

**Kengele Children's Network (KCN)
November 2010 Report**



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

November Report.

Table of Content

- I. **Introduction**
- II. **Project Report**
 - a. Facilitators
 - b. Study centers
 - c. Networking
 - d. Lobbying/Advocacy
 - e. Outstanding action points from previous report
- III. **Activity Report**
 - a. Mentoring activities /Field trip
 - b. Home visits/School visits.
 - c. Special feature.
 - d. Expression- Magazine, Art, Dance, Radio, film

I. Introduction:

The Kengele Children Network Project Phase 3 has become a formidable children movement. It is changing the role of children from passive subservience to that of active participation in shaping their destiny. The results have been phenomenal and November was one of those exciting months.

The first Saturday of the month started with preparing the Kengele Children Network members who were candidates for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination. We had eighteen children sitting for this national examination which determines whether a pupil will go the secondary level.

The dance team also practiced the traditional dances to be performed during our visit to Shepherds Junior School in the following week.

During the second week, some of the children visited Africa Nazarene University, in the outskirts of Nairobi for an educational field trip. Other children visited Shepherds Junior School in an exchange program that has formed the basis for cultural dialogue of children from two diverse backgrounds; both socially and economically. 8 of our children have received scholarships at Shepherd's. We conducted evaluation sessions to assess the value of the two trips with the children and inquired what they learnt and enjoyed.

In order to further emphasize the importance of this exchange, we have a special feature of one Fardosa Ali. She is a fifteen year old girl from Korogocho slum and a beneficiary of scholarships awarded by Shepherd's annually to Kengele Children Network. At present 8 children are beneficiaries of this scholarship.

During the last two weeks of November conducted home and school visits in order to fill update forms on how the children were fairing both at home and in school.

We also distributed clothes and food stuff donated by the Shepherd Junior School to Kengele Children Network during our visit to the school.

The Kisumu Ndogo/Nyayo library is open and running. We have also continued with the search for other study centre spaces. We have held both formal and informal meetings with groups in both Highridge and Ngomongo to lobby for space.

II. Project Report

a) Facilitators' attendance, progress and points of concerns and strengths

The number of facilitators has reduced from eleven at the beginning of the year to six facilitators in November. The facilitators have been consistent in attendance at the Saturday meetings and Monday meetings. They have also been available when there has been a need for anything to be done in the course of the week.

The smaller team is a lot more manageable and efficient than the bigger team. On the other hand, we need to hasten efforts to involve the older Kengele Children more in the facilitation process in order to assist facilitators. We also need to device ways to keep the team of facilitators well motivated.

b) Study Centers

- **Kisumu Ndogo/Nyayo Study Center.**

The Kisumu Ndogo /Nyayo Study center has been operational for the last four months since its opening in August. The facility is opened in the evenings from 5 p.m to about 7:30 p.m. during weekdays. An average of thirty children use the facility daily with the numbers double during the holidays. This includes both KCN members and other children living around the study center. On weekends Kengele children use the facility as a venue for Saturday meetings.

During the holidays, the study center is open from 9 a.m to 6p.m. The main challenge has been the lack of electricity in the center which means that children will use their own lantern lamps or go home early. With the installation of electricity, the children will

be able to use it for few more hours after dusk. Electricity has been applied for and we are awaiting connection by the Electricity Authority.

There have been requests from secondary- school- going children that we stock more secondary school text books. Those in primary schools will also benefit from more school curriculum textbooks.

The Kisumu Ndogo /Nyayo KCN children have responsibility for opening, closing and cleaning the study centre. They alternate the responsibilities from week to week.

There is a suggestion to have some indoor fun/learning games in the study centre e.g. monopoly, Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles, checkers, scrabble or chess.

Once electricity is installed we can set up an e-learning unit in the study center where the children can take advantage offered by educational technology. Shepherds Junior School has already offered to donate a full set of e-learning materials.

The children have shown an increased interest in their studies as a result of the study center. There has been a great sense of responsibility on the part of the children in running the center as well. We plan to do a qualitative study of the impact of the study centre in order to improve service delivery at the facility.

- **Highridge/ Gitathuru Study Center**

Space in the slum is at a premium and is difficult to obtain. In this extremely densely populated region, even were there may be space, access to allow installation of the shipping container for the Study Center is a great challenge.

