



# Kenyan Orphan Children's Foundation

## Newsletter December 2017



Dear Friends of Mama Orphans,

Merry Christmas 2017 from the Kenyan Orphan Children's Foundation, and our friends at Mama Orphans Children's Home (MOCH) in Busia, Kenya.

2017 has been a challenging year for the orphanage. A lack of rainfall early in 2017 in Kenya, meant that farmers had to delay preparing fields and planting new crops. As such, prices for common commodities such as sugar and beans increased substantially, sometimes up to double the usual price.

As well, the tensions around the national elections (which had to be held twice) caused a lot of disruption for the children. The elections disrupted many school days and protests around the election results even occurred right on the doorstep of the orphanage. The largely negative tone of the campaigns also seemed to contribute to a somewhat dejected sense in the local population in Busia, which likely affects the children as well.



### Primary school news

The previous old buildings which housed the primary school had become unsafe for the students and teachers to occupy. Fortunately, the Home was able to find a small amount of funds to build new

classrooms in the back of the compound in some of the space previously dedicated to the children's playground. This area is more spacious than the previous classrooms and still retains a large enough outdoor space for the children to participate in activities such as physical education.



### Reconciliation Project

In response to the rise in ethnic tensions which occurred during the course of the elections, Mama Orphans Children's Home founded a project to foster a greater sense of harmony across all ethnic and tribal groups in the Busia region. The project known as TRIBE-ALL is a project whose activities are geared towards bringing together all Kenyans regardless of tribal identity with a view of forging positive relationships amongst young people. Young people are often exploited by political leaders to propagate violence and therefore are our point of focus for this activity. Teens and young adults from the orphanage are helping to disseminate messages of pan-tribalism and reconciliation to their counterparts from other parts of society. Many of the teens involved in this project are those who have been directly affected by tribal conflicts and violence. They have first-hand experience of the negative consequences of tribalism in Kenya. One major activity was to organize an art exhibition with themes

of reconciliation and ethnic groups living in harmony with one another. This attracted young talented people from all over Busia, regardless of their tribal affiliations. This also saw Jack, a 14-year-old from the orphanage, who calls himself 'tribeless' showcasing his talent. We received overwhelmingly positive responses to this activity and we are therefore looking for more funds to plan similar ones.



#### **Volunteers**

The orphanage continues to host volunteer teachers from the UK and elsewhere. The Home has been very pleased with the enthusiasm and high quality of education provided by these volunteers. They also provide much needed collegial and academic support to the teachers employed by the Home, many of whom are just beginning their teaching careers. The opportunity to interact with these overseas volunteer teachers make the paid teaching positions at the Home more attractive to those who fill them, even if the salaries are not as high as in the public schools. As well, non-teaching volunteers are also frequently welcomed by the Home. Anyone interested in visiting Mama Orphans Home and/ or volunteering should contact Betty Oduor at [mamaorphans@yahoo.com](mailto:mamaorphans@yahoo.com)

#### **Re-integration**

Mama Orphans continuously tries to trace extended families and re-integrate children back into their home communities wherever possible. However, even if extended families can be traced, these children may not be accepted back due to issues of poverty, inheritance and differing ethnic

backgrounds may result in situations which are not safe for the children to return. Nevertheless, the Home has been successful in terms of reconnecting many of the orphans into their extended families and villages outside of Busia Town.

#### **Income generating activities**

Poultry farming continues to be an ongoing small source of income for Mama Orphans. It is also a great opportunity for the children to be involved in managing a business. Besides poultry, the institution is also trying to develop a fabric making business with the children. Teen-age students are taught to embroider fabrics which are later sold in the market. This activity also has the potential to provide employment for some orphans once they leave the Home.



#### **High school/ Vocational training/ University**

The Home continues to support over 20 children in high school and vocational training for other children who are not so academically inclined..

One former resident of the Home, Juma now works as a news anchor on one of our local television stations in Busia called 'Tv Magharibi'. As an added bonus, Juma has helped to re-integrate two children from the Home by highlighting their stories on the TV channel.

**Those wishing to donate online can go to our website at [www.kenyanorphans.org](http://www.kenyanorphans.org)**

**You can also send a cheque to:  
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Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V8  
THANK YOU AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!**