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Supporting Education & Sustainable Development

The heart of man plans his way,
but the Lord establishes his steps. – PROVERBS 16:9

Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” This quote has long been the foundation for international development. It conveys the idea that merely giving a handout is not the best option. If a handout is given, it will only solve the problem temporarily. Instead, international development focuses on teaching people how to fish so that they can become self-sustaining.

What does sustainability look like?

What does teaching someone to fish look like? What does it look like for someone to become self-sustainable and to be able to feed themselves? It is a continual, holistic transformation of an individual. In development work, growing physically means eating well to become stronger, not taking harmful drugs that would harm the body, and learning proper hygiene to keep bodies healthy. If you teach someone to fish they can sustain their body physically beyond what a one-time handout would achieve. But there is a need to grow mentally too, by learning more about areas of business, arts, and community. When you teach someone to fish you are also teaching them about biology, geography, and care for God’s creation.

In addition, there is a need to grow relationally. This means that they need to grow in a sense of community, and learn about how to serve in a community. When you teach someone to fish they can help to feed and sustain their whole community.

Finally, and most importantly, they need to grow spiritually. This means learning who God is, how he has saved us, and how he is reconciling the world unto himself (Colossians 1:20). Many in developing countries face horrible situations and tough times, but the Lord’s everlasting arms will hold communities and individuals through these ordeals. Especially when the proverbial fish supply runs out in these situations, trusting that God will provide is of utmost importance.

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In summary, sustainable development occurs successfully when you are teaching people to feed themselves holistically – mentally, spiritually, relationally, and physically – for a lifetime.

How is CRWRF doing it?

Throughout this update you will find examples of how CRWRF is supporting

sustainable development by transforming people through an education bursary and by starting a new community development project in Busia. Furthermore, by giving out microloans to start new small businesses, CRWRF is enabling holistic community development, so that communities can be transformed to become sustainable.



Education Bursary Fund

In November 2021, the first bursary funds were transferred from the CRWRF Education Bursary Fund (EBF) to the AICCAD centre in Nairobi, Kenya. As its mission statement lays out, the goal of this fund is to “build capacity through community-based empowerment” by providing financial support to needy children enrolled in secondary school education. We were able to offer tuition support to 11 students in this initial round of funding, some of whose stories can be read elsewhere in this newsletter.

Though armed with a clear and concise mission statement, the EBF committee quickly discovered that things were not quite as simple as receiving a list of students and providing a stamp of approval. Seminal to building capacity within a community is an understanding of and sensitivity to its particulars. To extend the fishing metaphor, misunderstanding a community might result in giving ice fishing equipment to a community in the rainforest. It's helpful, but not as helpful as it could be.

In this instance, there were two specific factors that affected our process and ultimately altered the shape of the EBF program moving forward:

1) The structure of the Kenyan education system

Similar to many Canadian provinces, Kenya follows a 8-4-4 educational system. Eight years of primary school are followed by four years of secondary school and then four years of undergraduate studies. However, unlike the Canadian system, all students exiting primary school must write a national exam called the KCPE. A student's

performance on the KCPE will dictate what level of secondary school they will attend: Public, Private or *Harambe* (or Community) school. Students with the highest grades attend the state-funded schools, while the *Harambe* schools accept the students with lowest grades, but receive minimal funding. The Private schools are affiliated with particular (often religious) organizations, and have the widest range both in terms of prestige and cost per student. Even though less than 50% of primary students advance to secondary school, competition for places in the publicly-funded schools is very intense.

What does this mean for the EBF committee? Rather than simply being able to calculate a cost-per-student equation, the ten students we considered had tuition costs that ranged significantly. Moving forward, some flexibility will be required in our budgeting to account for these differences. As we look forward to partnering with organizations in other countries, we are eager to see how the regional education system structures factor into our allocation of funds.

2) The effects of COVID-19 on the Kenyan educational system

In October 2020, as many of our Canadian students were adapting to the online learning world, the Kenyan government made the decision to shut down all schools mid-year. This shutdown would last for 9 months. The Kenyan school year typically runs from January to November, so when classes resumed in July 2021, it was with an altered and very compressed schedule. By shortening each session by a few weeks,

the goal is to fit three school years into two years. The Lord willing, they will be back on a normal schedule by December 2023.

What did this mean for the EBF committee? While our November contribution was intended to coincide with the release of KCPE results and secondary school placements, it would now fall into the middle of a school term. Rather than simply providing funding for Form 1 (our grade 9) students, the incoming students were enrolled in Forms 1 and 2. While we were not expecting to be considering applications again until late 2022, the next round will already be arriving in late March. Please join us in holding these recipients of education bursaries, and all students in the Kenyan education system, in our prayers as they navigate this uncertain (and academically intense) situation!

Even though these external circumstances might have resulted in some adjustments to the EBF's otherwise straightforward mandate, the results were a rich educational experience for those of us working on the committee. It was fascinating to have this glimpse into the educational workings in another area of the world and to see how effectively this fund can be used to promote real change in the lives of these students. If you, too, have had your interest piqued by our initial experiences, and wish to join us and share similar experiences with us moving forward, you are encouraged to reach out to any of the committee members! We are in search of a few more members and would welcome you to learn along with us as we seek to support the learning of young people around the globe.

