

## Update from my recent trip to Tanzania

Dear Karimu donor and supporter,

During my recent trip to Tanzania to review our ongoing projects I had the pleasure to see that not only the teacher's bathroom and the washing sink at Haysam Primary School, but also the washing sink at Ayalagaya secondary school are done and operational. By now we have built bathrooms and washing sinks in 3 of the 6 schools in Ayalagaya. Each one of these projects get us closer to one of our major goals: improving the overall health of the community.



Bathroom for teachers and staff at Haysam Primary School



Washing sink at Ayalagaya Secondary School

The highlight of my trip was seeing the complete water project fully functional. When we started this project, it seemed overwhelming: bring water to all 13 villages of Ayalagaya so that no one has to walk more than 500 m to fetch water and children would have time to go to school. What a wonderful feeling to have it done! Everywhere I went, people expressed their gratitude: children gave me the most cheerful thumbs up, women smiled and waved, and older people respectfully approached me to tell how we had transformed their lives. I wish you could all have been there to feel the joy of dramatically changing the lives of so many people. Thank you all for making this possible!



Nevertheless, to be sure everything is running smoothly, I accompanied an independent engineer who audited the water project and highlighted some issues to us. We are already following his recommendations. To prevent rain erosion, we are building a retaining wall, installing gutters, and landscaping around the water tank in the hills (the larger tank that collects all the water for the 3 other tanks and the 94 water points). Besides, since one of the thirteen villages was having water supply issues, we are constructing a smaller tank to solve this problem.

During this trip we also kicked off two new projects.

We started a pilot with a Canadian teacher who volunteered to train the teachers of Haysam primary school on computer basics via videoconference. The first of three modules, which has already been completed, consisted of weekly classes and exercises on internet, word processing, and spreadsheets. At the end of the module the teachers were tested and eighty percent of them passed with scores higher than 80%. The second module starts next week. This training is part of Karimu's school program which aims at improving the qualification of the teachers. The ultimate goal is to increase the education level of Ayalagaya Ward children.



Haysam teachers during the exam at the end of module 1

We have also started to execute our strategy in the financial area by bringing a Tanzanian who is a worldwide expert on savings groups to evaluate the performance of the approximately 20 savings groups in Ayalagaya. She concluded that such groups need to increase their effectiveness before Karimu can provide seed money for micro-loans to the members of the savings groups. In order to achieve that seven people have been selected and trained. They will now start teaching the savings group on how to be more effective and encourage the creation of new savings groups. Our ultimate goal is to provide the means for people to increase the overall income of their families in Ayalagaya.



Savings group training for future community trainers

It was a surprise to learn that Karimu's success in steadily improving the level of education in the primary schools has created a new challenge. :-) We had such a record number of primary school students passing last year's National Exam - a requirement to go to secondary school - that, unfortunately, we exhausted the capacity of our Ayalagaya Secondary School. The school simply ran out of classrooms to absorb all new students. As the government has no means to quickly expand the school, it made the terrible decision to block 29 students from attending secondary school. My first reaction was to contact the regional secretary of education with whom Karimu has an excellent relationship. I told him that Karimu would commit to quickly build new classrooms at Ayalagaya Secondary School under the condition that the 29 students would be allowed to join the school at the start of the school year initially overcrowding some classes. The government agreed and building these classrooms has become a top priority for us ahead of all other projects.

We are now in the process of realigning all other projects, deciding jointly with the community their contributions, and revising our fundraising targets. As soon as our plans for 2019 and 1H2020 are defined in more detail, you will receive an update from us.

I returned home with renewed energy. Karimu's expansion is finally tackling all three challenges that keep people in poverty: poor health & sanitation, meager income, and lack of access to financial services. The progress is visible, and the enthusiasm of the community is contagious.

Thank you for all your support. *Asante sana*.

Nelson

Karimu Chief Operating Officer