

## **NEWSLETTER – May 2017**

Dear members and friends,

I hope that the vast majority of you have received news from their sponsored pupils, meaning their 1st 2017 quarter grades, quarter which ended in Kenya at the end of March.

The first quarter is followed by a month of school holidays (the whole April) and now, beginning of May we are in full 2nd quarter (May to end of July).

This explains why MAA regular trip in Kenya is planned usually on July: to be able to visit all the schools in villages, at least the most frequented by our pupils, and meet and exchange with our grant beneficiaries. We also meet school authorities at that moment (teachers, principals, parents committee) and we discuss with them their needs and often emergencies).

### Projects progress:

- Project I

- ❖ The classroom for 50 pupils (nursery class) was built in Lemongo primary school and is also equipped. The construction of the sanitary facilities is complete as well. A big thank you to our collaborator Leshinka who supervised the work.
- ❖ Construction of the primary class at Matepes continues, as well as the digging of school latrines (6 more).



Latrines in Lemongo primary

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At Lemongo



Matepes, the progress of the works.



The classroom at Matepes and WC under construction.

▪ Project II

- ❖ The pipeline that brings water from a junction point to the Iintumtum primary school is almost finished. We faced several technical problems, but finally we are out of the woods.

A big thank you to our collaborator on-site John Mepukori (who is a teacher in the neighbouring school of Emurua-Dikkir) for his involvement and good management of the project



It was question of covering a distance of 3.5 km by powerful water tubes, because of the high water pressure. These tubes were expensive.

Although the project seems ungrateful at a first glance, it is much more useful than you think : it brings drinkable water (from a distant river) to more than 350 students of Iintuntum primary school, and the inhabitants of the same village.

The villagers have no running water in their homes, neither wells nor drilling. At this geographical point of Kenya, the water table is deeper than 200m. Therefore water becomes inaccessible.

The one we bring comes from Ewaso Ngiro river that cross the area towards Maasai Mara National Park.

- Project III

This project concerns 2 Maasai Women Cooperatives one in Rombo / Loitokitok district and one in Iintuntum / Narok district. It will help them to acquire, settle in a shelter (built by MAA) and learn how to operate a grain mill (diesel one, because of lack of electricity in the area).

This project is funded by BNP Paribas Foundation, trough our members who are employees there and it aims to strengthen empowerment of rural women, and establish for them an important economic and social activity.

One of the cooperatives is located in Rombo and called "Nosim Ilpasekero", with 70 members, the second at Iintuntum village called "MAA women group" (25 members). The project is in the phase of acquisition of the land on which MAA will build 2 rooms storage : a room for the engine itself and another one as storage of grains and flour. The land will be offered by one of cooperatives members, thru simple written donation guaranteed by the local administrative chief. This is necessary to insure that we'll not have ownership conflicts later one, once the grain mill operational. A grain mill is called posho mill in Kenya.



Posho mill

A cereal or "posho mill" in Kiswahili is a widespread engine in Kenya. Most locals grow their own wheat and corn which are the staple food in Kenya. If corn is not eaten toasted or cooked in whole

grain (githiri), their harvest is brought to the nearest "posho mill" to be transformed into flour. The corn flour once cooked is the favourite dish of all Kenyans, called "ugali". The ugali is firm as a compact puree, while the "uji" prepared with millet flour has a consistency of soup and is like porridge, preferably eaten in the morning.

It is very easy to prepare ugali : a saucepan, boiling water, a very solid wooden spoon and salt. The mixture is turned over until it becomes compact and then is kept on the fire, stirring constantly in the "sufuria", a deep saucepan. It is served very hot, with vegetables and a stew sauce, with or without meat.

To grind 2 kg of corn a private one pays about 10 ct of a Kenyan shilling, if he produces his own corn. If not, the flour costs 50 cts for the same weight. Corn is bought/sold in 90 kg bags. A posho mill grinds as well millet (wimbi) and sorghum, a native plant in Kenya.

#### Various :

We promised to explain to you why MAA does not organize "voluntourism" in Kenya. By "voluntourism" we mean trips and reception of western tourists who pay dearly for their stay and food on the field, while they participate in a humanitarian activity (most of the time, they believe to offer a useful service, but often is delusion). These humanitarian activities are like teach English to orphans (false orphans in reality, this happens in Cambodia or Nepal) or digging wells and donate pumps in villages, where people have many wells all broken !

- First of all, MAA does not have a permanent antenna on the field. To do that we should have expatriate staff who lives permanently in Kenya to oversee all activities. We do not have office there, because we don't want to pay fix administrative fees (as rental, telephone, fax, electricity etc). MAA spends a 100% of your donations on direct actions on the field. We just pay local collaborators to supervise our projects. Project management is done for free from Geneva, Switzerland.

- In this way we stay mobile (like the "flying doctors" who have neither Hospitals nor medical offices). This is rather a strong point of our organization, because we can go where it is needed to be, to act quickly and directly helping vulnerable youth.

- Many times we were asked to build and run a "rescue home" in Kenya for Maasai girls, threatened by circumcision (FGM) and forced marriage. I visited twice such rescue homes. My conclusion is that they are big scams, kind of juicy business, because even if the girls are real victims of violence and traditional child abuse, they have no hope to get a day free and even worst to continue with education.

Some years ago, I "extracted" from such rescue home in Narok 2 young girls (14 and 15 y old) who had not been in school for more than year. Their role was limited to appear as victims when American philanthropists were visiting the place and so to attract donations. Apart being fed and having a shelter, they were not educated neither having kind of return negotiation with the family. MAA put them in boarding high schools and paid for them up to the end of secondary education. The rescue home manager lady (matron) was not happy at all and never asked me again for help...

In Kajado town I visited another Home and 2 other young girls, victims of forced marriage and FGM approached me. MAA took under sponsorship both of them and we were paying the rescue home for their education (otherwise they could not access education, as in Kenya the State pays less than half for secondary schooling). After some years when I visited them again and had a private interview, they confessed to be treated less than poor... No books, no school trips, even not one school uniform per year. The Home owner and manager lady who was the Head teacher of the neighbouring high school was managing our grants in her way...

This speaks volumes about the management of such charitable "homes" called shelters. We don't want to participate in any way in such activities.

Thank you for your attention and interest to read us.

For the M.A.A. Committee :

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