

Hope Kariru Working Group, Kenya – Partnered with SunCreek UMC, 2014-2016



The activities of the Hope Kariru Working Group as of April 2015

In only a year, the children of the Hope Kariru Working Group have already progressed from being a problem in their community to becoming the problem solvers for other children like themselves. While it is often common for ZOE graduates to adopt other orphans into their homes after graduation, the Hope Kariru group decided to adopt a few other vulnerable children into their group during this past year. The community leaders report that the ZOE group is doing great. They specifically commented on how the children are becoming models for promoting good hygiene in the community.

The Hope Kariru Working Group has been busy working to prepare land for the growing season. Together they completed agriculture training and received seeds to plant. The young leaders will grow corn, bean, carrots, kale and potatoes. The rainy season began at the end of March and they hope this season will be better than the last, which saw poor harvests due to difficult weather conditions. The crops will not only provide additional food security but will be a means for the group to generate income. (Information about achieving food security is provided below.)

The group has chosen to not only farm together but they have also identified other group projects. After completing animal husbandry and small business training, the Hope Group decided to raise chickens and sell detergent as a way to provide funds to the group. Individually, the children received small grants to boost existing businesses. Five members have attended vocational training and six have received start-up kits to begin new

businesses. These individuals will train others in the group as interest is expressed. (More information about how grants are distributed and businesses started is below.)

Since their first training on health and hygiene last year, all the members in the group were rewarded with blankets and mosquito nets for prevention of diseases. Additionally, the group members were given tanks for water storage. The children will continue to be encouraged to keep a clean and tidy home as well as learn additional ways to prevent disease and maintain good health. As mentioned previously, many of the changes the children are learning through the ZOE empowerment program are leading the community into transformation as well.

Lastly, Individual members of the Hope Group have set up their personal bank accounts. The group has both an account for managing the money they receive from ZOE and earn from group projects, as well as a revolving fund to help provide larger amounts of money to members by turn. Between the farming, small business efforts, and the foundational relationships being formed, including the partnership with Sun creek UMC, the Hope Kariru Working Group has had a hugely successful first year.

We have asked the working group if they have any special prayer requests for Sun creek UMC and they replied:
-Pray for good rains and good health

Becoming food secure and generating an income are usually the most urgent needs of the children identified for ZOE. The information below discusses ZOE's empowerment approach to overcoming these challenges.

Focus On: Food Security

Children entering the ZOE empowerment program struggle every day to alleviate their hunger. Usually they try to find work, but because they lack status or an adult advocate in their community, they are paid extremely low wages or small amounts of food. They might try growing their own food, but they do not have the resources or knowledge to succeed. It is not unusual for these children to go two or three days without eating. Occasionally they must resort to begging or even taking from a neighbor's field just to survive. Even those children who do manage to eat daily suffer health consequences from the poor nutritional value of their meals.

With guidance from ZOE program facilitators, new working groups learn what foods they need to eat as well as explore different ways to attain a stable food source. Because ZOE is an empowerment program, the children are not told what to do, but are instead given options and training so that they can devise their own approach to becoming food secure and self-sufficient.

Children in rural areas who can access land will learn about the best agricultural practices for their region and then be given the seeds, fertilizer, and tools to begin vegetable gardens and/or plant crops like corn. Other ZOE households might start with raising small animals, like rabbits or chickens, after learning about animal husbandry. All children are encouraged to begin earning money as soon as possible to increase their food security.

Focus On: Income Generation

Young family leaders are encouraged to develop multiple income sources. Working groups usually take on a joint business project, like growing a cash crop, raising small livestock, even running a restaurant. These projects will produce profits that all can share. Individual households also start small income generating-activities like buying

and reselling food items, phone air cards, clothing, etc. Later, ZOE helps the children dream larger dreams about how they can provide for themselves and their siblings in more secure ways. For example, ZOE may help a child enroll in vocational classes to start a trade business (like tailoring, auto mechanic, or hair styling), open a kiosk business to sell dry goods or enlarge their farm or livestock breeding to produce surplus they can sell. It is typical for an ambitious young person in the ZOE program to run several income-generating activities simultaneously.

Before being given resources to start these small businesses, ZOE trains all working group members on how to craft a business plan and manage money. After this training, the group takes the following steps:

- Discusses what businesses could succeed in their community and how they can cooperate to serve the market if multiple children want to try the same business.
- Creates individual and group business plans, presenting these to the group for discussion.
- Votes to approve the proposals or help the members create a better plan.

