



*Protecting street and other acutely vulnerable children in Thika, Kenya - December 2009*

## Welcome to the AfCiC December Newsletter

H	O	M	E
S	A	F	E

Puzzle: Can you help a child get home?  
Directions: Change one letter in each new row, creating a new word, until you've changed "HOME" into "SAFE." Many street children encounter dangers and distractions on the street which prevent them from getting home safely. AfCiC works to help children avoid these dangers in order to get back home and back to school.

### Director's Summary

A very happy Christmas and New Year from everybody at AfCiC!

The last three months have been very busy in Thika. We are delighted that it is raining! Not as much as we need, but at least enough to turn everything green. We pray that it continues into December and January so that there will be enough food in the next harvest. We just celebrated our first ever formal graduation ceremony for many of our children who have successfully completed rehabilitation through our Outreach Programmes for Vulnerable Children and Residential Rehabilitation Programme. It was a fantastic day that all the children truly enjoyed. Highlights of the last three months have included our December Holiday Club for vulnerable children, a BBC World Service Radio Interview on our performing arts project Hear Our Voice, and searching for new sponsors for former street children returning to school in January. We have been working with the community in Thika to make positive change happen, whilst we wait for the politicians at higher levels to think of the people first!

As always please get in touch with any questions or thoughts at [kenyadirector@actionchildren.org](mailto:kenyadirector@actionchildren.org).

Best wishes,  
 Eleanor Harrison, Director, Action for Children in Conflict

---

## Kenya since September: Drought, Prosecution, and Constitution

Since our last newsletter, the drought that has been affecting Kenya has continued. Though there has been a bit of relief in the short rains of October and November, the rainfall levels have not been up to historic standards; crops are still failing and water levels in lakes and rivers still dropping. As hunger persists, AfCiC is doing its best to keep the vulnerable children in and around Thika fed, to keep them from dropping out of school, begging, and turning to crime. Our school feeding programmes, December Holiday Club, Interim Care Centre, and Outreach Programmes for Vulnerable Children are all engaged in supplying food to hungry children while the food crisis persists and food prices continue to rise.

In early November, International Criminal Court prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo visited Kenya as part of an investigation into the post-election violence of 2008. Kenyans and the international community alike have become concerned that those who orchestrated the horrific violence were not being investigated, and that the government has been delaying the process. On November 7th, Ocampo visited Kenya to determine whether the government has been taking the appropriate steps to bring the perpetrators of the violence to justice. After meeting with President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga, the heads of the current coalition government, Ocampo decided that the government was not making adequate progress and announced that the ICC will open a prosecution. All Kenyans are hoping that the outcome of this process will help forestall any future ethnic violence.

Finally, on November 17<sup>th</sup>, Kenya's new draft constitution was released for 30 days of public comment. After comments and amendments are taken into consideration by MPs, it will be subjected to public referendum in March 2010. The new constitution is designed to improve the separation of powers, limit corruption, and generally make government more responsive to the people. This is an exciting development, and people throughout the country are eagerly following the process.



---

## ICC Graduation and New Intake

On Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup>, the boys who have been residents of AfCiC's Interim Care Centre for the last six months celebrated their graduation. They have completed their education, and they will now return to their families and communities. Thanks to the efforts of the ICC staff and the determination of the boys themselves, most of them are now attending school, while several, due to family circumstances, are attending boarding school. It is gratifying to see that in many cases, children can be rescued through counselling, social



loving environment. We wish this cohort the best, and look forward to seeing them progress through school and beyond.

In late January a new group will arrive, identified by AfCiC staff as being critically vulnerable but willing to rehabilitate themselves. This new cohort will begin the process that the current one has just completed, hopefully with similarly gratifying results.

---

## AfCiC Christmas Gifts

As the holidays approach, AfCiC invites you to help a child or family in need by buying an AfCiC Christmas gift. Whether you buy one for yourself, a relative, or a friend, the gifts we offer are designed to empower and protect the children and families we are supporting. You will receive a card and certificate for the recipient of the gift, and the knowledge that your purchase, regardless of size, has been a great help for a child in need. We have a range of gifts to suit any budget, and some examples are listed below. To see the full range of gifts, please visit the link provided.

### Buy 4 Chickens - £10

For **just £10** you can buy 4 chickens whose eggs will provide us with both a source of food and income, allowing us to do more for the vulnerable children we work with.



### Provide a Desk for a Poorly Equipped Classroom - £15

Some of the poorest schools in Thika require children to buy their own desk when they enrol. For **just £15**, you can ensure one vulnerable child can go to school in an effective learning environment.



### Provide a Cook for a School - £40

For **only £40** you can pay a cook's salary for a month, allowing us to feed 200 children. For many of these children lunch will be their only meal of the day.



