

# Kengele Children's Network (KCN) Beyond expectations



*A Partnership between Be Kids, Child Peace and the Children of Korogocho*

## **Introduction:**

Kengele Children's Network Project has continued to evolve and achieving immeasurable result since its launch in September 2008, barely 2 years down the line.

Throughout the different Phases of the project, the project team and partners have endeavoured to consult the children at every stage to achieve the best for the children and with their interest at heart.

This report focuses on a few selected achievements that may be humble but mean so much to the children, the community and more so informs the power of a collective effort when such a constituent within a population, take upon them selves to decide on their destiny.

## **Breaking the tradition:**

*Issahq Bukura and Gabriel Odinga of Kengele Children Network exemplifying greatness*

Through the Kengele project, eight children from Korogocho have won scholarships at Shepherd's junior school, an affluent private school in a middle class community in Buru Buru Nairobi. Piloting with only four children, the school was not sure of the move to offer a full sponsorship to some slum kids who may be exposed to "so much" and may be a concern to such a private school.

However out of the high discipline and sense of responsibility by the 4 (thanks to Kengele) and amazing academic performance despite their back ground and challenges that they face, the school's management decided to add 4 more children from Kengele. This confirmed our spirit of promoting child participation for social change.

The 8 children have continued to do very well in school, to a point where the school now feel part of the project and ready to support the children in as much as they would as far as education is concerned.

The following two cases stand out as unbelievable achievements that no one would have thought of:

**Issahq Bukura; Appointed the Shepherd's Junior School's Head Boy 2010-2011**



After less than a year since he was admitted to the school on sponsorship, Issahq was recently appointed as the school's head boy.

To be appointed as the head student in this school, the teachers and other students in upper classes, consider the following aspects:

- Discipline both in academics and inter personal
- Leadership and communication skills
- Sense of responsibility
- Tidiness and cleanliness

Due to stereotypical assumptions about children from such back grounds as Korogocho, it is almost unexpected for them to have the above qualities. However, Issahq has proved that children from such back ground like his are equally as good like any other, and with equal potential.

Issahq has been brought up by his 95 yera old grandfather who has taught him respect for discipline and hard work. The Kengele process has reinforced the qualities of leadership, discipline and other life/ social skills.

Among the responsibilities that he has as the school's head boy are:

- A link person between the student community and the school's management
- Ensuring some order among the students by addressing individual petty discipline concerns
- Working with other class monitors and the head girl to ensure that the students are comfortable and adhere to the expectations of the school's management office

**Gabriel Odinga; Emerges position 5 in his first exam at Shepherd's junior school**



From a public primary school marred with so much challenges affecting the quality of education, and from a wanting back ground faced with so much huddles, Gabriel was smart enough to emerge in position 5 out of 16 and with a total of 377 points out of a possible 500

The academic performance by Gabriel has proven beyond doubt that education is an equalizing factor between the haves and the have nots in our society today. He went to a school that is expected to intimidate him, found children from a totally different and privileged social-economic back ground, yet he conquered all the doubts and challenged some of the social theories used to qualify failures.

Gabriel has engaged with the Kengele mentorship process wholeheartedly and he is always ready to learn from his colleagues and teachers. Although in class 5, Gabriel hopes to be an astronaut after his studies some day. He hopes to continue doing well in his studies and evidently shows this by utilizing the study centre in his village, Nyayo.



**Telling our struggle to the Nation:**

*Fardosa Ali on a Kenya's National TV.(Citizen TV)*

Recently in the Month of July, through the efforts by Joan Peters of Be Kids and her friend June Gachui from Kenya, the Kengele project was highlighted in a break fast show on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

Fardosa Ali confidently faced the cameras and articulated the success story by the Kengele project and the impact it has had on her specifically, the other Children and the general community in Korogocho.

Though slotted for around 15 to 20 minutes only, she was able to attract a National audience watching the station at that hour, evidently by the responses after the show. She spoke passionately of the immense benefits of the Kengele program that believes in the ability of children and gives children an opportunity to be part of the social development in their community and expecting change for their betterment.



