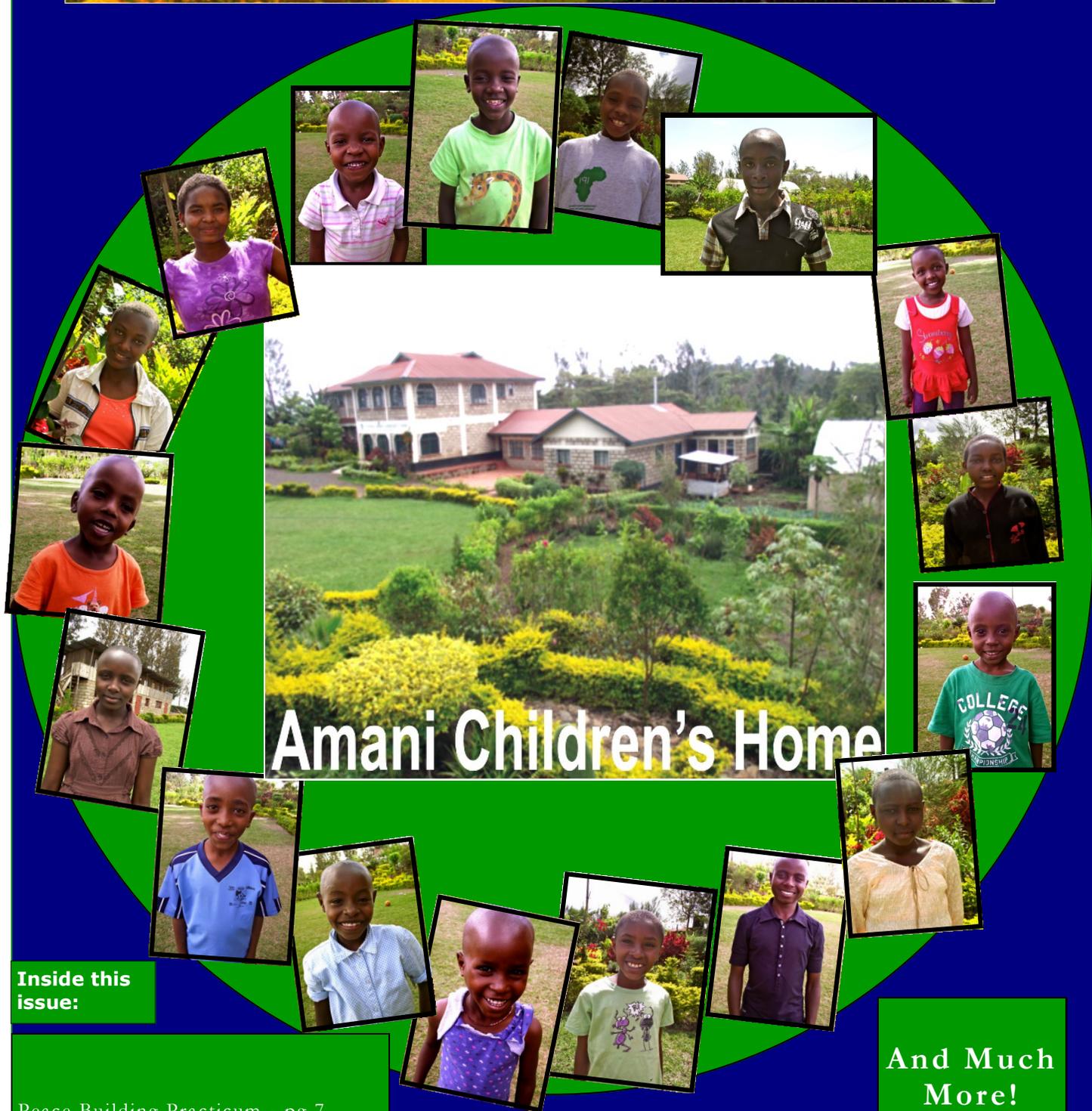


# TAMASHA LA AMANI

## The Newsletter of IPI - 2012



Amani Children's Home

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**And Much More!**

# TAMASHA LA AMANI

## The Newsletter of IPI - 1st Issue 2012

### Note from IPI Founder and President, Karambu Ringera (PhD)



IPI Founder and  
President ,  
Dr. Karambu Ringera

I would love to welcome all friends and partners of IPI to this great year (2012) . The new year begun with children at Kithoka Amani Children's Home (KACH) going back to school; with most of them joining the next level of classes. The beginning of 2012 also saw some of the High School candidates; OVCEF beneficiaries get their final year examination results with most of them performing excellently and now waiting to join college.

As we come to the end of this first quarter of 2012, though we have faced various challenges in implementing our programs we do appreciate the extension of love from our donors and partners. In this first issue of our Newsletter we share the great experiences we have had in the first quarter of this year.

