

# 2024 Fall Newsletter

**Supporting women and youth in Kenya**

P.O. Box 516  
Menlo Park, CA 94026

EIN 35-2314350

## Fr. Kiriti's Note

by Margo McAullife

Fr. Kiriti is still in Lare Parish, just 35 km (22) miles from Nakuru. Lare has a population of about 35,000, of which about  $\frac{1}{4}$  are Catholic. It's very rural and quite arid. People in that area depend on their crops for food, so time of drought is also time of famine. Here are his hopes for that community.



*Two years ago, I was transferred to Lare Parish, where I dreamt of making the environment better. To this end we began a tree nursery program. Today 25,000 tree seedlings have been planted from our nursery. We have had over 20 catholic funerals and in every funeral 10 trees are planted. Scientists tell us planting trees can save our planet by helping to combat the effects of greenhouse gas. The miracle in this is we are also making trees available to the people. Shown here are newly planted trees, protected from animals, mostly goats and donkeys.*

## Cynthia Wambui by Hillary Agisa



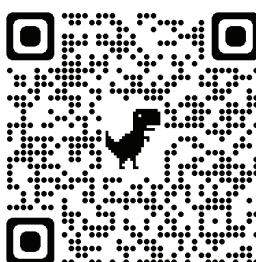
Cynthia Wambui's story is a powerful example of education's impact. She grew up in Mji wa Neema children's home where Margo lived when in Naivasha. One of the older children, Cynthia was a leader: energetic, outgoing, and a talented singer and dancer. She was educated through Kenya Help and Empower the World. At university she majored in engineering, landing a job with Tata, truck manufacturers, which she loved. Currently she is a project and technical engineer with Ecocycle. [www.ecocycle.co.ke](http://www.ecocycle.co.ke) This is more than just a job; it's her mission to revolutionize environmental engineering, by cleansing wastewater into clear, odorless water for agricultural use. She installs and maintains wastewater machines, a critical component of Ecocycle's operations. Recently

Cynthia had the opportunity to explain the project to Kenya's president, William Ruto. Her story inspires many young engineers and entrepreneurs

across Kenya and beyond.

Cynthia's journey reflects the purpose of Kenya Help and Empower the World. "We are dedicated to ensuring that those who benefit from our programs receive the necessary support not only to achieve success in life but also to make significant contributions to Kenyan society. It is this vision that drives us to create opportunities that empower individuals to thrive and, in turn, enrich the community as a whole."

## Please Donate



# Some of the 20 Newly Sponsored Students 2024 by Hillary Agisa



**CECILIA WANJIKU** is 16 years old. She earned 358 marks in her KCPE. She has two siblings.

Cecilia's mother is unable to perform hard tasks due to back problems. At times she does casual labor like clothes washing. Cecilia's family lives in a mud plastered house that her mother inherited from her deceased brother.



**ANGEL WANJIKU** is 14 years old. She earned 274 marks on her KCPE. Angel lives with her mother and her 21-year-old brother,

who attends A.I.C Technical Institute. Her mother is a single parent who tries to support the family by washing clothes. In January 2017 their house caught fire and they lost most of household items.



**PIUS MUIRI NJOROGE** is a 13-year-old who scored 362 marks on his KCPE. Pius lives in a low-income area of

Naivasha with his parents and his older sister. His father works as a car wash attendant and his mother is currently jobless due to a leg injury. She had been a salonist (beautician) but now cannot stand for long periods of time.



**IVY ACHIENG ALUOCH** is a 14-year-old who earned 340 marks in her KCPE. Ivy lives in Naivasha with her parents

and her 3 younger siblings. Her father is paralyzed and cannot work while her mother works at a flower

farm. This is a low-paying, seasonal job. Supporting the family weighs hard on her mother.



**ZAKARIAH KOIKAI PARSAMPULE** is a 16 year old who earned 351 marks in his KCPE. He resides with his

parents and 5 siblings. His father is a pastoralist while the mother works as a security guard. Zakariah's family depends on pastoralism, but due to the long period of drought and uncertain climatic conditions a large number on their cattle died.



**MARGRET NDUKU NJERI** is 13 years old. She earned 364 marks in her KCPE. She has lived in a single parent household

after her parents separated. Her mother's income that she gets from washing clothes can barely meet all the family's needs. Margaret has two siblings.



**TOBIAS OLUOCH** is 16 years old. He scored 383 marks in his KCPE. Tobias is an orphan and is partially deaf. His

mother passed in 2016 at the age of 48, and father in 2001 at the age of 58. Since then he has lived with his guardian, Sr. Mary Josephine. Tobias has four siblings.



**JOHN NDUNGU WANGUI** is 14 years old. He scored 298 marks in KCPE. John lives with his mother who works as a casual laborer. John's father was laid off during the Covid-19 pandemic which frustrated

him and he abandoned the family. John has three siblings.



**PETER NJIRI NYAMBURA** is 14 years old. He scored 357 marks in his KCPE. Peter lives with his guardian aunty, who

took him in after he was abandoned by his parents at the age of 2. He has four siblings all of whom live in a children's home. Peter's mother was struggling with alcoholism and was HIV positive.



**JOSEPH MBUGUA** is 18 years old. His KCPE score was 325 marks. He is the first born in a family of six and lives in a rented mud house with his unemployed mother. The family has lived in hardship. At one point Joseph dropped out of school due to financial constraints. He did casual work in order to support his family.

**DENNIS KASOPON** is 14 years old. He earned 355 marks in KCPE. Dennis lives in a mud house with his parents. Although unemployed, they are livestock keepers. He has six siblings.



**FRANCIS NG'ANG'A MBUGUA** is 14 years old. His KCPE score was 356 marks. Francis lives with his parents. His mother is the bread winner and does casual labor while his father, who has a mental condition, is not working. Francis has two siblings.

