



Protecting street and other acutely vulnerable children in Thika, Kenya - March 2010

Welcome to the AfCiC March Newsletter

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Word Search: try to find the following words to the left:

- STREETS
- THIKA
- GLUE
- PREVENTION
- CHILDREN
- ICC
- OPVC
- AFCIC

Director's Summary

Greetings and best wishes from all of us at AfCiC!

The beginning of 2010 has been busy and rewarding for us in Thika. Since January we have graduated 27 former street children from our Interim Care Centre, successfully returning them to their families and helping them back to school through the purchase of school uniforms, desks, shoes and other essentials. We have helped a further 65 vulnerable children back to primary day school over the last 3 months with school uniform and other basic items, ensuring they are able to access "Free Primary Education". In addition, we helped 5 extremely at-risk former street children go to primary boarding schools, and 10 former residents of ICC and participants in our other programmes were successfully sent to secondary school.

February saw the arrival of a shipping container that we are converting into a dedicated counselling space at our centre. At the beginning of March we took 25 street children into our Interim Care Centre, following in-depth assessment by our Outreach staff. We are dedicated to ensuring each and every child who comes into our care succeeds – emotionally, physically and with education or employment. None of this would have been possible without your support. Thank you.

We also launched our Appeal for Land this March in order to establish a permanent, safe, quality space for our successful work, and to enable AfCiC to become self sufficient. We are seeking to raise £50,000 by year's end to buy land, and we have already begun to make progress. Our need is urgent, and we can not wait any

longer to secure the future of our important work. Please see the section below for more details and how to contribute to the land fund.

As always please get in touch with any questions or thoughts at kenyadirector@actionchildren.org.

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

Appeal for land: We need your help!

In 2010, we are committed to taking hold of our future by purchasing our own 3 acre plot of land near Thika, for the construction of a new Interim Care Centre (ICC) as well as residential flats to provide a stable income for AfCiC as we grow and expand.

The ICC is the site of our intensive, residential rehabilitation programme for street children, a cornerstone of AfCiC's work. We are renting the current ICC, but have decided that this approach is unsustainable, and is holding us back from being as effective as possible.

The rented buildings and land have sufficed so far, but they are rapidly becoming unfit for purpose. The structure of the buildings, including the sanitation and pipes, are suffering from chronic neglect, and we have been without electricity for over a year as a result of our landlord's conflict with the Kenya Power Company over his bill. The current space is also insufficient for the sensitive work that we are doing, as we need separate and tailored spaces for the ICC's many activities. For example, there is currently only one room for education, dining, and play.



A lesson being held outside the ICC due to lack of space

Renting the land and buildings is also an inefficient use of our funds; it is holding us back from directing resources towards direct delivery of services to vulnerable children. For example, the amount we spend on one month's rent at the current ICC could instead go to purchase 20 school uniforms or feed more children who are in danger of dropping out of school for lack of food.

A section of the land would be allocated to residential flats and other income generating activities for AfCiC, such as agriculture for use and sale, and renting workshop and training space. We believe that we can and must become at least 30% self sufficient as soon as possible.

We already have two major funders who have expressed a very keen interest in funding the construction of the new ICC, and we have several volunteers who are

ready to contribute their skills and manpower in areas such as architecture, construction, engineering, and project management. However, without land we can not begin to move forward. Adding urgency to this appeal, a major Thika-Nairobi highway is under construction, which is already increasing demand and cost of land, so we must act now!

We need £50,000 to purchase at least 3 acres of land near to Thika Town where we have built up a strong reputation, excellent local knowledge and a wide network of supporters. Please help us buy this land, so that we can assist more vulnerable children and families and improve the quality and range of our services. To contribute, please see our fundraising page at this link:



<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Appealforland>

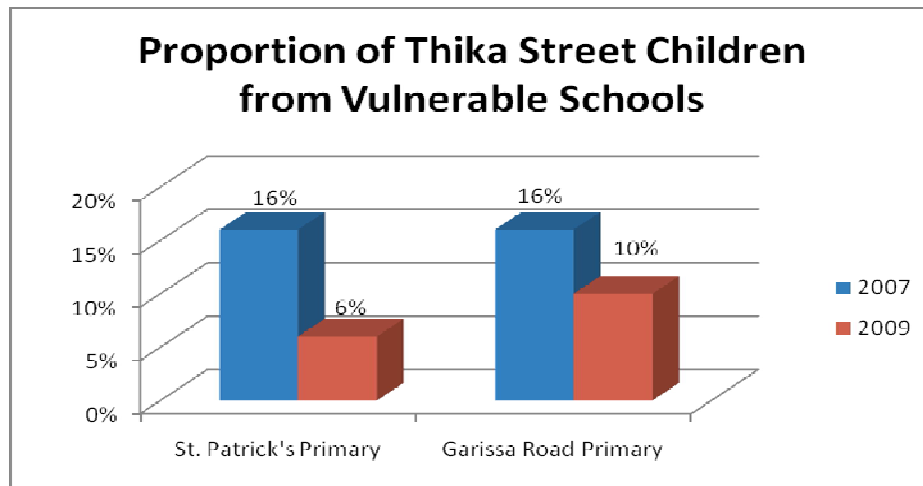
A Partner in Education

On March 12th, AfCiC's Education Officer, Daina Kibera, attended an Educational Success Day at Thika Stadium. AfCiC was invited to attend the celebration as a Partner in Education, recognising the important contributions the organisation has made to schools in the Municipality. The celebration honoured schools within Thika Municipality whose students had performed well on the annual Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), a nationwide standardized exam for students finishing primary school. Among the attendees were AfCiC Trustee Wilson Huruko in his capacity as a Municipal Councillor, and the Thika West District Education Officer.



