

Dear donors and supporters,

I have just come back from the 2019 volunteer trip to Tanzania and I could not be happier. It is really hard to describe great life experiences in words, but I will do my best. Sorry for the long email, but sooooo much was done during the trip.

Thirty one volunteers from 7 countries spent 2.5 weeks together dedicating their busy lives to help people from Tanzania, treating them as equals and respecting them as friends. They were wonderful! Nothing could had given me more joy than seeing them working towards the same goal: reducing poverty in Ayalagaya Ward.



Every day the group of doctors, computer analysts, teachers, architects, engineers, dentists, business owners and other professionals split in smaller groups to cover a broad set of activities related to the Karimu projects of this year.

### **New classrooms for Ayalagaya Secondary School**

Volunteers worked side by side with the *fundis* (local workers) on the construction of 7 additional classrooms and 3 smaller offices for the school. They plastered walls – and discovered it is a very tricky job 😊 -, moved bricks, shoveled sand, and created a sidewalk in front of one of the buildings. Despite the language barrier, the *fundis* were able to show the volunteers how to do the work, and we all got better at it day by day. By the way, the construction of the toilets at Ayalagaya, the project our volunteers worked at last year, was highlighted on TV across Tanzania. It feels great to know we are doing a good job and can serve as a role model for other projects in the country.



### **Sustainability and preventive maintenance of water project**

Volunteers visited and assessed 5 water tanks, the collection tank and all 94 water points. Everywhere we went people mentioned what a difference the water project had made in their lives and wanted to thank us again and again for it. The volunteers created a water maintenance application and trained the Karimu staff on how to use it. We also met with the village and ward water committees to discuss a monitoring and maintenance model. They are eager to maintain the water tanks and points in good condition - a proof that the community is embracing the project as their own. Unfortunately, however, we realized that they are significantly underestimating the effort to manage and maintain such a large project. As a consequence, we hired a new person who will be fully dedicated to train the water committees on how best to manage and maintain the project. The job of this new employee is, therefore, to get him out of a job because, as you know, we want the community to fully manage and maintain all Karimu projects.



### **Sustainability and preventive maintenance of schools and toilets**

Volunteers also checked the maintenance of all Karimu school and toilet projects. While overall the schools and toilets are in good shape, a series of issues were identified and are now being addressed by the community. Progress on maintenance fully done by the community is looking better in this area. We also created an app to automate the maintenance checks of the schools and toilets, which will facilitate the work of our Tanzanian employee. Besides we mapped all school areas and buildings in order to develop expansion plans. That way we know where we could potentially build, for instance, a kitchen at each school, when such a project is listed as a priority by the community.



### **Patient consultation and training of medical staff**

Our 3 volunteer doctors visited the Dareda Kati Clinic and 2 other health centers in Arri and Gidas. Thanks to our good relationship with the secretary of health, this year doctors were allowed to consult and attended over 150 patients. During the consultations and meetings with the staff, they could evaluate the primary needs of the clinic regarding supplies and training. Pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, fetoscopes, ear gloves among other supplies were donated to the Dareda Kati Clinic and the 2 other health centers. Based on their observations, the doctors drafted a health program for Karimu. It details necessary improvements on the current dispensary, expansion plans, and necessary changes to turn the current clinic into a Health Center (a mini hospital offering additional medical services including overnight for the patients).



### **Education and training for midwives**

Over 50 midwives from Ayalagaya and Arri Wards attended an advanced midwife training focused on specific questions they wanted the doctors to address. Brief videos introducing topics such as child delivery, breast feeding, and child nutrition gave the midwives opportunity to have intense discussions and exchange experiences. At the end of the training the midwives received soap, blankets, baby clothes and baby towels.



### **First aid training**

Two teachers of all 15 schools in Ayalagaya and Arri received first aid training to know how to deal with the most common accidents at school. As most of students would have to walk long distances to get medical attention after an accident, this year's training focused on 1st aid in remote areas and wilderness. The teachers had a lot of fun “practicing” on each other. We have also restocked the first aid kit they received last year as it is very important that the schools are equipped with the necessary medical supplies.



### **Leadership training for girls**

Twenty middle school girls participated in a 3-day leadership training developed by our volunteers to help them realize and expand their potentials. According to their interests, volunteers showed them how to increase their educational opportunities and pursue new careers. The girls were all excited and eager to accomplish bigger dreams. Dreams their mothers and grandmothers most likely could not think of, let alone realize.