To purchase AfCiC Christmas gifts, follow this link:  
<http://www.actionchildren.org/giftshop/giftlist.php>

---

## 2009 Street Census completed

On November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, members of various NGOs in Thika conducted a street census. Participants from eight organisations and government departments, coordinated by AfCiC, systematically covered the streets of Thika town and its surrounding areas, seeking information about the number, age, home, and habits of

area street children. The census continued for 24 consecutive hours to make sure nothing was missed. The participating NGOs believe that learning more about the characteristics and habits of Thika's street children will allow them to improve the effectiveness of their services, and identify new needs within the community. The numbers have been analyzed, and some of the results are very interesting and will inform AfCiC's work in the future. Some of the important results are:

- There were 143 youths found on the streets of Thika and Makongeni
- There were 89 children under the age of 18
- 90% of the children surveyed were male
- 85% claim to go to the street every day
- 81% are not currently attending school
- 48% are from Kiandutu slum, on the outskirts of Thika
- 70% are using at least one drug, 30% are using multiple drugs
- 78% have already received some support from an NGO
- 60% say they would like to have skills training or employment in the future

---

## Ongoing Children's Rights Advocacy

This November, members of AfCiC's advocacy team visited eight area schools to talk to standard eight and form four students preparing for their exams. The students were given presentations about the importance of hard work and education, and also about life skills as they become adults. One focus of life skills was to discourage early marriage, a children's rights issue that often leads to family separation and lack of support and maintenance by young fathers.

These visits were part of AfCiC's ongoing advocacy programme, led by KCLAW (AfCiC's free legal services department). Earlier in 2009, after seeing many abuse cases in which the victims had very little knowledge of how and where to report, the advocacy team decided to visit teachers in six area schools to talk about abuse. Social workers, counsellors and lawyers from AfCiC gave presentations to teachers about the definitions of abuse, how and where to report it, and how to talk to vulnerable children about it. AfCiC staff worked alongside the District Quality Assurance Office in this effort, seeking to transfer knowledge to local authorities and ensure sustainability. Next year, the advocacy programme will continue with a series of workshops and public debates about such topics as early marriage, alternative discipline methods, and drug use in Thika.

---

**Thanks to our supporters!**

### Events

**Barclays at the ICC**

As part of their community outreach work, members of the "Barclays at Work" team in Nairobi made the journey to Thika to visit the boys at the Interim Care Centre, donate supplies such as blankets, maize, milk and school books, and paint the dining room walls. The day included tree planting, dorm cleaning, wall painting, football games and a very satisfying lunch cooked by the Barclays staff. They gave the boys a mentoring session about their future careers before a song and dance to work off lunch. It was a great day for all involved and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Barclays at Work.



### **First Aid Training**

Since our last newsletter, AfCiC staff and volunteers underwent a government-certified first aid training funded by The Laura Case Trust. The course, conducted by Kenya Red Cross, trained the participants in how to administer first aid and handle life-threatening injuries. As their jobs consistently involve large numbers of children, the training was very valuable to the staff and volunteers, and enjoyable as well. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, a junior first aid training was conducted, targeting some of the older children connected with AfCiC. Considering the many dangers and potential for injury that children face on the street, this training was very important as well. We would like to acknowledge the value of these trainings, and sincerely thank The Laura Case Trust for its support.



Above: Students study and practice first aid

### **Greenland Trek**

In April/May of 2010, Einar Kvam will be trekking across Greenland unassisted as part of a multinational team. The team will ski while hauling their gear a distance of 550 km over an ice cap 2500 meters high. For his trek, Einar is raising money for the Interim Care Centre at AfCiC. If you would like to donate or learn more about his trip, please see his website: <http://www.justgiving.com/greenlandcrossing2010>.

### **Holiday Club**

We would like to thank the donors and volunteers who have contributed to the December Holiday Club. During school holidays, AfCiC hosts between 100 and 400 children for lessons, activities, games, counselling, and lunch. This helps children stay off the streets and helps ensure they will return to school in January.

Thanks to:

Margaret Snell



Glenn Averiss  
Julie Nichols  
Duncan Maclean  
Jenny Benton

### **Sponsors**

AfCiC would like to thank the following people who became new child or family sponsors in the last few months:

Joe Payne	Amanda Stephens	Laura Swanston
Samantha Smyth	Kerwyn Foo	Katie Fallon
Neil Levene	Suvi Waithora	Holly Davies
Sophie Donellan	Su Corcoran	Samantha Whittacker
Anne-France White	Mikki Corcoran	Rachel Michel
Margaret & Norman Long	Kaare Olen	Duncan Maclean
Grace Wilding	Jenny Mcgugan	
Samantha Wilding	Sophie Milton	
	Katie Milton	

### **Trusts, Organisations & Individuals**

AfCiC would like to thank the following trusts, organisations, and individuals for their generous support in the last few months:

Action for Street Kids	Rotary Club of Swindon Old Town
Mr. & Mrs. JEB Hill Trust	Rotary Club of Abingdon Vespers
Trinity Hall, Cambridge	Rotary Club of Wootten Bassett
Marr Manning Trust	Hurtwood House
Francis Crabtree Trust	Claire Dibble
Jesus College, Cambridge	Ilsham Primary School
Lindsay Robertson	One Vision, One Fitness Gym, Torquay
Sheila Parnell	Vodafone Foundation
Sharanjit Kaur and friends	Wings of Support
Roz & Mike Harrison	Torquay Quaker Meeting
Ruabon & Penylan Churches	Sophie Donnellan
Greenhead College	Cath Burley & Colleagues
Hertwood School	