The search for space in Highridge has yielded fruit after a series of meetings with a youth group in Highridge, namely Korogocho Integrated Youth Initiatives. We have held two meetings with Korogocho Integrated Youth Initiatives (KIYI) in November .The officials of KIYI i.e. Chairman, Ali Kijibe and the Secretary and a few other members met with Charles Maina and Peter Mwashu representing Kengele Children Network. The atmosphere of the meeting was informal and we viewed the space that was being offered by KIYI.

Highridge and Gitathuru are predominantly Muslim villages. KIYI is a youth group composed of Muslim Youth who are focused to making Highridge a better place.

We have had the backing of one of the most progressive women leaders in Korogocho called Mwalimu Dhahabu was is also a member of the Korogocho Residents' Committee. Mwalimu Dhahabu has been instrumental in making sure that Kengele Children Network meets with KIYI.

The site in Highridge is in a central and secure location. The location is also easily accessible by a truck. What we need now is to agree to the terms for use and to sign the necessary agreements among the stakeholders namely, Be Kids Australia, Child Peace In Kenya and KIYI.



Issack Bukura, Abdiwakil and Abdi Nasser showing the available space in Highridge.

- **Ngomongo / Ngunyumu Study centre**

The Study Centre Committee in Ngomongo/Ngunyumu villages composed of opinion leaders, KCN children representatives and the Kengele facilitator in this village has identified another free space that can be used to set up the study centre. Only informal meetings have been done in this village.

The concern is that it was not easily accessible by a truck. The space new space identified is alongside the main road connecting Ngomongo village and the rest of Korogocho. Plans are underway to look for a more central location.



Judy, the Ngomongo facilitator at the available space.

c) Networking

There have been efforts to network with other schools around Korogocho and this was what we intended to achieve with the fun day at Shepherds Junior School. The weeks

before the 13TH of November, facilitators went to schools in Buruburu and its environs to invite them for the fun day. However, our efforts did not avail much since none of the schools we invited came. We might want to change strategy next time and also ensure we send invitations much earlier.

d) Lobbying/Advocacy.

Lobbying and advocacy has been done mainly with the aim of getting study space in both Highridge and Ngomongo villages. These have been made possible because of awareness affirmative action meetings conducted earlier in the year. We now need to build on these gains carefully and consistently.

As a result of these efforts we have had group from Gitathuru, called Together We Can approach Child Peace in order to put up study centre in that village. We are going to keep lobbying for space in Ngomongo until a suitable space found.

The role of Kengele Children Network is to keep the children and their immediate community engaged in finding practical solution to the problems affecting them. In the same vein, a cleanup activity is scheduled to be done by KCN in Gitathuru /Grogan A villages in order to draw attention to the need for a cleaner environment. The event is planned so that it will also include a campaign against drugs and substance abuse.

e) Reports on outstanding action points

The main outstanding action points include:

- Formalizing on the space agreement with KIYI.
- Assisting with the conduct of interviews for Shepherd Junior School.
- Follow up on the Africa Nazarene University mentors.
- Clean up and awareness campaign.

The report on the above action points will be reported on in the December report.

III. Activity Report

a) Mentoring activities /Field trips.

❖ Africa Nazarene University Trip on 12th November 2010.

Fifty children who had expressed an interest in the field of arts, business, teaching and journalism went for this trip.

We were received well by the mentoring team from Nazarene University organized by the students' services patron Evans Katanga.

We immediately got in the hall for introductions and a couple of game songs to help the children acclimatize to the new environment.

Thereafter we had one of the mentors, Carol Mosiany give a brief talk on the kind of courses offered in this institution ranging from journalism ,computer studies, teaching, business studies ,management and religious studies.

The children later asked questions related to the talk and they wanted to know mainly how they can get to join the university.The children were informed that by attaining the grade C + in Kenya certificate of Secondary Education, one is able gain entry to universities in the country.

The children were later shown around the campus and allowed to interact freely with students who were going to their classes. They also visited the various departments in the school and also had an opportunity to enter the well equipped library in the university.

