

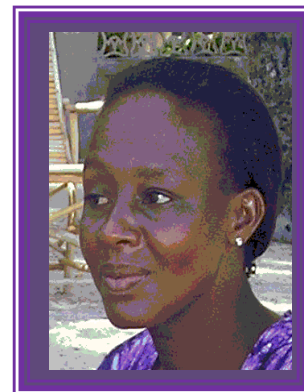


UPENDO ORPHANS SUPPORT
PROJECT
P.O.BOX 898, Kilifi

December 2010

This is the first Newsletter in 2010 giving you the latest news from Upendo. We had a very busy and fantastic year with all members and children participating in all the activities.

By Grace Mzungu
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Upendo Orphans Support Project



When our societies are affected by insecurity, orphans are most vulnerable. As we operate a day care centre we are always worried about the safety of the orphans from our centre to their guardians' homes. We therefore extend our gratitude to all our collaborators in Kilifi who help make Kilifi a better place through their community work and by promoting security. We also give special thanks and honour to all our external sponsors who are playing a key role in transforming the lives of these orphaned children. Our objective of supporting these children is to become independent and responsible citizens of our society, and this cannot be achieved without your generous support.

As we support these children we are honoring the dignity that comes from God which can only be achieved through unconditional love.

On behalf of the Upendo family I wish all of you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Now for some of our activities this year.....

Board of management

We have now revised our structure so that we have a Board of Management and a Trust. The Board takes care of the daily running of the project while the Trust holds overall responsibility for the assets and long-term future of the project. By holding monthly meetings, the Board has been able to accomplish all the planned activities for the year. As volunteers from all walks of life they have devoted generous amounts of time and holistic support to this organization.



Group and family guardian meetings.

The group and family guardian come together once in a while to give progress of the child from their homes and the centre. A strong bond has been established between these two guardians (the guardian from the women's group and the family guardian). It has improved the sense of insecurity prevailing in these children. The orphans have given a name to the group guardian as "my Upendo mother". Upendo means love.

These guardians also visit the Women's Group Nursery school to interact with the children.

Kilifi Plantation Triathlon – fundraiser for Upendo.



Organised by KEMRI-Wellcome Trust (our local medical research institute), the objective of this event was to raise funds and raise more awareness of the project in the community. The activities for the day included swimming 750m, cycling 20 km on a murrum road and running 5 km. It was a big event which brought together for participation local and international visitors who were residing within the beach hotels around. Some of our children participated in all the above events. It was a unique moment as supporters and beneficiaries were working towards a common goal. Carramore, an international freight organization, also supported the event financially and all the proceeds were given to Upendo Orphans Support Project. Thanks to all those who participated in one way or the other.

Outreach program.



This program involves one family 23km from Kilifi town. The women's group visited this family and they were delighted to learn that Ibrahim Omar a 4 years old boy who survived a fire disaster has been certified as recovered after having several correction surgeries performed on him. The young girl 2 ½ years Aziza will still undergo corrective surgery of her feet. Through our healthcare program the group has been meeting the medical bills. The visits will be used to counsel the big girls who are entering adolescence.

Procession

Stigma associated with HIV/AIDS has been a drawback to our activities. To sensitize the community on the importance of taking care of our needy children, we organized a



procession to walk round the streets of Kilifi town with a very loud brass band from the Salvation Army church, singing and beating drums. The Women's Group and many other local organizations carried banners saying written "Let us take care of our needy children". It was a great success and now more people from the community want to be involved in volunteering to the project.

Retreat



Due to poverty in our orphans' extended families, they do not celebrate Christmas. The women arranged a pre Christmas retreat towards the end of November 2010 and the children visited a local Nature Trail (Haller Park) in Mombasa and an open public beach. It was an exciting moment for the children as they met other school children from other areas. It was also one way which they could celebrate in the absence of a Christmas celebration with family.

End of year/ farewell party

It has become a tradition towards the end of the year to throw a party to bring together the orphans and the women's group. In early December the party was held to wish the children a merry Christmas and a happy New Year and also to bid farewell to a very long-standing staff member, Rachel Ngoma, who had retired later in the year. It was giving the children an opportunity to share a meal with the women and interact. In the morning we made Christmas decorations together with another local organization called KESHO. We had lots of fun!



Home visits

Some of the women's group members visited the homes of the orphans attached to them. This is a time where the whole family is counseled and an assessment of how the orphan is living within the family is done. Donations of clothes, food, etc. are given to these families. Any notable indiscipline, health problem or other problems with the orphan are disclosed to the group guardian and discussed at length.

Let us continue work together next year to create an environment that is conducive to the positive development of these young lives.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR