

Update on Bacho School Project and results of our trip to Tanzania

Dear Donor,

Claudia and I are back from Tanzania and soooooo happy with the results of the trip that I can hardly control my excitement. Let me give you a full update on our accomplishments while in Tanzania. Sorry for the long email, but we did accomplish a lot.

Bacho Primary School

The reconstruction of Bacho Primary School is going beautifully well. See pictures below. The 1st building of the new school is really gorgeous! The group of volunteers (including Claudia and I) painted it and it is now done. The new school year starts next week, and three classes will already be in the new building. Additionally, we started the 2nd building, working with the Tanzanian workers, teachers, and other volunteers to lay the foundation and raise the brick walls. We expect this 2nd building to be completed in September. Then, the construction of the 3rd and final building together with the kitchen and bathrooms will start and all should be completed by the end of the year. Even better news is that we are already seeing the positive effects of the new building: enrollment is already up by 19% and the principal expects this number to grow as we get closer to completion.

Kitchen & school meals

We are building the kitchen because we managed to convince the Bacho parents to allow their children to eat meals at school. They will also provide beans, rice, corn, etc. so the school does not incur additional costs by providing these meals. This is great news! We expect that the combination of the new buildings, clean toilets, and the meals will double the enrollment at the school and cut student's absence in half.

Maternity Clinic

While in Dareda Kati, I spent time looking at previous projects and was thrilled to see the maternity clinic that we constructed last year fully operational. There were dozens of pregnant women to see the doctor, babies receiving vaccination, and others being treated. I had tears in my eyes seeing the improvement this clinic is already bringing to the health of the community. See pictures. We also donated 41 different medicines requested by the head doctor, a machine to measure blood pressure, a fetal doppler, etc. We committed to donate medicine every time we come to Tanzania to ensure the clinic remains well equipped.

Technology Learning Center

We opened a technology learning center for all teachers in the ward (total of 6 schools and 70+ teachers). The learning center has 4 laptops donated by Karimu volunteers so teachers from all schools will be able to use these computers every day. We also gave computer classes to several teachers, covering internet, search, gmail, word, excel, and Facebook (see pictures). Every teacher who attended these classes opened a Gmail account, joined a Facebook group, and was given a modem so they can continue to access the internet and work on their own further development. We will be monitoring the Facebook group and posting content to help their IT education. Finally, the learning center will organize classes taught by other local teachers so that slowly every teacher in the area will be very comfortable with the use of technology. I am thrilled that the first class will take place tomorrow (July 15th).

Solar Panels

Another important project was the installation of solar panels in the maternity clinic and some schools. The maternity clinic now has enough energy to light the building and power all the important medical equipment. The schools received less energy, but enough to lighten some classrooms and allow teachers to charge their cellular phones (instead of having to walk 3 to 4 kms to charge them). The funding for all solar panels and their installation was given by the volunteers Elizabeth & Brian Kuykendall who own a solar company in California.

Midwives

As a yearly tradition, Claudia and my niece, Daniela, worked with the midwives to refresh past classes on hygiene, how to avoid diseases, how to remain healthy during pregnancy, etc. Claudia was impressed with their knowledge, hard work, and commitment to this community.

School Classes

Like in previous years, the volunteers worked with the children of several schools, teaching them arts, science, and other subjects. It is a joy working with these children. They are curious, well-behaved, and eager to learn.

Sports Competition

Probably one of the most fun activities was the sports competition organized by my brother with 120 children from different schools. The children loved it and, in my opinion, the volunteers enjoyed it even more.

We also did a lot to decide the new projects for 2018 and prepare for the expansion of Karimu's activities in Tanzania. Let me briefly list what we did here. I plan to send a separate email with more details on the future plans in a few weeks:

- **Clean water for Gajal village** – after doing the field research during our trip, this will be one of the key projects in 2018. Gajal is an extremely poor (and dirty) village that has no water. There are 520 families in this village, and they need to walk 4 km (2.5 miles) to fetch water from an old pump. It broke my heart seeing a little girl who, every single day, needs to fetch 3 buckets of water in the morning, 4 at noon, and 2 in the evening. Soon, we will start fundraising for Gajal.
- **Clean water for Haysam village** - The 535 families of Haysam have the same lack of water as Gajal. Very sad! We will also start fundraising to bring clean water to Haysam.
- **Gajal and Haysam schools** - Both schools are in desperate conditions. The situation is even worse than Bacho was before the reconstruction because these two schools have no water. We will do fundraising to reconstruct both schools, falling back to, at least, bring water and rebuild the bathrooms with flush toilets if the funds we raise are not enough.
- **Internet Connectivity:** Michele Battelli, an ex-Gogler, joined me in researching what it would take to bring fast connectivity to all schools in the area. It is possible and, if the teachers show real use of the internet through the learning center, we will consider the installation of fast connectivity as a future project.
- **Reducing Girls Dropout rates:** Claudia together with a few other women volunteers discovered that girls dropping out of school is not an issue in this area of the country. Schools have special programs and support for girls, causing the enrollment of girls to be much higher than of boys. So, we won't be doing much in this area.
- **Karimu Website:** volunteers with strong background in photography collected enough material for us to redesign the Karimu website documenting its past projects, impact, success stories, etc.
- **Karimu employee on the ground:** I decided to hire a highly qualified teacher with a university degree, Shau Erro Ae, to work for Karimu in Tanzania. I will pay for this person to ensure that all Karimu donations continue to go 100% for the execution of the projects. One of Shau's first tasks will be to execute a complete a survey of the Ayalagaya ward to identify all its needs. We will then prioritize them and develop a 3-year strategic plan to address them. He will also be responsible to work with the state government to prioritize the districts Karimu should start expanding to. Such an expansion will also be in the strategic plan which we plan to complete in 1Q2018.
- **Regional Government:** Finally, but certainly very important, I met twice with the governor of the region (like the state gov. in the US) to ensure they continue to support our projects. These were excellent meetings and the government agreed to work together with us to ensure all Karimu projects continue to be staffed and operational as soon as we complete the constructions. They committed to do that even as we expand. We feel that the partnership between the community, Karimu, and the regional government is as strong as ever and that we will be able to accomplish a lot more moving forward.

As you can see, it was a very productive trip. We are excited with the progress at Bacho school and look forward to finalizing it by yearend.

However, as you can see from my email, there is a lot more to be done and I hope you can continue to support us by making a donation at <http://www.karimufoundation.org/>

We would like to, once again, thank you for helping us rebuild Bacho Primary School.

Nelson & Claudia Mattos (with a lot of support from Karimu's founders: Don and Marianne)