Of particular note is the fact that when they went to the Journalism department, one of the Kengele children, Abdel Nasser, talked passionately about the Kengele Children Magazine. The students of journalism got very excited and wanted to know how they can give technical support to the magazine team. Follow up will be made in order to see how best we can utilize students of Journalism from Africa Nazarene University to help with the Kengele Children Magazine.

Another highlight is that, Nazarene university offers secondary school scholarships to few bright and needy students. The scholarship program, which is very competitive, allows children from all over the country to apply and few are taken in. One of the Kengele children, Mercy Wanjiru, has applied for the scholarship and she is very hopeful. Mr. Katanga also promised to give more forms in the coming year so that we can have more applicants from Kengele Children Network.

At the end of the day, students from Nazarene promised to visit the children in Korogocho as a response to our visit .This was a welcome suggestion since it would go a long way to enlarge our pool of mentors from institution of higher learning.

❖ **Shepherds Junior School on 13th November 2010: A cultural dialogue.**

The trip to Shepherds Junior School had been long awaited by the children. The trip had been initially planned for fifty children but eighty children turned up for this activity. We had to get additional bus in order to ferry the extra number of children.

Since 2008, the exchange program between Shepherds Junior School and Kengele Children Network has marked the perfect way to end a year. For the school, it is a

community outreach day and they do that by extending a hand to the children from Korogocho. The bond has grown over the years and children receive Christmas gifts in form of clothes and food stuffs.

In addition to this year's activity, we had Bridah Funworld ,an entertainment company that helped make the day a lot of fun for the children. It is noteworthy to say that most of the children from Korogocho have never seen a bouncing castle, let alone jumping in one. The same applies to a waterslide. The children had a great on this day. The children engaged in dancing competitions where they danced to contemporary Kenyan music.

The Kengele Dance Troupe had been practicing for months in order to be able to perform on this day. With the dance facilitator, Jack Okoth, on the drums, our dancer group performed traditional dances during the activity.

At the end of the day, the Shepherd community gave the Kengele Children Network Christmas gifts in the form of clothes and food stuffs.

We were also given the go ahead to find candidates for the annual Shepherds Junior School scholarships for two children in class five. We were then required to go and do interviews to willing children, then shortlist six of them who would do other in interviews in the school.



b) Home Visit Report.

❖ Special feature – Fardosa Ali; a girl of two worlds.

Fardosa Ali, commonly known as Farry, is a beneficiary of the Shepherds Junior School scholarships awarded to Kengele Children Network. She was among the very first join that school from Korogocho in the year 2009 as a class six student.

She comes from Highridge village in Korogocho and lives with her blind father and her siblings in their one roomed house. Her father is religious teacher and is also an authority in the mosque.



Fardosa serve her dad, Mr. Ali Adan, a cup of tea.

Highridge is predominantly a Muslim community and it boasts a population of about twenty thousand people, one of the most populous in Korogocho. An average household in Highridge has about eight family members.

Among the villages in Korogocho it is the best organized in terms of house arrangements and access roads. This village has the largest mosque in Korogocho and it is the surest way of knowing you are in Highridge. The village has the best health facility in Korogocho and some private schools.

History has it that the first inhabitants of this village came from a slum in the green leafy suburbs of Highridge, in the Westland's of Nairobi. The more affluent neighbors in Highridge conspired to move the slum dwellers because they posed a security threat. This is how the parents and grandparents of Fardosa got themselves in the sprawling slums of Korogocho in the 1970s. However, they carried the name with them.

According to Fardosa, the most pressing need for this community for many years has been the quest for a healthy environment. The village borders the largest dumping site in Nairobi, namely, the Dandora dumping site. All the industrial and chemical waste is dumped in the site near the village.

Apart from being an eyesore, the dump site is a health hazard to the inhabitants both in Highridge, Korogocho and its environs. The smoke from the chemicals burning in the site has been the cause of many diseases and respiratory difficulties. Many school children do not attend school because they have to go and work in the dumpsite for a paltry amount of money. This is one dumpsite that Fardosa would want to see moved.

Fardosa is also concerned with the disregard for education of her ethnic Somali community. There is more emphasis to study Arabic and Islam than there is to attain formal education. Girls are married off to older men all in the name of tradition. Although this practice has reduced to significant levels, it has not completely stopped.