Once the business plan is approved, the individual will receive a micro-grant and/or a start-up kit to begin.

Throughout this process the ZOE program facilitator is available to provide guidance, but not to tell the group what to do or make decisions for them. In this way the children begin to learn how to make their own decisions while assisting one another so they may continue this process beyond the three-year ZOE program.

***Six month, aggregate report on all the 18 first year working groups
Managed through the Maua Methodist Hospital ZOE office, July – December, 2014***

FOOD SECURITY

Unfortunately, inadequate rains last season (spring of 2014) resulted in poor crop yields, but this season the program is experiencing good rainfall and the crops are doing well. In November, the program participants weeded their farms and when the rains subsided in mid-November they were able to top dress the farms with fertilizer/manure.



In October, ZOE provided the families with 1080 kg of corn seed. This was the second time for the 2014 groups to receive the planting corn due to crop failure in the April planting season. The first year groups were also provided with the necessary seeds and tools for each to start a kitchen

(vegetable) garden and were given dairy goats where appropriate.

INCOME GENERATION & FINANCIAL SECURITY

ZOE always works to connect the young people in its program to community resources. An example of this is how program facilitators helped five working groups write successful proposals to receive money from the government's youth entrepreneurship fund (Uwezo Fund). Additionally, ZOE has helped working groups set up "merry-go-round" funds that the individual households pay small amounts into on a regular bases and then use to provide loans or grants to group members. This type of savings and loan has enabled families to purchase items like household utensils, plastic chairs and buckets. In the future, this fund will be an important resource for individuals wanting to expand their business or needing help when they experience a difficulty.

Most of the 2014 heads of households completed small business training and received start-up kits and/or grants. Start-up kits contain the basic items needed to start a trade business. For example, a young person wanting to begin a business as a barber would receive a chair, mirror and clippers. A youth interested in tailoring would need items like a sewing machine and scissors. Income generation grants were provided to heads of households as approved by the working groups. These grants help pay expenses for starting a business like first month's rent for a hair salon or the initial stock to open a kiosk business selling grocery items. The working groups also received grants to begin group projects.

Other income related activities included:

- Distribution of small animals (rabbits and pigs) to families who are interested in farming as their income activity.
- Training and grants to 65 individual to establish agri-businesses.

HEALTH, HYGIENE AND DISEASE PREVENTION

- All children were assisted with registering and acquiring health Insurance.

- Mosquito nets were distributed to each head of household after they attended training on how to properly use the net and on other steps that need to be taken to prevent infectious diseases.

EDUCATION: ZOE helped all the younger children re-integrate into school, sometimes meeting with the head of the school to explain the ZOE empowerment program and gain cooperation. Where necessary, ZOE supplied materials, but during the next two years, the heads of households will be taught how to budget their income to cover these expenses. During 2014, 180 school uniforms were distributed.

TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

Income Generation Most of the members of the 2014 groups have finished various training sessions and received startup kits for income projects. The primary focus was on basic management skills and how to identify business opportunities. Some training sessions covered animal husbandry for those members who are raising livestock. The training included the management and care of farm animals, selective breeding for desired traits, disease and disease prevention.

Health, Hygiene and Disease Prevention. All the households were trained on HIV/AIDS and hygiene practices. In the months of July and August they were taught the importance of environmental sanitation to improve their health. After training, the families dug compost pits, built utensil racks and cleared bushes to keep their homes and yards clean. Specific training for girls included a week-long program on alternative rite of passage practices to counter traditions of female circumcision; topics on puberty; education to increase awareness of dangerous situations; and how to identify and protect themselves from harmful cultural practices.

Child Rights. The child rights training provided to all members increased awareness on the right to seek protection against violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. ZOE's comprehensive approach includes: introduction to children's rights; exploring ways to make children and young people active agents in their rights; enforcement of children's rights in the community; and involving the community in protecting the rights of the child. The training also covers the reporting process for any abuse and what help is available for recovery when violations occur.

CELEBRATORY EVENTS

- World Aids Day, December 1
- A five day revival meeting in November where 200 youth participated and 40 accepted Christ
- International Girl Child, October 10
- Day of the African Child, June 16
- World Orphans Day, May 7

The picture to the right shows young ZOE leaders during World Orphans Day. Note they are proudly wearing ZOE shirts.



