



Action for Children in Conflict work with vulnerable children & their families in Thika, Kenya

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New intake of boys into the ICC



25 acutely vulnerable boys from the streets join us at the Interim Care Centre. (p.1)

New land promises a bright future



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New intake to the ICC

In February, AfCiC recruited a group of 25 acutely vulnerable boys direct from the streets to be given a fresh start at our Interim Care Centre (ICC) in Thika

The children, brought in from Thika, Ruiru, Makongeni and the surrounding areas, will stay at the ICC for six months to undergo counselling, learning and therapy activities to allow them to put life on the streets behind them.

Many of the boys in this intake were chosen from particularly difficult backgrounds and with long periods away from school and on the streets. This can make the rehabilitation process even more challenging, with the children less able to cope with structure, lacking an ability to concentrate and the motivation to change.

Inherently with life on the streets comes some kind of substance abuse, most commonly sniffing of glue which is freely available for around 10KSH (equivalent to around seven pence).

The rehabilitation success rate for children that have spent longer periods on the streets is sadly lower as they occasionally run away to service their addictions and refuse to return or be cannot be relocated.



Evans is one of the boys from the new intake who spent time on the streets but is responding well so far to life at the ICC.

So far the progress is slow and steady with the boys learning a new routine, undergoing initial psychological assessments and as our social workers start to open up lines of communications with their families.

Land purchase promises AfCiC a bright future

As many of you may already know, AfCiC ran a campaign throughout 2010 to raise money to buy our own land in Thika on which to build a new Interim Care Centre for the rehabilitation of street children.

Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our supporters from around the world and the hard work of the team at AfCiC, we were able to raise over £58,000 to buy a suitable plot and in doing so, help us to expand and improve the quality and range of our services to the community.

We are delighted to now report that a purchase of a three acre site on the outskirts of Thika Town has been made. The plot is a virgin site with beautiful fertile soils and has enough space to build an entirely new sanctuary for former street children to find their way back into education.

Now that the land is secure, we are moving forward with work to plan the construction of the site, which will begin later this year and allow us to move away from the old facilities that have to date helped more than 260 children.

The site will be designed and developed around the ICC's many residential, educational and therapeutic services and will also provide sustainable income generating activities, such as agriculture for use and sale, rented workshop and training space.

It's a big project that will mean we can help more children and families in more ways.

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Into Work trainees enjoy wildlife at Ol' Pejeta Conservancy



AfCiC's Into Work Programme gives disabled and older street children a route into employment by offering on the job training in a variety of professions such as vehicle maintenance, mobile phone repair, tailoring and hairdressing.

As a reward to those students that have been performing well in their training and as an incentive to others to continue to work hard, AfCiC took a group of 14 students to the Ol' Pejeta Conservancy – a famous educational wildlife sanctuary near Nanyuki in the foothills of Mount Kenya.

The group was treated to a day safari aboard the Action for Children in Conflict 'fun bus', stopping off to learn about rhino, giraffes, elephant and a plethora of other big game wildlife. The



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highlight for many was visiting the chimpanzee sanctuary, where they came face to face with a family of rescued animals enjoying a stress-free afternoon in the shade.

Before heading back home after an exhilarating day in the savannah, the group spotted what they had waited all day to see – a pride of lions gearing themselves up for an evening of hunting.

This was the first time the students had been in the company of all these magnificent animals and they chatted happily about their favourites all the way back to Thika.

In the past 12 months, the Into Work Programme has helped 69 street and other vulnerable youth to meaningful employment and at the time of writing there are 21 currently in training.

Watch three video interviews with young people from the Into Work Programme and find out the difference made to their lives at:

www.YouTube.com/ActionChildren

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Family sponsorship update

AfCiC's family sponsorship programme is changing to benefit more 'at risk' people

AfCiC's family sponsorship programme has been restructured to allow us to help more families.

The programme is still achieving good successes in the community, making the lives of many vulnerable children more stable and secure.

Mama Mofat (pictured) is a beneficiary of the sponsorship programme and is doing well, having taken a new business loan last year of 3,500 KSH (equivalent to £26) to begin selling tea, coffee and spices by walking around the Kiadutu slum, near to Thika. She also has a camera through previous AfCiC support, and takes pictures of people in the community for a fee.

AfCiC became aware of Mama Mofat through her son, Mofat Itmemo, who we helped back into school after he spent time on the streets.

He is still in school and has recently started his first year of secondary school. Mofat Itmemo has younger siblings, all living in Kiandutu slums, who depend on Mama Mofat.

Through the programme and the success of her business and own personal initiative, Mama Mofat has now paid down her loan and is paying rent and nursery school fees for the youngest child and has expanded her business.

Computer classes for street children

Beginning this March, the new intake of former street children at the Interim Care Centre started weekly computer skills lessons.

The training took place at the AfCiC office in Thika Town, thanks to volunteers from JKUAT University and concentrated on computer fundamentals, such as the monitor, power adapter, typing on a keyboard, switching on and off and the use of computers in society.

Watch a video of the first session at youtube.com/ActionChildren



Volunteers from JKUAT University ran the first weekly computer training lesson at the AfCiC office





In Focus: Birth Certificates

AfCiC's work in Kenya is not without its challenges and one such issue that frequently requires overcoming concerns finding the birth certificates of the children we help.

Birth certificates in Kenya are required for a child to be registered at school and into exams and without them they are unable to be included. AfCiC social workers are continuously sourcing birth certificates for vulnerable children, as part of their work with their families, to enable them to rejoin the education system.

Many children we come across from the streets do not have any documentation and it cannot be traced through their parents. In some cases, the child may have been born at home and never had any documentation to begin with or it may have been lost through lack of understanding and literacy.

Replacing a birth certificate is time consuming under the Government's system as although a father's details can be omitted, a copy of the mother's identification must be provided. In addition, notification must be received in writing from the hospital of birth and in some cases confirmation that the child has been baptised.

It can take months to reproduce a certificate due to the large backlog of requests to the Registrar of Persons, but this is a critical part of AfCiC's work, which happens in the background.

Positive parenting classes

AfCiC runs a number of outreach clinics in nearby Ruiru and Makongeni, acting to support vulnerable children and families in those communities.

Many of the former street children, currently in rehabilitation at the Interim Care Centre were brought up in Ruiru or Makongeni, and there are widespread social problems and poverty on display.

In addition to the community support work performed at the outreach clinics, AfCiC has launched weekly classes offering the parents of 'at risk' children advice and tips on 'positive parenting'.

The outreach centres continue to serve their communities well - In the month of January alone, we were able to help 24 vulnerable children back into local primary schools.

Book club at Karibaribi school

In February, AfCiC started a Reading Club at Karibaribi Primary School with the pupils in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and lower primary.

The club aims to stimulate learning through books and to improve basic literacy, which is directly linked to better academic performance.

The initiative is part of AfCiC's commitment to helping the most vulnerable children to access and succeed in primary education.

New YouTube & Facebook site

Action for Children in Conflict has enhanced our presence on the web this month with the launch of more social media channels.

Now you can keep up with all the activities, video, pictures and comment from life here in Thika at your convenience.

We look forward to hearing from you.



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Contact us:

2nd Floor, Imara Plaza,
Thika Town, Tel. 067 22604
Kenya@actionchildren.org