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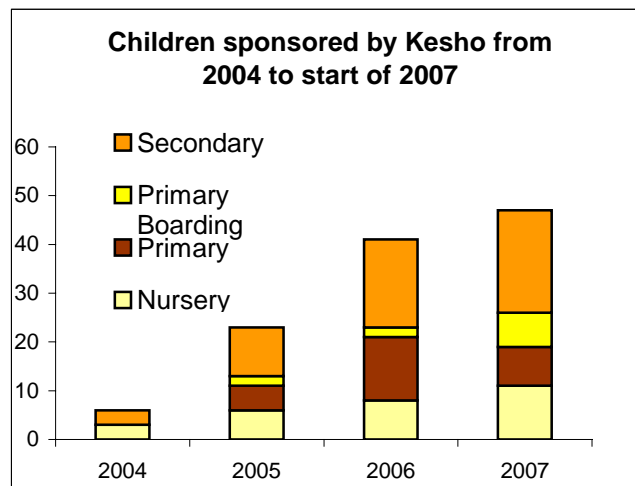
Kesho News 2006



Mambo means How are you? in swahili

With the completion of another academic year here in Kenya, it is timely to give an update on the activities Kesho has undertaken since the last news letter this time last year.

Since we started, in a very small way, in 2004, a total of 59 children have benefitted through Kesho. In 2007, there will be 47 students being sponsored (24 Boys and 23 Girls) of which 17 are orphans (see graph).



This year we celebrated for the first time, the graduation of three Secondary Students. This is a real milestone and one we are very happy to have reached. The next step for these students is a University Education; an education which we feel could make a real difference not only to the individual but to their family and their community too. Kesho has, therefore, agreed to extend it's support beyond secondary level in the future with a commitment to the continuation of support for students through university. At this stage, support can only be offered to students who are successful in gaining a government assisted place. Government assisted places, though highly competitive, are affordable at approx £300/year. Private places are regrettably in the order of £2000 and currently beyond our financial resources. We wish our students every success.

This year has also seen the graduation of three Primary students. We very much hope they are successful in gaining places at Secondary School next year.

The Kesho Days continue to be great forum for Kesho to conduct it's administrative duties and for students and committee members to meet one another and feel part of the organisation. We have extended the range of activities undertaken on these days to include drama and art which, while fun, are also able to address broader health and family issues of relevance to the students. In addition, we have recognised a need to provide a professional counselling service on Kesho Days. A counselling group from Mombasa have been recommended and they will begin group and individual sessions at the next Kesho Day in April.

We now have a growing group of students who attend a very well run government primary boarding school in Kilifi. These students are all orphans, and without any extended family who can adequately support them. The committee refers them to the school only after lengthy consultations with all concerned including the children themselves, their guardians, their head teachers and sometimes the local Chief or Councillor. The burden on families to support additional, orphaned children can sometimes be too great to sustain day in and day out. By sending the children to boarding school, the strain on extended families is considerably lessened and the children themselves can at least be sure they will have the opportunity to attend school regularly and will receive regular meals.

The Kesho Committee is run entirely by volunteers so our administrative costs remain extremely small (approx. <2% of our annual income). Some non-specified donations are used for this purposes in order that the money given by you as sponsors remains entirely for the student/child. With Kesho's income reaching £5000 in 2006, we employed a professional accountant for a few days in October to set up our accounts on "Quickbooks". To minimise costs, the Treasurer of Kesho will continue to be responsible for the daily handling of accounts, employing the Accountant only once a year to conduct an annual audit in January.

Kesho has almost completed it's registration within Kenya as an official Community Group. This is an important step as it means we can set up a "Kesho" bank account and we can receive funds from other organisations within Kenya such as the Rotary Club. We still aim to obtain charity status in the UK too. It is a lengthy process but one which we are embarking on in earnest next year.

Kesho were invited to another Regional Lilliane Fonds meeting in August this year. This is a Dutch organisation which provides support for children with disability. An important outcome of the meeting was that there is now a "Mediator" for the Lilliane Fonds working in Kilifi. This means that when Kesho meet children with disabilities, and with needs extending beyond what we can provide, there is now a system in place locally, whereby we can refer children in the knowledge that financial support will be sought to ensure they receive the care they need.

We're planning to have a Kesho Website next year. Watch this space!

Many thanks once again for your continued support.

Happy New Year!

/// Today's education is tomorrow's future ///