### **School classes**

Kids aged 3 to 10 of twelve primary schools in both Ayalagaya and Arri wards learned about geometric forms in a very creative and fun way: they painted with watercolor, built 2D and 3D structures, created puppets and played with beads. The kids brightened up with every new task they were given, and we could realize they got faster and faster once they opened up to the new experience. The secondary school students explored a new way of learning science by building a hydraulic bridge using popsicle sticks. Teamwork was also addressed during this task. Both topics were developed by a teacher volunteer, but chosen by the local teachers, who were eager to learn the new teaching methods. We have distributed extra supplies among the schools, including specific material for the disabled kids. A poetry and a music

teacher worked together with secondary school students to create new songs and lyrics. It was all based on improvisation and jam sessions. Another huge success!



### **Sports competition**

Over 100 children from all 6 Ayalagaya schools joined the volunteers to play soccer, volleyball and netball – a favorite game of Tanzanian girls - with the sports equipment donated by Karimu. Our volunteers not only acted as referees, but also tried to keep up with the kids running after the ball (and, obviously, some were surprised with their sore muscles the following day) 😊. At the end of the competition, the children danced and sang for us.



### **Donation of clothes**

With the funds collected from volunteers we were able to purchase and provide over 500 pairs of shoes and 500 articles of clothing for the poorest children. These items were distributed according to criteria created by the community, such as children with disabilities, orphans, most vulnerable children, children in foster families, children in elderly families, HIV groups, etc.



### **Donation of computer and printer**

We installed a computer and a printer at Haysam Primary School. Haysam teachers have completed the Basic Computer Training taught by a volunteer Canadian teacher via videoconference and passed the training with performances scoring higher than 90%. Haysam school is also complying with other Karimu school requirements, such as high teacher attendance, school attendance, students receiving lunch, bathroom cleanliness, bucket and brush availability, hand soap availability and menstrual pad availability. This school will be a role model for others.



### **Effective savings groups**

Eight of the 16 existing savings groups were visited. Our volunteer expert in savings groups conducted a meeting with all 16 groups to discuss how to increase the available capital. Our microfinance consultant joined us and spent two days presenting new approaches to capitalization and discussing the formulation of a savings group federation. The topic was also discussed with village and ward leadership at the strategic meeting. We are now ready to start training the 16 savings groups.



### **Agricultural survey**

We surveyed the agricultural activities and livestock in the region. Karimu intends to define additional projects to help increase the income of the community, one of our main goals.

### **Mapping**

The volunteers also collected GPS coordinates of all important points and boundaries of Ayalagaya to better map the region on Google Maps.

### **Strategic meeting**

Karimu leaders met with representatives of the village and ward to discuss the priorities for next year, i.e., upgrading the Dareda Kati Clinic to a Health Clinic; rebuilding the remaining primary schools; start to upgrade the Ayalagaya Secondary School to make it also a high school; increasing capital available to savings groups based on establishing a savings group federation.





### **Arri Ward**

We started engaging with Arri community to discuss Karimu's future work in the area. We met with the village and ward leadership and trained locals who will run a door-to-door survey of the ward later in 2019, similar to the one we ran in the Ayalagaya Ward last year. In the beginning of 2020, we will hold several meetings to get to know the main challenges of the Arri community. This will serve as a basis for a 5-year plan draft to be discussed with the community during our next volunteer trip to Tanzania in June 2020. The community at Arri is so excited with the future partnership with Karimu that they have even started to feed their children at all schools - our main requirement to start any project anywhere.

### **On the right track**

The fact that Arri's community is excited and eager to work with Karimu showed, once again, that we are in the right track. We work building relationships. We don't rush things. We work with the community for the community.

Nevertheless, the great extent of the friendship and trust Karimu built over the last 12 years never ceases to amaze me. We were welcomed with songs and dances literally everywhere we went. Families welcome us in their homes. If not in English, they talk to us with their big and sincere smiles.

This trip was also very special to me because I had the chance to make a dream come true: I celebrated my 60th birthday with my Brazilian family, my African family and my closest friends. During the farewell ceremony children, villagers, traditional dance groups, representatives of the government and Karimu volunteers got together to express their joy and gratitude. This year the whole community celebrated not only my 60th birthday, but also Marshall's 80th birthday. Marshall is a volunteer from California who has joined us for the third time. And believe it or not, I even got a goat as a gift!



One of the highlights of the farewell ceremony was our Macarena dance. All volunteers practiced every night and learned a choreography to show at the party. Dancing is an important part of the Tanzanian culture, and all volunteers were very proud to connect with our friends also through this universal language. After working hard for 2.5 weeks, everyone joined me in a safari adventure. It was the perfect closure of a wonderful trip! I am pretty sure it was the best birthday I've ever had. Click on this link to see [behind the scenes of our volunteer trip](#).

Before I extend this email too much and start getting emotional with the visible, positive impact we are having at Ayalagaya and the incredible gratitude of this community, let me stop here and just say thank YOU for making all of this possible. *Asante sana* for your help and support.

Nelson Mattos  
Karimu Chief Operating Officer