The DEO speaking to guests

The event's organisers recognised AfCiC because of its role in helping the Municipality's vulnerable schools, which improved their KCPE results significantly from last year. AfCiC provides school feeding programmes, holiday clubs, and drop out prevention programmes in several vulnerable schools, including St. Patrick's and Garissa Road Primaries. In addition to being recognised as a Partner in Education by the Municipality, AfCiC's own investigations indicate that these programmes have had excellent results. Data from a 2009 street children census shows that, since 2007, St. Patrick's and Garissa Road Primary schools have greatly reduced the number of children dropping out and going to the street.



The education work AfCiC has done in the last two years is clearly paying dividends, and we are eager to continue our progress.

AfCiC participates in large bed kit distribution

On March 4th, AfCiC staff and volunteers spent the day at Kimuchu Primary School facilitating, along with the Rotary Club of Thika, the distribution of 600 bed kits which had been donated by Sleeping Children Around the World, a Canadian NGO. The bed kits, which include clothes, mattresses, mosquito nets, school bags, text books and other necessities, were given to some of the most vulnerable children in the area. Benefitting children were identified through AfCiC staff, area schools, other local NGOs and Thika Rotarians. AfCiC Director Eleanor Harrison is a committed Rotarian (Rotary Club of Thika) and was delighted to use AfCiC's extensive local knowledge and relationships with schools and NGOs to help organise the beneficiaries and the event, which was by all accounts a massive success.

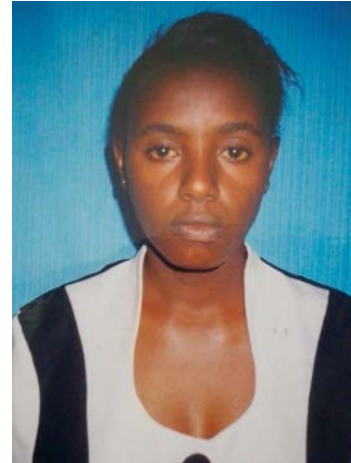
We believe that this sort of networking and local cooperation has been, and will be, crucial in our efforts to fight poverty and address the issues of vulnerable children. It was gratifying to see so many children in need benefit from these bed kits, which contain the basic items necessary for good health and learning. We look forward to continuing this event in the future, and would like to thank Sleeping Children Around the World, which donated 5,000 bed kits throughout Kenya in total. We would also like to thank the Rotary Club of Thika for their continuing dedication to the welfare of Thika District.



A happy child with his bed kit

Case Study : The value of skills training

Jackline Wangari is a married mother of two living in Kiganjo slum, outside of Thika. Though they are hard working, she and her husband have struggled to adequately care for their children because of the scarcity of jobs. Last year they were both looking for casual jobs to put food on the table, but work was difficult to find. Jackline was identified by AfCiC as the mother of vulnerable children, and joined *Into Work*, our skills training programme. She was trained in tailoring and showed a natural talent for the work, according to the instructor. At the end of her training, AfCiC was prepared to give Jackline a business loan for the purchase of tools, so she could start a small tailoring business.



However, she heard about a call for tailors from the National Youth Service, an organisation that trains young people for employment with the government. She applied for the position and by March, Jackline had been accepted for a tailoring job with NYS. She is now undergoing a three-month orientation and will likely be considered as an instructor in tailoring for young people. Such a reliable position for a government organisation will transform the fortunes of Jackline's family, and assure that her children will have what they need as they grow up. This positive development is a result of Jackline's hard work and talent, and of the opportunity afforded her by AfCiC's *Into Work* programme. We are very pleased with this and all the other *Into Work* successes, and will continue to do our utmost to provide people like Jackline the opportunity to start businesses or work for a decent wage.

Thanks to our supporters!

Sponsors

AfCiC would like to thank the following people who became new child or family sponsors over the last quarter:

Karen Bell
Sue Cooke
Christine Maclean
Sophie Allebone-Webb
Olivia Humphreys
Danisha Bathia
Janet Gow

Chris Kolenberg & family
Rod & Denise Thomas
Robert Thomas
Anthony Rough
Chris Becher
Dorota Lyszkowska
Helena Kaliniecka

Trusts, Organisations & Individuals

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

Michael Corbett and Judy McGrath
Einar Kvam
Helen Nash
Steven Allen
Diana Wilkinson
Hannah Hopper
Mr. & Mrs. Becher
Directory of Social Change
James Ofwona
Henley on Thames Rotary Club
Allan Griffey
Robby Jerwood
Ralph & Mary Provenza
Ilsam Church of England Primary School

British Foreign Schools Society
Revd. M.A. & R.A. Harrison
Terry Nicholls
Tiverton Rotary Club
Rene Manradge
Cath Burley & colleagues
MFCBO Sweden
Bruce Gow
Mr. & Mrs. Hardy
Chris & Liz Le Fevre
Anushka & Toby Jones
Chris & Wendy Hargrave
Elmwood United Reform Church

Christmas Gifts

Though they are too many to name, we would like to thank everyone who purchased AfCiC Christmas Gifts this holiday season. In the last three months, gifts totalling £1,340 in value have been purchased for vulnerable children and families in Thika. We thank you for your generosity.