



UPDATES FROM AKILI

<http://underthetree.mamahope.org/episode-3/>

Greetings everybody! 2015 and 2016 have been big years for Akili Preparatory School so far and we wanted to share some of the journey with you. Within this newsletter you'll hear about our new campus and boarding house, how our sustainable farm is expanding, and some snippets from our girls and their parents themselves! We hope you are all enjoying 2016 as much as we are and we thank you for your continual support.

NEW OBAMBO CAMPUS AND BOARDING HOUSE

Since our last major update Akili Preparatory School has grown in a big way! Major construction projects have been underway and we can't believe how much we have achieved in such a short period. As with any project there has been some bumps in the road and in 2015 we faced a big challenge when we were served with an eviction notice from the local church we had been running the pre-school and primary school from since our inception. We had bought land in Kasarani, Obunga, with the intention of relocating the pre-school buildings in 2016. However, we were told to move within a week in November 2015. This came during a period of major construction at the Obambo campus. With our budget stretched thin, and term starting in early January, we were in a bind. However, we found room in our budget to reallocate and construct the new Obunga pre-school campus just in time thanks to generous support from Life Point Church Kenya Mission Team. We decided to finish one of the two dormitory rooms in the boarding complex, and only finish two of the four classrooms. The money saved was reallocated to Obunga campus. We'll finish those rooms during the next period of infrastructure advancement. In February this year we also opened our new campus in Obambo. Here the 3rd and 4th grade girls attend classes and we will be adding a new grade annually as the girls grow. To support their learning environment we have also opened a

boarding house within our Obambo compound. The 20 girls in our 3rd and 4th grade classes have moved from Obunga to live there! The other 10 girls come from Obambo village and are day scholars. We want the surrounding community to feel supported by our school so will be enrolling 5 girls from the Obambo community in each grade level in the future.



Akili Girls in class at the new campus

The boarding house was completed with the help of Mama Hope and their Global Advocates. The Life Point Kenya Mission Team visited in January 2016 and helped to paint the classrooms, dormitory and build latrines. It has been a life changer for the school and the girls, who now receive 3 healthy meals a day while living in Obambo during the 3 month school term. They also have a beautiful view of Lake Victoria and clean, fresh air all around.

SUSTAINABLE FARM

We had purchased a block of land inside Obunga, originally intended to be the site for the school however with the aim of increasing our self-sustainability we decided to turn it in to a farm. We have expanded our sustainable farm projects even more this year with the addition of a poultry



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project and a posho mill. To keep up with this expansion we have also hired our good friend Dennis Osiolo as a farm manager. Dennis has a business background and is passionate about the future we are trying to create for the Akili girls so we know he is the right person to help turn the farm in to an income generating project. Already we are receiving income from selling our tomatoes and from villagers who come to grind their maize at our mill. Just last week we took a big step with our poultry project and sold some chickens in the local market.

Currently the farm is supplying 60% of the vegetables required to keep our girls happy and healthy and this year we have big plans to increase that even more by turning the Obambo campus into an urban food forest with kitchen and vertical gardens galore! In June we also launched our new **SUSTAINABILITY CLUB**. The idea behind this is to help our students become stewards of their environments. The theory component teaches them about environmental issues and what they can do to keep their environment healthy. The practical component gets them involved in gardening, harvesting and looking after our chickens, all skills they will have for life and can take back to their communities to share.

We also received a grant from Australian Organisation the Sunflower Organisation in June this year to build showers and hire computer/ICT instructor. Our girls have been showering in the open and so there was a desperate need to give them some privacy so with this grant we have been able to build some shower cubicles. In keeping with our Sustainability Program we are also attaching a grey water recycling system so we can have extra to

water our trees and upcoming gardens.

We also used a

unique design element when building the showers to teach our girls about reusing and recycling.



Our happy girls standing in front of their new classrooms



Our shower cubicles in progress - Notice the two panels at the front built from recycled plastic water bottles

WATER CRISIS

We are thankful that for the most part we have enough water in Obunga to keep the farm there productive. In Obambo on the other hand there is simply not enough to go around. Accessing enough water there has been a big challenge for us.