In this issue, read on the success of the OVCEF programme, the Community Support Initiative (CSI) and the wonderful experiences that people who have chosen to volunteer with us have had. We also share on the wonderful experience the women of Meru had during the International Women's Day.

### IPI'S 2012 WISH LIST

- Strengthening the Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Education Fund (OVCEF). This fund helps keep orphaned children not living in the Amani Home in school.
- To keep an Amani Child in school, fed and cared for it takes US\$ 1,800 Or UK£ 850 (One can support one aspect only)
- To support a girl in High School with sanitary towels US\$ 100 or UK£ 45 for four months
- To support water sustainability of IPI project costs US\$ 5,000 or UK£ 2,800
- To build a cottage for the sustainability of IPI projects costs US\$ 20,000 or UK£ 8,500
- Detergent distribution motorcycle: US\$ 700
- A minibus for the Amani Children's Home: US\$ 15,000
- Laptops for computer lab for the Amani Home: @ US\$ 500 Per laptop
- General donations of any amount are also appreciated!!

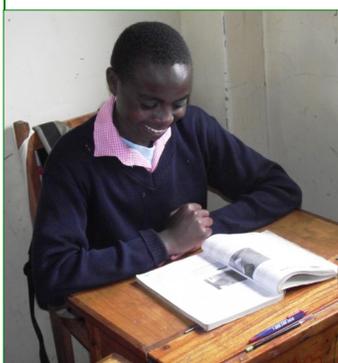
2012

Volume 1, Issue 1

# TAMASHA LA AMANI

## The Newsletter of IPI - 2012

### *OVCEF Celebrates Dennis Njuguna*



*Dennis Njuguna in class in his former Primary School*

Through its program orphans and vulnerable children education fund (OVCEF), IPI pays school fees and provides support services so that orphaned and vulnerable children can attend school and thereby provide hope for their own future and that of their families and community. Specifically, IPI pays for expenses such as school fees, books and other materials, nutritious food and health care to enable AIDS orphans to stay in primary and secondary schools; middle level colleges and university.

Last year, one of the program's (OVCEF), beneficiary Dennis Njuguna sat for his final year primary exam ; K.C.P.E in which he scored 362 marks out of 500 . OVCEF celebrates his excellent performance.

“ Am very happy that Dr. Karambu did not give a deaf year to our problems ,I don't know how my life would have ended up if she did. My mum was jobless we were displaced from our home as a result of the 2007 post election violence. But Dr. Karambu took me in and now a flame of hope lies in my heart.” Says Dennis Njuguna

Dennis is now a form 1 student at one of the best schools in the country.

The program also allocates resources for the care and support of initiatives for the families enrolled in the project. Dennis like other children who have benefited from this program have great ambitions for their lives.

“ I want to be an electrical engineer after am through with my education. My ultimate goal is to help solve energy issues in my country and in Africa.” Says Dennis Njuguna .

We at IPI hope other children supported by OVCEF will emulate the good example set by Dennis and work hard in school for a bright future.

“ Am very happy that Dr. Karambu did not give a deaf year to our problems ,I don't know how my life would have ended up if she did. My mum was jobless we were displaced from our home as a result of the 2007 post election violence. But Dr. Karambu took me in and now a flame of hope lies in my heart.”

Says Dennis Njuguna

Editor - In -Chief	Dr. Karambu Ringera
Editor	Antony Kiarie
Photography	Antony Kiarie

## *Transforming Rural Lives With Water*

**By Antony Kiarie**

**T**he Morning Glory women's group in Meru, Kenya begun on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010 with 138 members. Despite the number having reduced to 78 owing to the idea of its inception, the group's commitment to transform the lives of its member's has unwavering continued. Unlike other groups which use the idea of merry go round money contribution to each of their members, Morning glory's uniqueness lies in pulling its members' contributions together and depositing it in a bank for a particular project development.

Through its Community Support Initiatives (C.S.I) program, I.P.I has been supporting the group realize its dream of distributing water tanks to all its members. Recently the group completed purchasing a 1000 liters water tanks for its members and 2300 liters for its members who are from the same family and live in the same compound. This has had an enormous transformation on the lives of rural women in this village. Faith Nkatha is a good example of a woman whose life has been transformed by the project.

"I used to make ten trips to the river in two days to get water for domestic use. But now with the water tank I got from my group (Morning glory women's group), I now make only five trips and for the next three days I don't have to worry about water. More so the water I used to get from the river was dirty and we used to take it that way and we would fall sick, but now with the tank we take clean water because the tank has a sieve that filters the water." Says Faith Nkatha

Its other uniqueness is that the group's membership comprises of both HIV/AIDS positive and negative women. The idea behind this is to give hope to those already living positively and also to fight stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. They have also incorporated single mothers and widows in the group to fight stigma associated with them in rural areas. The women's group also visits and encourages women who have been bereaved by their children through the AIDS scourge.



