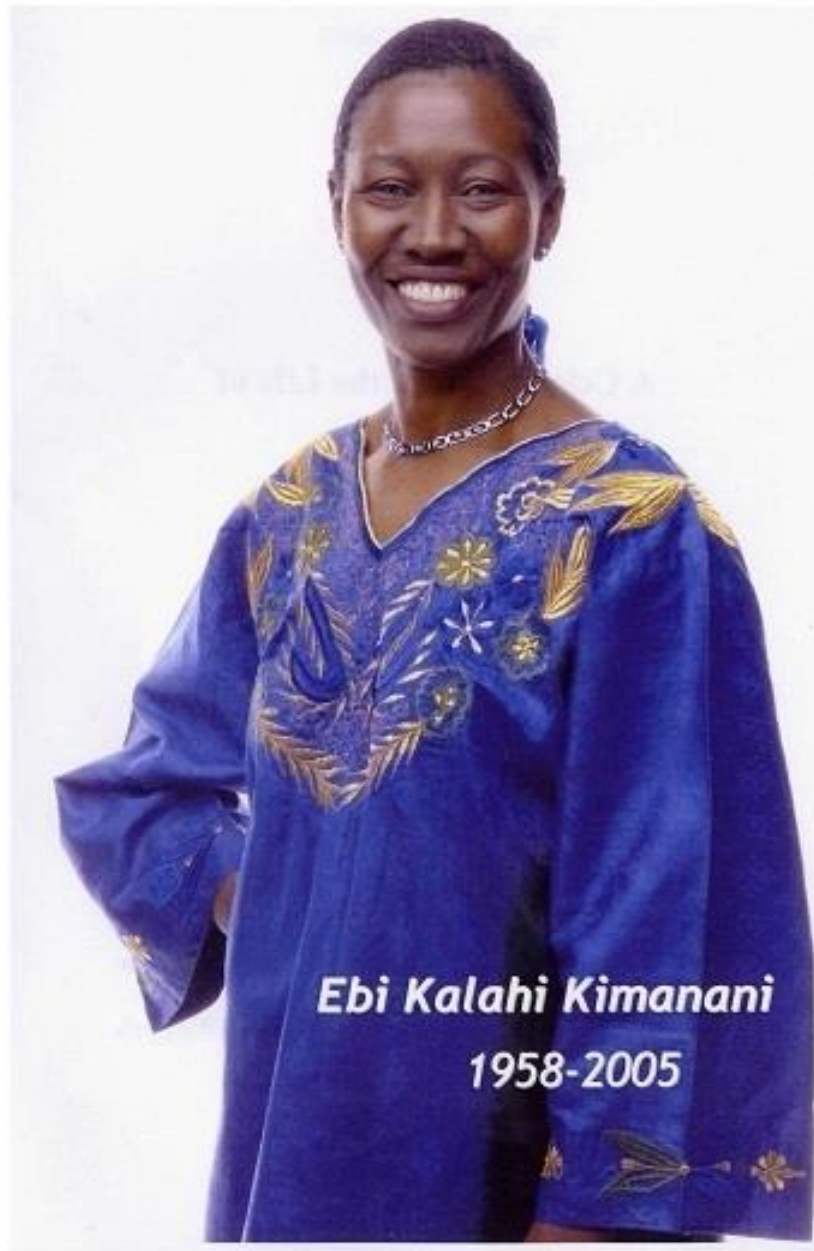
Your donation will
Provide Help where most needed for a
Vulnerable Kenyan Child.



SUITCASES FOR AFRICA
Supporting Orphans & Vulnerable Children
through Education, Nutrition & Healthcare

Thank you for Caring.

In loving Memory of Dr. Ebi Kimanani



*In honour of and thanksgiving for the life
of our dear friend Ebi.*