



Kisima News

July 2021

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A NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS AT LAST

As July comes to an end, we would normally be finishing up with our second term and heading to a holiday. But we are still following the revised school calendar and so have just begun a new term that marks the much-delayed start of the 2021 academic year. The Form Two, Three and Four students arrived back on Friday 23rd, after a holiday of just a week.



Students returning to school

Then the next day we welcomed our new Form One students. They come from more than thirty different primary schools in Northern, Central and Western Kenya, and are young people who have great academic potential but are from disadvantaged families. We had not been able to travel for field work in their home areas, so they were interviewed on their arrival here. There was then an introductory meeting in the hall, and each Form Two student took responsibility for the 'daughter' or 'son' they had been allocated. The new students are already getting stuck into school life and we pray they will feel at home and make the most of all the opportunities that are available to them here.



Principal Dan addressing the new students and their guardians



Form Ones singing in their first Sunday service

We continue with the COVID precautions of wearing masks, washing hands and monitoring temperatures. Until recently cases were low in Kenya but now they are increasing rapidly as the Delta variant spreads. Nine counties are particularly affected, including our county Nyandarua, and hospitals in Nairobi are feeling the strain. The government have just extended the night-time curfew, banned public gatherings, and limited church services to one third capacity. They are also focusing on trying to get more vaccines, as with only 1.2% of the population fully vaccinated, there is a very long way to go.

With the Form Ones now here, the school is back to capacity, unlike last term when we had only three classes in school. The Form Fours had gone home in April after taking their KCSE - a challenging three weeks in which they had to sit twenty three exams, including three science practicals. We are thankful that the exam period went smoothly, though a number of injuries on the games field made the Principal decide to ban football matches for that time!



Form Fours in the exam hall

The exam results came out after only three weeks and we are delighted that the students all did well, despite the months they had spent out of school last year. Six scored an overall grade of A-, twelve a B+, fifteen a B, two a B- and one a C+. This put Kisima at position eighteen out of the 10,567 schools in the country, and means that, for the fifth year running, all of the students will be able to proceed to university with the support of a loan. They are now waiting to hear which courses they have been selected for.

Our aim for the students is that they will not only achieve great exam results, but that they will also cultivate good character, grow spiritually and leave Kisima with the desire to bring help and change to their families and communities. Therefore we are happy to hear what they had to say at the end of their time here:

'Kisima has really moulded me into a responsible and caring person. I have interacted with students from different tribes and have learnt to live harmoniously with them.'

'The values I have acquired at Kisima will make me a successful person in future. These values include humility, generosity, prayerfulness and honesty.'

'I have learnt how to cope with challenges without despairing. My spiritual life has been moulded. I am really motivated that in future I will help another person to acquire education.'

'I will always give my best in everything I do. I now have a future because with education I can fulfill my dreams and be able to help my parents and the community.'

'I have learnt the virtues of sacrifice, being kind and always ready to help, and believing in God for everything.'

'I have additional value in my life and have changed from a naive boy to a courageous, respectful and self-driven person.'

'I have been inspired to be a great aid and support to the community.'

'I am a transformed person. I have learnt to give and to have passion for helping other people.'



The class of 2021

Congratulations go to one of these recent Form Fours, Florence, who was successful in the interviews for EARTH University. She will fly out to Costa Rica in August to study Agricultural Science and Natural Resource Management on a full scholarship. One girl from the previous class has also been awarded a scholarship - Aidah will be heading to Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study Biological Engineering. It is probably not a coincidence that she and Florence both had the role of head girl during their time at Kisima.



Florence



Aidah

Another former student who has received a scholarship to study abroad is Mark. He finished at Kisima in 2012 and went on to study Electrical and Electronics Engineering here in Kenya. Now he is at the University of Birmingham in the UK, taking an MSc in Electrical Power Systems. Mark's sponsors at Kisima were Kevin and Flo Watson and, amazingly, two of their children are also at the University of Birmingham! Mark met Kevin when he visited Kisima in 2010 but now has had the chance to meet other members of the family. When visiting the Watsons' home, he also attended a service at Christ Church Chorleywood, who have been tremendous supporters of Kisima. Mark spoke to the church about how Kisima had been crucial to his life and how he wants to give back to his community in Northern Kenya.



Mark and the Watsons

Some staff members at Kisima have also moved on to new things. Moffat Khamala has gone to a new school after several years teaching Geography and Kiswahili, and Francis Shilingi has retired after working as a cook since the start of Kisima - sixteen years of early morning starts! Last term we had a day of celebration to thank him for his great service to the school. He was presented with two sheep and a chair and stool made by one of our teachers, and the students performed some lively songs and dances.



Mr. Shilingi giving a speech and dancing with the students

OTHER NEWS

• Over the years, people have raised funds for Kisima in many ways, from sponsored bike rides to quizzes to cake sales and many more. Now for the first time, a dog has been instrumental in raising a significant sum of money! One of our long-term supporters, Penelope Roques, has a beautiful bearded collie called Lintie, and when she had a litter of nine puppies Penelope sold them and donated all the money to Kisima. We are so grateful to Penelope for her amazing generosity.



Lintie and her puppies

Many thanks also go to Karenza Howard-Williams who lives in Nanyuki, about 115km from here. She has been of great help to Kisima by collecting various resources for us, and visited us in June to bring files and other stationery items and a huge number of books for the library. They include atlases, dictionaries and many lovely reference books which the students are enjoying.



Students receiving the books from Karenza

- This year we did not receive the long rains that usually come from March to May. As a result, our tanks were running dry and we had to depend on piped water. Furthermore, the maize that had been planted at the school farm dried up just after germinating. We have now had some rain and the farm has been re-planted with wheat. The rain is accompanied by low temperatures which are a challenge for many of the students, especially those who come from hotter parts of the country.
- Because of the short terms under the new school calendar, the students are continuing to have extra lessons in the morning and evening. Some are struggling with the pace of learning and are not getting the results they are aiming for in class. It is especially hard work for those who have just moved to Form Four, as they have the most to catch up with and now have no long holiday before their KCSE next March.

PRAYER POINTS

Thank God for...

- The completion of the 2020 academic year and the beginning of a new one
- The arrival of a full class of Form Ones
- Great results for the Form Fours
- The scholarships for some former students
- All our staff and their hard work
- Everyone who supports Kisima

Please pray for...

- The Form Ones to settle in well
- Everyone to stay safe from COVID and for the situation in Kenya to improve
- Our former students to maintain good character and the desire to help others
- Favourable weather conditions at the farm
- The students to have enough energy and concentration for the busy lesson schedule