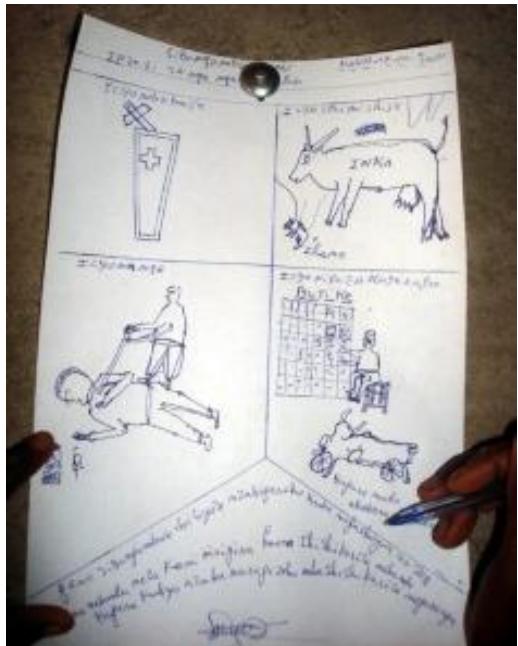
Head of Household: Ken, 12

Sibling: Linda, 14; Lydia, 9; Emmanuel, 7

Challenges: Considering the maturity level of most 12 year old boys, it is hard to imagine one taking on the responsibility of providing and caring for a family. But with the death of both his parents, Ken had no choice. In spite of their difficult situation, the family has stayed together and managed to eat daily. They received some community assistance, but mainly worked for their food. One of their biggest challenges was remaining healthy as they battled malaria and stomach parasites.

Although the family was surviving, they were in a precarious situation and they had no resources or opportunities to improve their situation. When ZOE invited Ken to join the Hope Working Group, he and his family began their journey out of extreme poverty. And it started with a dream.

Focus on: The Dream



Most orphans and vulnerable children entering the ZOE empowerment program face a daily struggle to survive. With their energy consumed by the need to find food for themselves and their siblings, there is neither time to think about the future nor reason to hope for something better. But through ZOE and your partnership, the children learn to imagine a new life and prepare to make it a reality.

During one of the early working group meetings, the ZOE program facilitator/social worker leads members through an exercise called the Dream process where they explore their current situation and then consider what they want and how to get it. After discussing hopes and goals with their siblings, the family leader creates a poster of responses to a standard set of questions from the social worker. To the left is an example of the Dream document.

The head of each family presents their Dream to the rest of the working group members who express support and give feedback. These Dream documents help the program facilitators/social workers better understand the conditions of the children's lives so they can address specific needs or traumas suffered. The family keeps a copy of their Dream, often displaying it in their home to provide daily motivation as they strive to create their new life.



The following are the responses Ken provided to the Dream questions after he had discussed it with the other family members:

1. What makes you feel sad? *Death of my parents*
2. What makes you happy? *Seeing other orphans happy*
3. What happens in the community that you do not like? *Quarrels and fights*
4. What is your dream for the future? *To have a big wholesale shop*
5. What will be your guiding principles to achieve your dream? *Prayer and hard work*

Family specific achievements because of your partnership:

Prior to ZOE, Ken and his family were buying all their food at the market, using what little money he was able to earn. If he could not find work, they risked not having food. Like all the children in ZOE's empowerment program, the family needed better food security. ZOE was quick to address this issue in multiple ways.

First, the working group received training on the best agricultural practices to grow their own food. This training included information on growing a small vegetable garden (also called a kitchen garden) to provide a variety of fruits and vegetables for a nutritionally balanced diet and skills for growing a larger crop. Ken and the other group members were then provided with seeds and tools to begin. In addition to a garden to provide for his family's meals, Ken also planted a crop of corn.

The second approach to food security involves generating a reliable income. While they are waiting for their food to grow, the young people are encouraged to begin an income generating activity. ZOE teaches them about business development and money management then encourages the group to discuss ideas with each other. Ken decided to request a grant so that he could open a kiosk store which he did in April. This small venture will provide the experience he needs to reach his goal of owning a large wholesale business.