We are having a real impact

STORIES FROM THE KENYAN RESCUE HOMES



The Story of Mercy Maureen Auma

Mercy was rescued in 2003 after the death of her mother when she was only six weeks old. She was brought to Achego Rescue Home for care and protection since her father was not in a position to take care of her. The former cook at Achego Children's Home took very good care of her while she was at the rescue home, and requested to be her foster mother when she left her position at Achego. Maureen was lucky to have a foster family that was willing to accommodate her in their home even though they were not doing very well economically.

She completed the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Exam in March 2021 with excellent results. She was given an admission letter to join Oginga Odinga Tamu Mixed Secondary School. Her guardian sold chickens to be able to raise her school fees but only managed to raise enough money to purchase her school uniform and a few

books. Her biological father was traced but he was not able to pay her school fees either, since he was not taking part in any economic activities. The Education Bursary Fund arrived just in time to give Mercy the opportunity to enrol in secondary school.

Mercy is receiving a good education, which is key to ensuring that she will be able to compete favourably with her peers for opportunities that will improve her life. She is being trained in important life skills, to and is being introduced to possible job options suited to her skills. The knowledge and skills Mercy is acquiring right now will give her a head start in life, and will allow her to support herself and give back to the community, instead of relying on charity or other people. She is grateful to CRWRF for partnering with AICCAD to set up an education bursary fund, to empower her and other children to face and overcome their daily challenges with courage and determination, and thereby to make a meaningful difference in their lives.



The Story of Alice Ntinyari

Alice Ntinyari has been living at Mufu Children's Home since 2015 after she was rescued by the children's officer and placed in the home for care and protection. After the death of her mother, Alice had been abandoned by her father who was not able to take care of her. During that time, she lived with her relatives who did not treat her well, and she missed school on several occasions due to lack of school fees. Once she entered Mufu Children's Home, she was enrolled in school and she achieved excellent results on her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Exam in 2021. After her exams she was

reunited with a foster family who were not able to pay for her secondary education.

Thanks to CRWRF's partnership with AICCAD to set up the Education Bursary Fund, Alice was able to apply for a bursary which enabled her to enrol in secondary school. She is determined to work hard in school and pursue her dream of becoming a doctor so that she can give back to her community and serve vulnerable families. She is also working hard to sharpen her skills and acquire knowledge that will be helpful in ensuring that she is able to provide for herself and her family. Indeed, the Education Bursary Fund has helped Alice to "learn how to fish" and become independent in the future.



The Story of Edwin Wekesa

Edwin Wekesa was rescued in 2013 and committed to Tumaini Children's home for care and protection. He wrote his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Exam in 2020 and performed very well. He received an admission letter to join St. Michael Top Station Secondary School. He was not sure about starting secondary school since he was living with an elderly grandmother and grandfather after being reunited with his family and they were not able to pay for his secondary education. He is grateful for the opportunity to go to

school, thanks to the scholarship from the Education Bursary Fund.

Through the education bursary fund, Edwin was able to transition from primary education to secondary education without any challenges. He continues to gain knowledge and skills which will enable him to face the challenges within his family and community. He is now sure of a bright future since he will use the skills and knowledge he is acquiring from school to be innovative and find solutions to the problems the family is facing. Edwin hopes to complete his education and engage himself in meaningful economic activities to provide for his family and contribute to the growth of his community.

Busia Update

Our Busia project is underway as of January 2022! For the five and a half years ending in December 2021, CRWRF funded community development in Tamu, a small town in Kenya. Tamu is now at a point in their sustainable development where they no longer need our financial support, so we can move our focus to a new area called Busia. This new community development project in Busia will involve children's activities, youth groups, parenting courses, health education, farm planning, and self-help groups. These various programs will serve to teach skills and increase community engagement, which will lead to finding and implementing sustainable

solutions to break the spiral of poverty. CRWRF is supporting the participation of 100 families in these programs.



TREASURER'S NOTE

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

— GALATIANS 6:10

Since the initiative to establish an Education Bursary Fund (EBF) began in 2019, we have been richly blessed with capital contributions of \$234.7K from our support base. To date, the investment earnings on this capital total \$14K.

Our EBF support began in the latter part of 2021 with our first contribution of \$2.4K. Our support covered approximately 58% of the school fees for the 11 supported children; the remaining funds were sourced locally via the work of our local partners in this initiative. Our financial support goes a long way in Kenya, where the annual cost of secondary education ranges from \$175 to \$640 CAD/year, depending on the type of school attended. Assuming an average annual cost of education of approximately \$450 CAD for the children supported, every \$1K in investment income on the Education Bursary Fund can support the education of four children for a year.

YOU CAN HELP!

We are currently looking for

34 more sponsors!

If your family is interested in supporting a Kenyan family by funding their access to these programs, please email:

SPONSORSHIP@CRWRF.CA

