



# Kisima News

## November 2021

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### HEADING TOWARDS NORMALITY

We start with the good news that COVID cases in Kenya have been falling since the middle of August and are now averaging less than one hundred cases per day. On 20<sup>th</sup> October the night-time curfew that had been in place since March 2020 was lifted, and now very few restrictions remain.

Here at Kisima we have stayed largely COVID-free. One of our teachers tested positive in August but thankfully this did not lead to an outbreak within the school (though with limited testing it is possible that cases went undetected). The vaccine is widely available and a good number of our staff have received it, but across the country uptake is slow - only 4.4% of the population have had two doses and 7.4% have had one.

We continue on the revised school calendar, with short terms and extra lessons. Because of this, extra-curricular activities were for a long time limited to games three times a week. But this term, we have been able to hold two special events. First was the talent show, where traditional talents such as singing, acting and poetry reciting were joined by some more unusual ones like wrapping a friend in tissue paper!



A highlight of the day was the ever-popular fashion show. Students wore costumes they had put together themselves, in the categories of school wear, sports wear, modern outfits and traditional outfits.

The following week we held an inter-class football competition, with a match each weekday and several at the weekend. Form Three were delighted to win both the girls' and the boys' competitions, though rain began during the boys' final and they and their opponents (Form Four) got very wet! As well as trophies and prizes for the winning teams, a number of individuals were also awarded, such as the top scorer, the best goal keeper, the most disciplined player and the best cheerer!



Alongside these special events, normal school activities have been continuing well. The teachers are working hard to cover all the material in the syllabus in the reduced time. This is especially critical for the Form Four students, who have their national exams next March, and the Form Threes, who have theirs next December. Those in Form Four who have opted to study Agriculture are busy with their assessed project, which this year is to grow carrots. They began by preparing their plots and sowing the seeds in September and now they have a healthy crop developing, thanks to daily watering and careful weeding. They are expected to harvest their carrots in January and then write up a report on the project.



*An Agriculture student and his carrots*

It has been great to have a number of people visiting Kisima for different purposes this term. One was John Diing, who is originally from South Sudan and who is now the admissions officer for EARTH University in Costa Rica. He came to talk to the students about the university, which specialises in Agricultural Science. Many of them are now aspiring to apply to the university and follow in the footsteps of previous Kisima students who have received scholarships to study there.

Another international visitor was Trevor Mwiu, who has recently become a TEFT trustee. Trevor is from Kenya but is currently living in the UK, where he works for World Vision. While he was back in Kenya to see his family, he made the trip up to Nyahururu to visit Kisima for the first time. He gave an inspiring talk to all the students and then answered their varied questions, covering such topics as study skills, career choices, life in the UK, peer pressure, and how to handle challenges they may encounter.



*Trevor addressing the students*

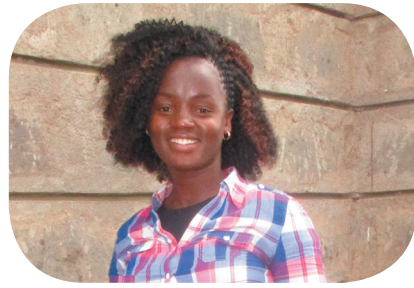
Further encouragement came when we welcomed a group from Deliverance Church in Nyahururu, who shared in our Sunday service through some wonderful singing and a sermon from Proverbs 4 - 'Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.'



*The group from Deliverance Church*

From late August to early October, our most recent alumni joined various universities in the country. For this they receive a loan from the Higher Education Loans Board, which they will start to pay back a year after graduating. The loan does not fully cover their tuition and living costs, so they need to be proactive in finding further funding. There are a few scholarships and bursaries available, and some families organise a fund-raising event in their home community, but most students rely on whatever work they can find before joining university and in their holidays, such as working in shops, labouring on building sites, and selling goods in the market or on the streets.

Despite their high grades, many of the students did not get onto their preferred degree courses. Some found an alternative subject they were happy to pursue, whether related or in a different field, while others were hoping to be able to change course after reporting to the university. A few have instead opted for diploma courses at one of the Kenya Medical Training Colleges. This is a good alternative route into medical careers, such as nursing, clinical medicine, and laboratory science, and can be a stepping stone to university at a later date. This is illustrated by one of our former students, Linet, who studied at Kisima from 2006 to 2009. She proceeded to KMTC for a diploma and higher diploma, and is now combining part-time university studies with her work in a centre that provides Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and learning support for children with special needs. Linet, whose parents both died when she was in primary school, and whose seven older siblings did not go to secondary school, says, *'Truly, education is the key to success. I am glad that I have the opportunity to serve the community and extend a helping hand to other people.'*



**Linet**

We were also very happy to hear news of another former student from the same class, Teresia, who studied Human Resource Management at Moi University. For many years she has worked as a Human Resource Officer for the national government, latterly within the Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development. She recently received an award for distinguished service in public service, which was presented to her by two Cabinet Secretaries and a Principal Secretary. Teresia says, *'As the Kisima motto goes, indeed I was empowered to transform. I am putting it into practice by positively impacting the Kenyan public sector through serving diligently.'* Teresia has also impacted her family; she comes from a family of nine children and has helped pay secondary school and higher education fees for several of her siblings.



**Teresia being presented with her award**

## OTHER NEWS

• In early October there was a week's holiday, during which two classroom floors were tiled (the other two had been done previously). This is a great improvement on the damaged concrete floors, and makes the rooms brighter and easier to clean. New chairs were also bought for the staff meeting room. This is all thanks to Ebbe and Lena Westergren from Sweden, who both turned seventy this year, and their friends and family who attended their birthday party. As they celebrated with singing, acting, food, cake and more, they also raised money for Kisima.



*One of the newly-tiled classrooms*



*Lena and Ebbe at their birthday celebration*

• We are also very grateful to our friend Karenza Howard-Williams in Nanyuki, who once again thought of Kisima when she had some items to pass on. This time we received several boxes full of equipment for the science laboratories - a valuable addition for practical lessons.

• Not all schools in the country are running as smoothly as Kisima. During this term, there has been a spate of incidents in which students have set fire to their school buildings, vandalised school property or walked out in protest. This is thought to be a reaction to the pressure of the new school calendar, compounded by the congestion and insufficient resources in many schools, as the government has required all children to proceed to secondary school but has not increased the schools' capacity.

• Another cause for concern is insecurity in various parts of the country, caused by ethnic conflicts and cattle rustling. Recent occurrences include an attack on a vehicle in Marsabit, in which six people were killed, and clashes between herders and bandits in Samburu, which left fourteen people dead.

## PRAYER POINTS

### *Thank God for...*

- The improved COVID situation in Kenya
- Protecting us from a COVID outbreak at Kisima
- The resumption of some extra-curricular activities
- All the visitors who have come to share with us in different ways
- The encouraging achievements of our alumni
- The generosity of our supporters

### *Please pray for...*

- Continued protection from COVID
- The students to do well in their studies despite the busy lesson schedule
- Our former students as they continue with their studies at university and college
- An end to the unrest in other schools
- Improved security in the troubled parts of Kenya and for the students' families in those areas to not be affected