# Linah Njeri Ngatho, A Success Story

I am Linah Njeri Ngatho, second born of three children. My early years were spent in Naivasha with my mother, while my father worked in Nairobi. In 2007 he suffered a fatal stroke. My mother relocated to Nairobi, leaving my elder brother with our grandmother in Naivasha. A year later she sent us to live with our grandmother while she sought employment. Until 2016, I was raised by my grandmother, during which time my mother's presence and support were sporadic. She faced her own battles, remarried, and welcomed a son into her new family.

Despite the challenges, my siblings and I were fortunate to receive support from our extended family and benevolent individuals. Thus, we were never in want of the essentials. Divine providence seemed to guide helpers to us, and when hardships arose, we reached out to the community for assistance.

I completed primary school in Naivasha where I earned 315 marks on the KCPE. Fr. Kiriti, our local priest, introduced us to Sister Veronica of the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi. She secured a sponsor for my first year of high school. When the sponsorship ended, Sister Veronica reached out to the Empower the World Foundation (ETW), which agreed to finance the remainder of my high school education.

Beginning in my second year at Naivasha Day High School, I faced the loss of my beloved grandmother, leading to a move to my uncle's home with my brother, while my sister went to live with our mother. My uncle advocated for us to attend boarding school, a request ETW honored by funding our education, and I enrolled at Naaro High School where I achieved a B+ on my



Kenya Certificate Secondary Exam (KCSE). My passion for university studies crystallized in high school, particularly during an agricultural contest in Form 4. A speaker, on agricultural biotechnology, inspired me with his enthusiasm for the field, guiding my decision to pursue that course.

I was admitted to Moi University to study that very subject. I approached Fr. Kiriti. ETW agreed to fund my tuition, while my family and friends assisted with living expenses, making my university experience enriching and full of personal growth.

My practical training took place at KALRO, Kabete's Biotechnology Center, where I immersed myself in tissue culture, animal vaccine development, plant disease diagnostics, and elements of molecular biology. In July 2004, I participated in a month-long international virtual course to address climate change through global learning, collaborating with peers from Kenya, India, Switzerland, and Brazil. Our team ranged from undergraduates to doctoral students.

I have now completed my studies at Moi and will graduate in December, 2024.

## Message from Margo



Greetings from my new home in San Diego. In June I moved to a retirement community, where I still

head up Kenya Help. I continue to be in touch with Fr. Kiriti and Hilary Agisa, Program Director for Empower the World, our sister foundation in Naivasha, Kenya. Despite my move, we have retained the PO box in Menlo Park, so donations can continue to be sent to PO Box 516, Menlo Park 94026.

As you read through the stories of some of our newly sponsored students and that of Lucas Mwangi, keep in mind, we can help only a small number of students. Yet, the gift of school is life-changing for those we support. Our students come from incredible poverty, but schooling gives them a hand up, thanks to your gifts. One of my great joys is to hear from someone we sent to school, to receive their gratitude and to know of their successes.

Empower the World, with funds from Kenya Help, took in 20 new sponsored students this year, while continuing to support our students who are still in school.

## **The New Education System (CBC)**

by Hillary Agisa

Kenya's Ministry of Education has developed a new Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), replacing the previous 8-4-4 system with 6-3-3-3. It shifts the focus from academic achievements and standardized tests to the development of skills, competencies, and values. It's a more inclusive and adaptable approach acknowledging the varied talents and abilities. The curriculum offers three specialized tracks for Senior Secondary School: (BAM), Business, Accountancy and Management, (HESS) Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, and (STEM) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

This overhaul of the education system will impact Empower the World (ETW) in 2025, as there will be no new admissions. To compensate, we doubled the number of new students in 2024 to 20 new sponsored students. Furthermore, the selection process for students will undergo significant changes. Historically, ETW has chosen students based on their academic scores. However, our new selection criteria will reflect the curriculum's emphasis on a broader range of competencies beyond test scores.

## Kenya Help/ Empower the World

Kenya Help is a US registered Foundation, established in 2005, receiving tax-exempt status (EIN 35-2314350) in 2007.

**Empower the World (ETW) is a similar tax-exempt foundation registered in Kenya. It was established to disburse funds raised by Kenya Help, receive applications for scholarships, vet the families and choose the students to be sponsored by Kenya Help funds. They are “sister foundations.”**

## **National Schools/ Government Schools**

**National Schools** are the top schools, accepting only the best students of the country. **Government schools** can vary in quality, but many are quite good.

It costs \$800-\$1000/school year to support a student. Support includes tuition, boarding, uniforms, and other fees and personal items. Private schools are mostly boarding, mostly church sponsored and of good quality.

## **Exams and schools in Kenya.**

**Kenya Curriculum Primary Exam (KCPE)** is taken at the end of the 8th grade. Out of a possible 500 points, a score above 300 is considered quite good.

**Kenya Curriculum Secondary Exam (KCSE)** is taken at the end of high school. It is scored on an A, B, C basis, with an A score being very difficult to achieve. B+ is outstanding.

Kenyan high schools are not free, but fees vary. While day schools are cheaper, boarding schools are believed to provide better preparation for the all-important KCSE.

## Ways to Donate

- Send a check:  
Kenya Help  
PO Box 516  
Menlo Park, CA 94026
  - Go to website: [www.kenyahelp.us](http://www.kenyahelp.us)
  - Use our new QR xcode
  - Make a provision for Kenya Help in your will
  - Donate appreciated stock or mutual funds.
  - And if you are over 70 1/2, one of the best (most tax-efficient) ways to donate is to do so directly from your Rollover IR

Please contact us if you have any questions.