Dennis working in the sustainable farm in Obunga



The Akili girls taking part in a Sustainability Club meeting

In February 2016 after successfully raising funds with the help of wonderful partners at Deeper Missions Org, USA, JDC Trust, Life Point Church Mission Team's Greg & Trish Yocum and other great friends through Global Giving Org and Giving Grid platforms, we unsuccessfully drilled a well at Akili School. The wells were declared dry after attempts at two separate spots, 100m deep each. This was a very difficult time for us since we really need the water to serve our girls and the wider community and there is no way around it. Having hired hydro geologists to survey the area before drilling, it didn't occur to us that we could fail to strike water. Even more difficult was conveying this sad news to our incredible supporters who gave to finance this project. We are very blessed that amidst all the frustrating news, our supporters were very understanding and supportive throughout. We know that we are in this journey together, during good and difficult times and if we keep doing the right thing and giving honest feedback to our supporters, they will stand by us and help us overcome whatever situation we may be in.

Thanks to funds raised through our partners at Global Giving Org, we successfully installed a rainwater collection system to mitigate the costs of buying water for lack of a sustainable well. The tanks which harvests water from the roof store over 60,000 liters and has been very helpful.

Our wonderful partners at Deeper Missions Org have since commissioned a team of highly qualified and thorough hydrologists from Aqua Well Services Ltd Nairobi who have now pinpointed our access point and we feel elated that our Obambo compound has a supply of water within it. Unfortunately we have been unable to begin drilling as it will cost about \$13,000USD. We are making it a priority however and once we have gathered enough funds drilling will begin.



We invite you to continue helping us to raise the much needed funds to make this well a reality.

We know that once we have a constant supply of water our Sustainability projects can commence in the Obambo campus and in turn our financial independence will increase.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Our partners at **Gates Of Hope Org, Idaho, USA** has been sponsoring 15 girls at Akili School. We were all happy to welcome them to Kisumu in August 2015 where they met the girls they support. We love such trips and it connects our girls to their sponsors.



Our friends at **Tailored For Education, Org, USA** has provided school uniforms for all our girls for 2 years now. With new uniforms every year, our girls have gained more confidence/high self-esteem and are now performing better in their exams with 80% scoring 350 marks or more out of a possible 500.



Although it is very difficult to find organizations that fund teachers and staff wages which is often categorized as overhead costs, our friends at the **World Food Program (Catherine Bertini Trust Fund), USA** and **Hilden Charitable Trust, UK** funded teachers wages for a year, enabling us to hire 2 teachers, a matron and cook and improve the quality of instruction at Akili School.



We have continued to work with our partners at **Mama Hope Org, USA** to build infrastructure at the school and sustainable farm. In 2016 we added a poultry project, posho mill and hired, Dennis as the farm manager. Our goal is to diversify our sustainable projects and generate revenue to meet 50% of operational costs locally in 3 years.

Our wonderful friends from **Life Point Church, AZ, USA** visited again in Jan 2016, having made a similar trip in Jan 2015 with our friends John Freeman and Tracy Mcbee from Ireland. Together, we painted



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classrooms, dormitory, built school kitchen and toilets. We look forward to meeting them again in January 2017.



We are also partnered with **Pink Elephant Org, USA** to train and share resources with our teachers to improve the quality of instruction at Akili School. **Boys & Girls Club of Denver, USA** are partnering with us to support our after school program and connect our teachers with resources they need to improve quality of education at Akili School.

We continued to receive volunteers from all over the world who visited us in Kenya and worked alongside our teachers and staff to support our girls education. We are very grateful to everyone who has volunteered their time and money to support our cause.



END OF TERM CELEBRATIONS

IN NUMBERS

STUDENTS: 105

WOMEN EMPLOYED: 9

MEALS SERVED: 7596

CAMPUSES BUILT: 2

% OF FOOD COSTS COVERED LOCALLY: 37
% OF SCHOOL VEGETABLE NEEDS COVERED
BY THE FARM: 60%
PROJECTED NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY
2020: 165

FUN FACTS

With the expansion into Obambo we have been able to employ four more women from our community. 2 teachers, a matron and a cook.