Organizations in Korogocho have campaigned against Female Genital Mutilation, which was rampant in the Somali community, and there have been reduced cases of this

practice as well.

Fardosa believes the opportunity to attend Shepherds Junior School is invaluable. She is able to go and study in very different environment from that which she has grown up in. Before joining Shepherds Junior School, she attended over-crowded local Daniel Comboni Primary School and she appreciates the stark difference between these two schools.



Fardosa, with the headscarf, marches on in the school parade. Also helping to hoist the flag.

In Daniel Comboni, she had to struggle to learn in a class of seventy, lack of textbooks and she could not get assistance from teachers who were always busy. Now, her class has only fifteen pupils. This translates to better teacher-to-student interaction which means she gets to learn more.

Before joining Shepherds Junior School, she only heard about Buruburu but now she goes there every day. The school bus picks them at 5:30 a.m and drops the students back at 5 p.m in the evening. Se wakes at 3am to organize her tasks and get ready. She would like to be a surgeon.



Fardosa and Issack Bukura, both of KCN, raise hands to answer a question in class.

In Kengele Children Network, she likes participating in drawing in the art club. She also

likes engaging in the radio program. She admits that her tight school schedule, which includes going to school on Saturday and a lot of home work do not allow her to participate as she would wish. In her school, she is member of the scout guides.

❖ **Other Home visits /School visits reports.**

Twelve children were visited by the facilitators in five villages in order to get a general overview of how they were doing both at home and at school. The villages interviewed were: Nyayo, Grogan A and Grogan B, Korogocho A and Ngomongo.

The intention of the visits is to get information that will be useful during the academic review sessions during the school holidays. Only a few of the children availed their report forms when they were asked. Many said that they had difficulties with Mathematics and the Sciences. When asked what their best subjects were most of the children said they enjoyed Social Studies and the languages.

It also serves as an opportunity for the facilitators to identify areas that the children might require special assistance. When asked what marks they hoped to score in the end of term examinations most children wanted to score very high marks, which was virtually impossible compared to what they scored in the last examination. The children need to be assisted in setting realistic and smart goals. It was evident that almost all children did not have a study time table.

There was a stark contrast between what the children said they wanted to be in the future and what they said were their best subjects. The children also need to be helped to set their future career goals consistent to what they enjoyed and liked doing. This calls for sustained a sustained mentorship effort.

This was also the time to identify the candidates who would attend the interviews for the Shepherds Junior School scholarship. Thirty six children were shortlisted to attend the interviews to join Shepherds Junior School in class five in the next year. The condition was that they were to be currently either in class five or class four.

The interview involves a series of sub-interviews which includes being question by a panel of interviewers (composed largely of children and a facilitator to supervise). The candidate's ability to express themselves verbally is tested and successful candidates proceed to the next level. The next level involves sitting for examinations which basically aims at getting the best in terms of academic performance.

Thereafter, a minimum score is set and those above it are allowed to go on the next level.

A need assessment is done on those who pass the written examinations. This done in order to identify the neediest candidates and it includes visiting the homes of the

candidates. Once the neediest candidates are identified, who are by now reduced to six or five, they proceed to Shepherd Junior School for a written examination. Shepherds Junior School will normally take two of the most promising students to join their school. This year's interviews will be done in December.

❖ **Expression- Magazine, Art, Dance, Radio, film**

The Kengele Magazine is now with the designer and is planned to be out by December.

Art and craft team is working on the tin crafts .

Children have been practicing traditional dances in order to be able to perform at Shepherds Junior School. Some children have even formed a music group where they compose their own music. The ones in the music team are Peter Chege, Ezekiel Ngugi and Ralia Mohammed.

There will be cinema screening during the month of December when most children are on school holidays.

The children Radio program has not kicked off yet. We are yet to meet with the Koch FM management to discuss on the way forward. The children Radio Programs can best be planned for in the coming year.

❖ **Feedback on the funds sent for purchase of the costumes, shoes, shield.**

The purchase of the costumes has been delayed because of the rise in prices during this festive season. There is a tendency to overprice clothes or fabrics during this season. It was agreed that we wait until the beginning of the next year in order to buy the costumes at better prices.
