






2022 Newsletter

Although 2022 started with residual effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were optimistic that the year would bring us closer to achieving our vision to Educate, Empower and Enhance the lives of marginalized youth in Kenya.

It was an eventful year at Amara Charitable Trust: we handed over three dormitories, doubled student enrolment into technical colleges and secondary schools, launched a Feeding Program appeal that provides nearly 5,700 lunches daily to seven primary schools, organized a reproductive health and pad-making workshop and had two successful fund-raising events. All this in addition to supporting our students with mentorship programs, learning materials and desks.

Find out more: www.amaratrust.org   

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Construction projects

The first half of 2022 saw the fruition of three construction projects. Handing over the dormitories and being part of the celebrations was incredibly fulfilling. It was encouraging to hear how the dormitories would impact student enrolment and retention but more importantly improve overall self-esteem.

Empakasi Secondary School

Following the construction of a girls' dormitory in 2018, Amara Charitable Trust received an appeal from the school for similar facilities for the boys. In January 2022, a completed modern dormitory with inside ablution facilities and a bed capacity of eighty, was handed over. This project was possible thanks to the generous donation from Tushar and Anjali Shah, who donated the funds in memory Dr. Zaverchand Devshi Shah, and funds raised by Amara.



Completed dormitory building



Bunk beds inside the dorm



Amara, construction team and school teachers



Handover ceremony celebrations!

Najile Boys' Secondary School

With 150 students cramped into a dormitory with a bed capacity of 100, there was a need for additional facilities to ease the overcrowding.

In May 2022, thanks to the family of Mrs Shantaben Khimasia and other donors including fundraising efforts, we handed over a new dormitory at a colourful ceremony attend by stakeholders and the school fraternity.

Mr Wambua the Principal of the school had this to say:

“Thank you very much Amara Charitable Trust for enabling 100 of our students get a place to sleep. We had a big challenge. You made an impact in our school. It is a great gift and a motivation to our students. We promise to take care of this dorm. Welcome again and be blessed”.



Amara team and donors with school fraternity



Dormitory building upon completion



Students outside the dorm



Signing handover documents

PCEA Kimuka Girls' Secondary School

When we visited the school in 2021, the principal appealed for a dormitory. The nine existing dormitories were semi-permanent structures and overcrowded with barely enough room for the girls to move around. In May we handed over a spacious permanent dormitory that can comfortably accommodate 150 students. This project was possible thanks to generous donations from the family of the late Chandravadan Shah, Hena Sawjani and family and other well-wishers. The event was attended by Government officials and other stakeholders.

The principal was very grateful and this is her message:

"I take this opportunity to thank you for your kindness in donating and constructing a dormitory for our girls. Indeed, your excellent, beautiful work has improved not only the image of the school but above all the teaching and learning environment in the boarding school. You have rolled away our long term shame and as well made the girls confident about themselves thus improving self-esteem. Not forgetting that you have also served the community by creating employment opportunities whereby the school has hired a matron to check on the girls in this dormitory. As you witnessed, the school is still in need of another dormitory and we are confident that you are considering us again."



Education Fund Program

Thanks to the overwhelming support from our donors, our Education Fund Program gained momentum in 2022 bringing us closer to our vision to EDUCATE, EMPOWER and ENHANCE the lives of the youth from under-serviced communities.

Current enrolments in Technical Training Institutions and Secondary Schools stand at 99 students with 14 students awaiting enrolment in January 2023.

Number of Students Enrolled		
Year	Technical Institutions	Secondary Schools
2020	1	4
2021	22	8
2022	34	30
Total	57	42

We are excited that this year we were able to enrol young women into courses like plumbing and building technology. We also enrolled our very first community registered nursing student.

In October we interviewed nine students from Kyangoma Special Needs School for enrolment at Utangwa County Technical Training Institute.

Since September 2021, we had five Kyangoma students studying various courses at Utangwa. Their progress and transformation is inspiring: they have become confident and independent. Rael Mutiso, who is studying Fashion Design, earned a living from her skill doing minor alterations. She is a living testament to our vision that education can empower and enhance lives.



Rael Mutiso - Studying fashion design



Trustees visiting the TVETS

Our Success Stories

Trustees visited and mentored first year students in the course of the year and it was heartening to see them becoming confident young adults with a purpose.

Giving young people their dignity back and seeing them discover their passion is what we hope to achieve through our education fund program.



Grave Anyango



John Njau



Anne Nekesa and Nancy Wairimu

Four TVET students are on track to complete their courses this year:

Grace Anyango – studying Hairdressing, Beauty and Nail Technology has completed her studies and is awaiting her final trade tests in April 2023. In the meantime, she has enrolled for a three-month Teacher's Training course and has undertaken to paying 50% of the fees and related costs.

John Njau – studying Catering and Food Service is completing his course this year. John has shown remarkable initiative, and has built a network in the hospitality industry that has created employment opportunities for him while he was still studying.

Anne Nekesa and Nancy Wairimu – studying Hairdressing are completing their course this December. While they await the final Trade Tests in early 2023, they will venture out into the job market and start earning a living.

This past year, eighteen students completed their first trade exam and we are happy to report that they all passed, some attaining a First Class.



Christine



David Kamau



Mwendwa Mwaka

Secondary Schools

We have 42 students enrolled in form 1 through to form 3 at various secondary schools. We made time to meet and provided them with learning materials ranging from revision books to stationery.

Providing Learning Materials

We continue to support learning in the primary and secondary schools by providing learning resources, stationery and school furniture to the schools as well as supporting workbook programs.



Amara Team and volunteers handing learning materials and story books to students.

