

REDROSE NURSERY AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

This is a community based on non-profit making project that was initiated by 3 women social workers in 1998 but registered in April 2003 under the then ministry of gender, sports, culture and social services.

It focuses on entrenching the capacity of disadvantaged children who have no access to daily basic necessities such as food, clothing, education and shelter, consequently putting a ray of hope on their future lives.

The centre was started with an enrollment of 30 orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) from the Kibera slum villages (settlements) of Gatwekera, Kianda, and Makina. The 30 children were enrolled in three units that were Baby class (12), Nursery (8) and Pre-Unit (10) and were attended to by the three ladies who initiated the project. Luckily one of them was a teacher who had just retired from Government service and was very instrumental in establishing the centre.

THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- The centre wishes to facilitate full sponsorship of orphaned and vulnerable children in the payment of school fees, providing them with food to improve their health and buying clothes and school uniforms.
- The centre hopes to get sponsorship to facilitate the purchase of a spacious area where the project can be relocated so that it accommodates the ever increasing number of disadvantaged children.
- The centre wishes to provide adequate school furniture, teaching and learning materials, as well as information technology (e-learning)
- The centre hopes to raise funds from friends and well-wishers to remunerate the volunteer teachers and support staff adequately so that they cope with the escalating cost of living in Nairobi, the capital city of the Republic of Kenya.

SUCCESS STORY

RedRose Nursery and children's centre continues to give a ray of hope to 156 orphaned and vulnerable children drawn from 4 out of the 8 settlements (villages) in the giant Kibera slum by providing them with food, quality education, clothing and health care.

The centre has increased its involvement over the last 12 years and transfers to other schools within the settlements are minimal. There are children from the ages of 3 ½ years (Baby class) to 13 years (class 6). Initially, our children used to finish the kindergarten education at pre-unit (5 years) and join government primary schools. However, with the introduction of free primary education in 2003, enrollment in public primary schools swelled to unmanageable numbers, so parents who value quality education for their children sought alternatives. RedRose as a school project offered a ready alternative and this gave us the opportunity to introduce class 1 in 2005. We have continued to introduce a class every year, and we now have class 6, with an enrollment of 15 pupils, who will be our pioneer K.C.P.E. candidates in 2012 when the centre will register them for their first National Examination. The rate of enrollment is 1 child per class per term on average, with more admission being witnessed in the kindergarten classes (Baby class, Nursery and Pre-unit).

Of the 156 children at the centre, 52 of them are orphans and vulnerable children, who need more support than the other 104 who live with both parents.

In order to meet the special allowance given to the teaching and support staff, every one of the 104 pupils is charged a termly fee of 1500 and an additional sh. 200 for maintenance and repairs. The parents of the 104 children find these fees levy high and a third of them do not pay in time, so some of the services are delayed or not carried out at all.

We have a staff of 21 adults of whom 14 are teachers and 6 are members of the support staff. The principal Mr. Buluma completes the list of 21 volunteer workers at the center.

OUR CURRENT SITUATION

A. Local support comes from some of the parents who can afford to contribute. Kenya shillings, 1700 per term as stated above. Occasionally, financial support may come from one or two local philanthropists when they carry out research on the impact of education in the slums in Nairobi.

There is anticipation of government support in the provision of funds for the purchase of teaching and learning materials through the Ministry of Education at the rate of Ksh. 1020 per child, this amount is like a drop in the ocean because it can buy three course books yet a primary school child needs at least 5 text books.

B. Internationally, overseas visitors especially from the U.S.A. educational institutions bring gift items such as clothes, shoes, books and sports items for children.

Recently, a Kenyan young man with strong roots in Kibera (Katwekera village) and who works in Washington, D.C. formed a foundation that solicits for funds to sponsor children from disadvantaged families in Kibera to go through secondary school education (form 1 to form 4). It is known as the Children of Kibera Foundation and was founded in Washington, D.C. in 2007. The foundation appreciates the efforts of the volunteer staff at our center by paying monthly salaries of 8 teachers to the tune of Ksh. 61,000. The rest of the staff including the principal get their stipend from the irregular parent's contributions that also meet the cost of feeding everyone at the center.

The COK foundation has installed a computer laboratory and donated laptops together with a medium printer. In addition, it has rented an additional house where semi permanent classrooms and 5 toilets have been constructed.

The generous gesture by the children of Kibera foundation has created a strong impact in the community and Red Rose Nursery and childrens' center is now a school of choice. Of course we cannot forget the huge donation by the Boston Rescue Mission that came to us courtesy of Mr. Richard Kinyua, a former pupil of Mr. Buluma, the principal of the centre. We sincerely appreciate this newfound support that has brought a lot of happiness to both staff and children, and we pray and hope that this new relationship will blossom in the coming days to become long lasting. We received the second donation of \$1250 on 10th September. Thank you very much.

CHALLENGES

In our efforts to continue delivering effectively to the orphaned and vulnerable children at the centre, we are seriously handicapped in the provision of quality food on a daily basis. Some of the children barely get a meal at home and depend entirely on the centre for their daily bread.

Among the 52 orphaned and vulnerable children, one girl is living with HIV/AIDS scourge and 45 are affected by the disease, which claimed the lives of their parents.

This situation makes a mockery of the meager resources that are contributed by those families who actually make incredible sacrifices to keep their children at RedRose children's centre.

Lack of adequate space is another serious challenge. The centre needs to acquire a plot large enough to accommodate all the facilities that support the creation of a child friendly school. Our children participate only in indoor co-curricula activities such as drama, music and traditional dancing.

OUR APPEAL

It is our sincere prayer and hope that the revelations narrated in this brochure will touch the hearts of all those who work for organizations that seek for a world of hope, tolerance and social justice where poverty can be overcome and people live in dignity and security. Sincerely, the children in RedRose Nursery and Children's Centre are crying for your generous support.

P.B.N. Buluma
Principal

Redrosechildren.blogspot.com