It costs us 50cents to feed 1 day student for a week and \$3.35 to feed 1 boarder for a week.

We are now also supporting the Obambo community by enrolling 5 girls from the area in each grade at the Obambo campus.

80% of our students are achieving over 350/500 in continuous assessments.

Just saw the end of term two and on the last day we held a celebration and presentation for all parents. There were songs, dances, poem recitals and rounds of applause for all students, especially our outstanding achievers. The chairman of our parents made a beautiful speech in which he commented on the positive changes he has seen in the girls who have moved from Obunga out to our Obambo campus. He spoke about their confidence, their increase in activity and how they are looking “fat” thanks to three healthy meals a day. This was such a compliment for us and helped us to see that even with all the bumps over the past years we have made so much progress and our girls are proof of that.



Our girls and their parents standing in front of the new boarding house at our end of term celebration



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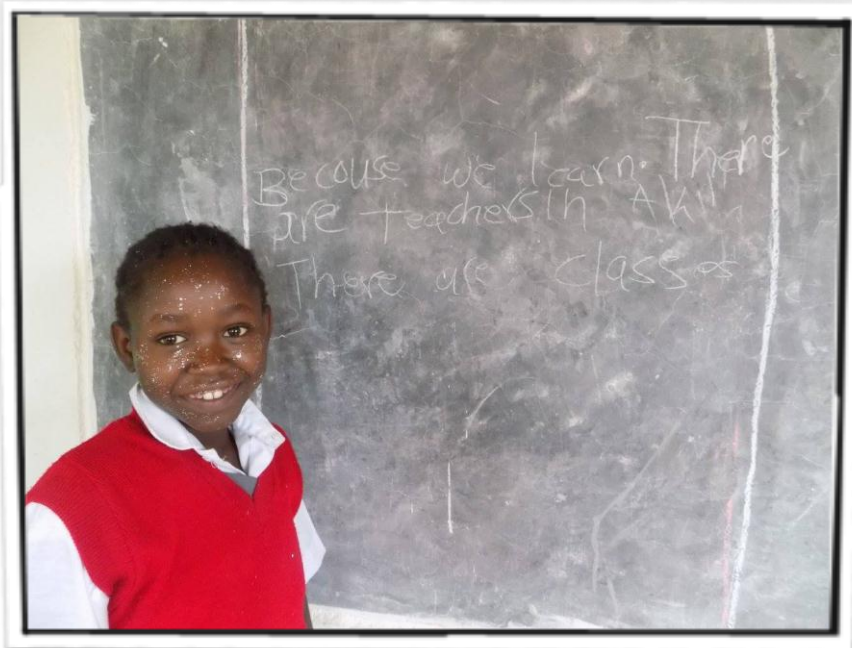
WORDS FROM OUR AKILI QUEENS AND THEIR PARENTS

As the holidays approached our girls were very excited to see their parents and spend some time at home but they were also disappointed to be leaving the boarding house.

We asked **'WHY DO YOU LOVE AKILI?'**



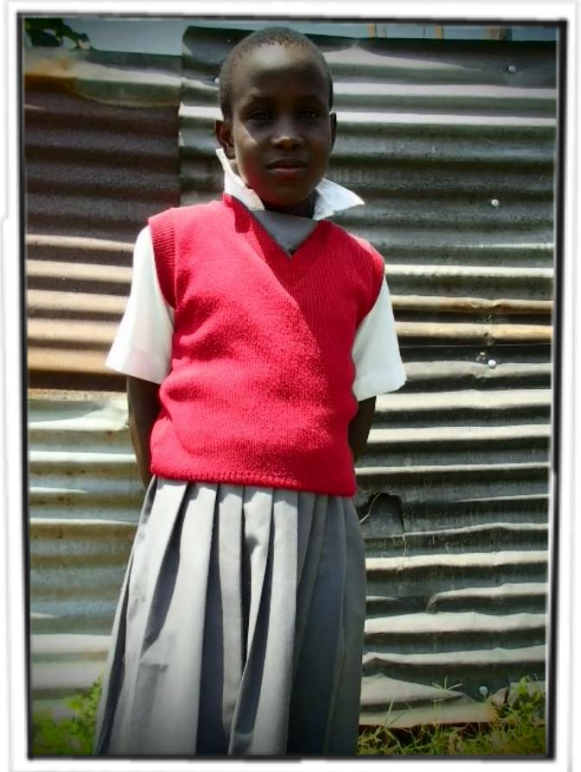
Valentine is happy because at Akili she has time to read her notes, she has learned about the environment and there is many fruit trees.