Future Plans for Training Institutions - TVETS

In 2023 Amara Charitable Trust will be undertaking an exciting venture, partnering with two county run institutions, Mitaboni Vocational Technical Training Centre and Utangwa County Training Institute, to improve the infrastructure and upgrade learning facilities

At Mitaboni VTTC we will be constructing a girls' dormitory to replace the current dilapidated structures as well as upgrading equipment and tools in various departments.

At Utangwa CTI we have a plan to carry out minor renovations, upgrade classrooms and provide tools and equipment to selected departments.



Feeding Program

Amara Charitable Trust believes that access to a healthy meal is the right of every child.

The impact our Feeding Program has on the primary schools we support continues to exceed our expectations. When we started the program in 2013 our intention was simple: provide a child with a wholesome school lunch. Today, with 5,700 meals being served daily in 7 primary schools we are astounded by the constant reminder of the ripple effects of the feeding program - from better grades to improved school attendance.

Thanks to generous donors and regular fund raising, we have been able to sustain the program.

This is an excerpt from a letter from Esther Musila, Head Teacher of Kanaani Integrated Primary School:

“...the learners were out in the streets selling scrap metal to feed themselves and their siblings. The parents are peasant farmers struggling for survival. Placing food on the table is not easy. Girls go pregnant since they were getting a few coins from motorbike riders to feed themselves. Since the continue support from Amara, life has changed. No more learners in the streets selling scrap metal and our girls are safe. The enrolment has increased to 1,079 from 650 in 2013. Our mean grade has increased from 243 I 2011 to 276 in 2021.”



And another from Mr Bernard Muthengi, the Principal of Mt View Primary School:

“Cost of living is high, feeding has become a thorn in flesh and at such a time Amara Charitable Trust affords to feed our kids. Stay blessed Amara for ever. Words to appreciate are nowhere to be found. In fact we feel your presence in our school.”

Fund Raiser Events

Bowling Evenings at Pins Entertainment

Spread over two evenings, 6th and 7th April 2022, we organized a fun-filled event to raise funds for the Education Fund Program. With a total of 36 sponsors and 190 players, all eager to prove their prowess, the event was a resounding success.

We thank Victoria Commercial Bank for their Platinum Level sponsorship and all the Gold and Silver sponsors for their generosity especially as we had just come through a very challenging economic time following the Covid pandemic. Without the support from our lane sponsors, we would not have raised the funds we needed to sustain our Education Fund Program.



10th Golf Tournament Fund Raiser at Sigona Golf Club– 10th June

Our 10th golf tournament received incredible support from our generous donors yet again. With close to twenty sponsors we raised funds to further boost our EFP kitty.

The event was also an opportunity to raise awareness of the work we are doing in marginalized communities and an occasion to meet our donors.



Mentoring

Students in TVETs (stage 2) of the Education Fund Program are encouraged to mentor and share their experiences with our secondary school students to inspire them and help become role models.



John Kariki speaking at Kitengela Magareza



Kelvin of St. Kizito speaking to Empakasi secondary



*John Kariki speaking at Kitengela Magareza
Kelvin mentoring students at Kitengela Magareza*



Michelle sharing her experiences at Kibondeni College

Workshops

Information on reproductive health and access to sanitary products continues to be a challenge for marginalized communities in Kenya and it is alarming that young girls continue to miss school due to not having access to safe sanitary products.

The Ministry of Health revealed that between January and February 2022, they handled 45,724 cases of pregnant adolescents aged between 10 and 19 years. This in itself is a shocking statistic further compounded by the fact that 2,196 cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) were registered among those aged 12 and 17 years and that every week 98 girls aged between 10 and 19 years are infected with HIV due to SGBV.

On 20th June 2022, we conducted a reproductive health talk and recyclable pad making workshop at Kajado West Technical Training Institute. The workshop's aim was to empower young women by teaching them the art of sewing recyclable sanitary pads and have them pay it forward in their communities. We also gave them information on how to take care of themselves and raise awareness on resources available to them.

Anne Nicholls a staunch supporter of Amara Charitable Trust, raised funds to run the workshop with surplus for similar programs next year. Our team of volunteers attended a class on pad making so that they could teach the skill to the students. We received tremendous support from well-wishers in the form of materials, their personal time and especially their commitment to sewing the pads that made up the dignity packs we handed out to the students.



Volunteers and team



Discussion at a workshop



What is inside the "Dignity Pack"



Students stitching their own reusable pads

Thank you

As the year draws to a close, we look back on all that we have achieved and are thankful to our donors both old and new who share our belief that education has the power to change the world and who continue to have confidence in us. This year we received overwhelming support in the form of stationery and school supplies and are thankful to the donors who gave so generously each time we sent out an appeal.

The Amara team is growing and this year, we recruited a new Administrator, Theresa Pereira, who started with us in May 2022 and joins Diana Nzisa.

We remain indebted to our volunteers who have become part of our vision by giving selflessly of their resources and time. Festus, Wambugu, Onesmus, Deepali, Tanvi, Aashnaa, Isha, Bhavya, Sejal, Geeta Vora, Samita, Saida, Sanosi, Judy, Mayuri, Geeta Dodhia and Tina – thank you! With your support and commitment, we continue expand our outreach.

We are grateful to all the school fraternities and communities who have embraced us and allowed us become part of the fabric of their lives. The warm welcome we receive each time and the friendships we have formed are bonds we cherish. They make what we do very worthwhile.

We remain thankful to the local government officials, who support the work we do and ease the processes where possible. We take this opportunity to wish you happy holidays and hope that 2023 will be filled with many blessings for you and your families.