Also important to the family's wellbeing is health. ZOE helped the family get the medication needed to address their stomach ailments and malaria, but more importantly, ZOE taught Ken how to keep his family from getting preventable illnesses. Training includes making home visits to check on the living conditions and help the families implement high health standards. Group members will help each other accomplish more difficult tasks. For example, Ken's working group helped him dig a compost pit so he could properly dispose vegetative waste and create organic fertilizer for his garden. After a ZOE program facilitator visited the home and saw that Ken was taking responsibility for his family's health, the family received mosquito nets and blankets.

Although Ken accomplished much in a short amount of time, there are still many things he needs to do and learn so that he can solidify his advancements and face future challenges. Fortunately he has your support and prayers to keep him going and help him achieve his dream.

Hope Kariru Working Group



Focus On: Working Group Formation

Poverty often means a life lived in isolation, unconnected even from those who share the same struggles and challenges. A ZOE working group provides orphans and vulnerable children a community where they experience understanding, compassion and acceptance. Together, they begin their journey towards a better life.

To form a working group, ZOE social workers first contact community leaders and local officials to educate them about the empowerment approach and to ask for their help in identifying children. During the first meeting, the children and their young caregivers learn how they will change and improve their lives within three years. Then ZOE takes a step back.

Working group members elect their own leadership, make rules to guide their meetings, choose a group name and decide where to hold weekly gatherings. These once-marginalized children learn from ZOE staff that their community and their Hope Companion partner have faith in their ability to succeed.

The eldest child from each family attends weekly meetings to discuss their activities, both achievements and challenges, and to share in prayer and reflection with each other. Additionally, ZOE's staff and selected community members host regional training sessions covering food security, health and disease prevention, business management and child rights.

One of the first actions the group takes is to select a project, such as a group farm, which they undertake together to quickly secure food and generate income. Because of your support, ZOE is then able to provide the basic training and resources they need to begin.

Hope Kariru Name List

Below is the list of names recorded by our ZOE social worker during group formation; **there are 29 households and a total of 97 members.** The names in bold are heads of household, followed by their siblings and dependents. ZOE works with orphaned and vulnerable children ages infant through college age. Occasionally, an older person lives with the family, but is unable to provide for them due to age or illness. Although ZOE obtains name lists with both first and last names, ZOE uses first names only in public lists to preserve the privacy of children in the program.

Please note, children joining the ZOE program are living in extreme poverty situations. Often they have no parents or birth documentation and have suffered multiple traumas in their young lives. Occasionally the children give conflicting information on their names and ages. Additional orphans are frequently adopted by the group, and a small percentage of children will leave the group due to family reunification or other reasons. ZOE strives to keep the list as up-to-date as possible. All the names on this list represent real children in need of your prayers.

Francis, 19	Lucy, 20	Lydia, 19	Erastus, 18	Doris, 20
Frendric, 15	Jane	Shadrack, 11	Caroline, 16	Kathambi, 12
Kennedy, 13	Dickson, 7	Erosy, 14	Beatrice, 13	
Harnet 14		Miriam, 13		Ann, 16
Brozeyn, 7	Kennedy, 20		Nuuria, 20	Brian, 8
	Mary	Fridah, 19	Lima	
Jackline, 15	Susan	Catherine, 14		Lydia, 18
Nelly, 15	Franklin	Danies 9	Timothy, 18	Nancy, 15
Timothy, 4		Brian, 6	Alex	Eric, 13
	Ken, 12	Bonny, 4		
Filomina, 18	Linda, 14		Peninah, 20	Erosy, 19
Jaina, 11	Lydia, 9	Jazzen, 17	Bessy, 18	Peninah, 14
Felista, 3	Emmanuel, 7	Rael		
Tasly, 2		Samuel	Harries, 18	Monica, Mentor
	Francis, 19	Danies	Munene, 16	Joy Mukiri
Seberina, 20	Moses, 19		Kanana, 3	Dorcas
Nanies, 16	David, 17	Angelica, 20		Betty
Anthony, 10	Jacob, 15	Kellen, 16	Moses, 19	
Dorcas, 18		Enoc, 11	Dennis, 17	
Monica, 19	Eva, 14		Joy, 16	
	Ronny, 9	Faith, 15		
Erosy, 14	Duncan, 12	Lawrence, 13	Patrick, 19	
Codadi	Sharon, 11	Ritty, 14	Nicko, 17	
Faith			Blessy, 19	
Jackson	Joy, 16	Simon, 17		
Anthony	Julien	Anthony, 18	Raphael, 18	
	Juster	Faith, 16	Titus, 17	
	Douglas	Franklin, 17		