Jane Awuor



Esther Ayuma



'I love Akili because they teach us very good things. I even love my teachers. They are so good.' Valary Anyango



A message from Mama Gloria, a parent at Akili

'Akili Preparatory School has really helped me and my 2 girls. My husband passed away in 2013 after a short illness. We used to work together with him to support our family and pay fees for my girls. After his death I could not afford to support the children on my own. My two girls Joy and Gloria dropped out of school for 2 terms. I couldn't even feed them. I can only say thank you to Erick and David for allowing my 2 daughters to go to Akili Prep school for free. My business of making chapatti has picked up again and I am now able to provide for their basic needs as Akili School takes care of their education.'



A note from Jacinta - one of Akili's teachers

'I am feeling very happy to engage the girls in education inside the slum so that they can know being in a slum is not the end. You can go somewhere higher. I want my girls to be happy and popular people, I want them to go places and help us improve the standing of the slum.'

You can also watch this video about our work
By our volunteer and Global advocate Ryan

<http://underthetree.mamahope.org/episode-3/>

MAMA HOPE ORG ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

In August 2016, we (David, Erick & Dennis) attended the annual sustainability conference organized by our partners at Mama Hope Org, USA. During the conference, we shared experiences with leaders from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana and Guatemala. We also learnt how to make our one page strategic plans, business canvass, how to tell our stories of social impact, setting indicators and monitoring and evaluating our work.



AKILI SCHOOL OPEN DAY

Our school open day is scheduled for December 10th 2016. We will host all our girls, their parents and community leaders for an open day celebrations in Obambo Campus. We welcome all our volunteers and friends to attend this special event in Kisumu.

AREAS OF NEED

Water well

We are still raising funds to drill the well at Akili School. The water will not only support our girls and the wider community but will also enable us to increase food production by converting our school to a food forest. We are accepting donations for the well here <https://goto.gg/22276>

Teachers' & support staff wages,

As we expand gradually admitting 15 new students every year and initiate and run new income generating activities, we continue to hire teachers and support staff to help us achieve our goals. Although teachers and support staff play a crucial role in ensuring that our girls receive quality education, very few people and organizations are willing to support their wages. Well motivated and remunerated staff are critical in delivering quality instruction and hence education for our girls. We are fundraising here <https://goto.gg/24812> to pay teachers and staff wages for the year 2017.

Child Sponsorships

About 70 girls do not yet have sponsors. We welcome anyone willing to sponsor a child for \$25 monthly to contact us at omondidavid@gmail.com . Sponsorship money goes towards buying school supplies, feeding program, uniforms and paying teachers wages.

Housing project

We have purchased 0.22 Ha of land near our boarding school where we plan to start building low cost housing to rent out to locals to generate revenue to pay our teachers and staff in the long term. We plan to commence construction later in the year.

If you would like to support our housing project in any way, please contact omondidavid@gmail.com

Fundraising champions/volunteers

We are always looking for fundraising advocates and champions to help us raise funds to support our work. Please contact us at omondidavid@gmail.com if you want to be involved.

As we wind up this newsletter we want to say a big thank you to all of our supporters and friends. Lots of our work would not be possible without you! Stay tuned to our Facebook page over the coming weeks as we start a feature on each of our boarders. Also, keep looking out for updates about our water crisis and the expansion of our sustainable projects. We hope you enjoy the rest of 2016, blessings to you all!

From, David Omondi and Erick Otieno

Founder and Director of Operations, Founder and Chief Executive Officer