

Karimu Expands Its Reach

A Successful Volunteer Trip

Karimu's seventh annual volunteer trip to Dareda Kati Village was highlighted by the completion of a third two-in-one teachers' house at Ayalagaya Secondary School. The volunteers also worked in Ufani Primary School's fruit and vegetable garden, taught art classes both at Ayalagaya and at Ufani Primary School, and supported the local midwives group with health education and basic supplies.

Ufani Primary: A Model School

Seven years of hard work by Ufani Primary School's teachers, local builders, and Karimu volunteers have earned Ufani the distinction of being named a Model School by the Tanzanian regional government. Karimu sees the honor as a signal that it is time to reach out to other local schools, which need the same kind of help that Karimu began to offer Ufani in 2007.



This does not mean that Karimu will turn away from Ufani; its teachers and students have earned our permanent commitment. Karimu will continue to support the professional development of Ufani teachers, while also funding upgrades to the fruit and vegetable garden and a more determined outreach by the school lunch program for Ufani's poorest children. But Karimu's major goal next year will be to build a two-in-one teachers' house at Dareda Primary School, which is a short walk from Ayalagaya Secondary School.



Ufani Primary (above) is now a model school, but the classroom at Dareda Primary (right) is a grim reminder of the way we found it in 2007.



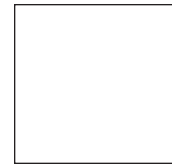
Every Tanzanian is familiar with founding President Julius Nyerere's 1967 Arusha Declaration, in which he insisted on the equal dignity and respect owed to every citizen of his young country, which had won independence from Great Britain only six years before. The Tanzanians' universal reverence for Nyerere is a powerful counterweight to the natural tendency of people living in different parts of a rural village to want the best for their own neighborhood.

On to Dareda Primary School

Many of the Karimu volunteers fell silent as they visited a Dareda Primary School classroom that consisted of nothing more than brick walls and a roof: the floor was dirt, and there were no windows, doors, or desks. The barren classroom looked hopeless to them.

Of course, they had not seen Ufani Primary School in 2007, when the presence of a single usable classroom—and the absence of any usable toilet—had brought the government to the verge of closing down a school that was supposed to serve more than two hundred students. Today, Ufani's students, teachers, and parents are proud of their ten classrooms, three teacher offices, three two-in-one teachers' houses, and clean running water.

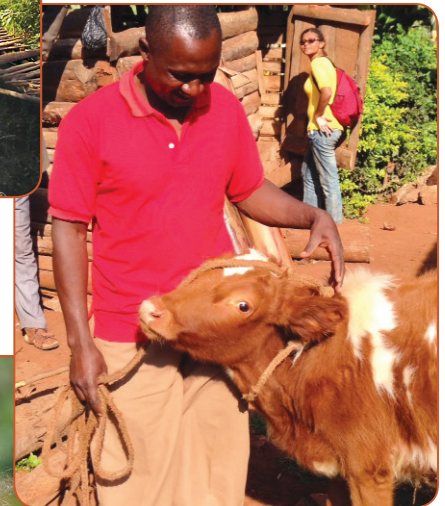
But after their grim tour of Dareda Primary School, the volunteers seemed to cheer up when they went back to the Ayalagaya Secondary School work site. The steady progress on Ayalagaya's new teachers' house may have helped the volunteers understand that consistent effort by a dedicated team can make the seemingly impossible become reality.



Their return from work at the end of the day, over a brand-new Karimu-funded footbridge, completed last October, drove the point home. For as long as Dareda Kati Village had existed, a gentle stream that the volunteers saw in June, July, or August would become a torrent in March and April, slicing the village in two and making education and medical care unreachable for many residents. By spanning the flood waters and joining together the two halves of the village all year round, the new bridge has become a visible symbol of President Nyerere's dream of unity.



The new bridge and the old coexist (left). Ufani teacher Mangachi Msuya (below) bought a cow with his UFAGRO loan.



Looking Ahead

Now that Karimu has regular Facebook contact with many of the villagers on their tiny flip phones, we can keep pace with the evolving needs of the Ufani Agricultural Organization (UFAGRO) microborrower group, as its growing membership introduces small businesses and more ambitious farm projects to the community. A smaller microborrower group, made up of HIV-positive men and women, is brainstorming their own business plan. And a partnership of eight women who make smoke-reducing, fuel-efficient clay stoves intends to submit a proposal to increase their productivity and sales.



Midwife Esther Ng'aida stays in touch (left, with Karimu's Marianne Kent-Stoll).

As Karimu plans for next year's construction at Dareda Primary School, we are also moving forward with the long-awaited clean-water project for Bacho Primary School. This project faced multiple challenges during the last three years. But Karimu funds that were wired to Tanzania on the first day of August are putting an end to the time when every school day began with children hiking up the Rift Valley escarpment that looms above the school in order to haul buckets of unclean water back down.

Karimu is optimistic that improvements in education, agriculture, health, and employment opportunities can generate a perfect—although gradual—storm of development in Dareda Kati.

Thank you, Volunteers and Donors

Karimu is grateful to all of the volunteers, from 2008 onward, who have devoted their time, energy, and money to the success of our projects. Many volunteers continue to engage with Karimu by offering financial support or by returning to Dareda Kati—for example, this year's trip featured a three-time volunteer, as well as three second-timers.

If you are a volunteer or donor who has lost touch with Karimu, you are always invited to reconnect, either through travel or through your support and enthusiasm.

Karimu eagerly welcomes both new and returning volunteers for next year's trip.