*File photo of Fardosa and other Kengele youth in a local community radio Koch fm during Kengele Phase II*

*“Fardosa you are my Hero I will name my expected daughter after you and I am your number one fan”* some of the comments, the presenter of the show Jimmy, couldn't hide.

When she first joined the project in 2008, Fardosa was a shy girl and would not speak confidently in public. By now, she is one of the leaders in this process at her village level. She can speak fluently and with content. She hopes to be a surgeon after her studies, a dream she has consistently held since she joined the program.

*“Children should not pride in the wealth of their parents; they should work hard to earn theirs”* A comment by Fardosa during the TV show responding to her thoughts on studying with children from a wealthy back ground.

### **Nahashon Mutahi leaves for Sweden for a two weeks exchange program**



Through an opportunity that came to his school Nahashon was chosen to be among the 12 students from his school for an exchange visit to Sweden for 2 weeks from September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Although not a member of the journalism club in the school which was part of the criteria to get the 12, Nahashon was still an eligible candidate for this trip, due to his track record as a consistent editor of the Kengele magazine since the first edition in August 2009.

The exchange is between the Our Lady of Fatima secondary school and with Media Gymnasia school in Sweden. The students will participate in different programs when there, to help the two sides understand each other, appreciate each other and respect each other despite their social, economic and racial back grounds.

Then in February 2011, twelve students from Sweden will visit Kenya and interact with their peers here on a number of programs. We look forward to Swedish students engaging with our Kengele children.

#### **Sponsorship opportunities for Harun Thuo and Ralia Mohammed for the next academic year**

Harun Thuo is 16 years of age and finished his primary education in 2009 but could not join secondary school in the following year due to lack of funds for the studies. He is 16 years of age and the first born in a family 4 children, with his second born brother also not able to join secondary school.

The mother is a casual labourer attending to odd jobs around the neighbourhood, while the father is currently sick after he was injured in the course of his duties as a security guard and was shot several times in his arm and on the chest.

Harun is at a critical age in which most of the youth from this community go to drugs and hard criminal activities and loose their lives on the same lines. He has been one of the talented boys in Kengele and he has been committed to the process and to date he is a leader in his village's Kengele caucus.



Harun is excited and committed to undrteaking secondary school in the coming year for 4 years before joining the University to study engineering a career he has been aspiring to.

He has received the news of him getting sponsorship for his first year with so much joy knowing so well that this is the first step towards the achievement of his academic goals that him and other Kengele Children believe is the bridge to the social and economic inequality in our country.

Ralia Mohammed on the other hand is 17 years of age and a first born in a family of six siblings and a single mother.

Ralia could not continue with her education after his uncle could not continue paying for her school fees due to financial constraints. She was in form two early this year and only went for one term (3 months) on and off.

Her Mother has no job and her small scale business was temporarily affected by the expansion of the road in the slum. However she is hopeful to go back to the business soon.

Ralia faces major challenges both as a girl of her age in a slum community and as a girl from a Muslim community with Somali origin whose traditions and cultural practices has major effects to girl child and women.



Girls of her age are married off to men equal the age of their fathers, and are introduced to the life of a wife and a mother at such age. Knowing very well that this is what her mother went through and now lives in poverty, Ralia is keen to work hard, go to school and gain knowledge and be able to liberate her self from such harsh conditions she found her self in.

Since she received the good news on the sponsorship, she has been going to different schools to secure a position in the next academic year.

Both Ralia and Harun will need 20,000 shillings each for school fees only, in every year of their secondary education. Other things they might need will include a school uniform costing about 5,000 shillings for each one, and some basic stationery.

Through the arts children make we hope to establish an education fund that will see these two urgent and needy cases go through school.

Ralia and Harun appreciate extensively the gesture by the people of goodwill through Be Kids Australia Inc. for offering to support them through the next academic year and they promise to do their best in education, acknowledging that this is a rare opportunity that many would only wish to have.

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