*Faith Nkatha fetching water from her water tank.*

Moreover, if one of its members has a problem; if a family member is sick or she doesn't have food the other members contribute money for her. Sabina Mware and her daughter in law Phyllis Kendi are good examples of Morning glory's efforts in transforming family lives.

"We were going through hardships without the water tank and since we used to rely on the community piped water which comes once a week, most of the time when it failed to show up we would walk close to six kilometers to fetch water. We even used to quarrel with my daughter in law over the use of water and none of us had time to rest because we would make numerous trips to the river. The water tank has really transformed our lives ;we now have time to even rest." Says Sabina Mware



*Sabina Mware and her daughter - in law fetch water from their water tank.*

The desire of the group however, is to meet the various needs of its members. For instance, some of its members already had water tanks but had other pressing needs that required the group's assistance and it came to their aid.

"I used to fetch firewood so that I could prepare my children to go to school and my husband to go to work. Everything was hectic then because firewood is a big problem here and they would all get late and I never got time to even rest. Thanks to Morning Glory women's group my life has now really changed for the better; with the small gas cylinder they bought for me. My children go to school early, my husband is never late for work and I now get some rest time. I chose a gas cooker because I had a water tank." Says Salome Kendi

Nonetheless, like any other group Morning Glory women's group has its fair share of challenges. Some of the major challenges it faces include: lack of money in terms of members contribution especially with the current prevailing drought situation in Kenya and lack of quorums in meetings with leads to distorted information.

## *Transforming Rural Lives With Water*

The challenges don't however deter the groups vision of continuing to transform the lives of its members and it has future plans of buying drip irrigation pipes for all its members, install the system and then train them on how to use it. This will help group members to deal with the issue of food shortages. Moreover, it plans to start a seedlings store so that it can give some to its members during the planting season and sell the rest to make money for future projects.



*Salome Kendi with her small gas cylinder.*



*Sabina Mware and her daughter in-law doing laundry for the family.*



*The Women dance as they celebrate the distribution of the last bunch of tanks*



*The last bunch of water tanks*



*One of the women from the group receives her water tank from Antony Kiarie I.P.I staff*

# A Learning Experience From Home

**By Ida Rotto**

I never thought I would become a frequent world traveler and still can't quite imagine my life changing to fit that description. I also cannot in any way, imagine staying away from this place. I came to East Africa from rural Iowa, USA two and a half months ago, with my dear friend and midwife; Brenda Borke. Volunteering first in Northern Uganda at Earth Birth maternity center then travelling to Nairobi, Kenya to volunteer at the Fremos medical clinic in their small maternity center. Each place has been completely unique and wonderful in it's own way, giving me learning experiences sometimes joyful, sometimes ever so difficult. I began to search for the next place to put my energy- my last, unplanned month drawing ever nearer until I learned of a place called I.P.I, and met with Dr. Karambu Ringera, who's description of this place, inspiring ideas and excitement and welcoming personality drew me in.

In my first few days at Kithoka Amani Community Home (KACH), I have discovered that if ever there were going to be a place to open you up, regardless this would be it. Everything about the Amani Home amazes me.

Because I came with such short notice, I didn't have any plan for a particular project or goal for my time here. This can be nerve wracking, but it turns out I'm glad for it and still don't have a plan or goal. What I do have is excitement to be with the kids each day, offering them what I have.



*Ida sewing a cloth pad with her Purity and Cecilia I.P.I staff members.*

My days at KACH as a volunteer were full of activities such as; Crocheting in the yard with the girls, Sewing pads with most kind hearted love emoting ever fun Cecilia (one of the two matrons), Singing and dancing , playing jump rope, ukulele playing and water fighting with the whole group of bright, open loving kids. The cloth menstrual pad making project has been exciting and the pieces made so far are very nice. This is an exciting idea for IPI- economically smart as they can be washed and used for a few years, as opposed to the commonly used disposable pads which can add up in spending throughout the year, environmentally friendly- reducing waste, comfortable and very fun to wear with

decorated soft fabrics.

Throughout my time here I have also been visiting local midwives and maternity clinics around the area, from which I have continuously acquired invaluable knowledge . The list of possible projects goes on. Meanwhile, I could easily spend all of my time here just learning from the many people and things that are happening and never sit down.



*One of the cloth pads made by Ida at I.P.I / KACH*

As my time to go back home nears and I think of the heart wrenching flight back across the world, the many voices of people who ask when I will be back linger in my mind. I hope to come back is all I can say and will ever treasure the kindness and enthusiasm of the people I've worked with.



*Ida plays the Ukulele with Emily one of children at KACH*



*Purity and Cecilia I.P.I staff members sew a cloth pad after a few lessons*

## Peace Building Practicum

**E**arly February this year two international and graduate students, Zuzana Molcanova from Slovakia and Riya Kaphle from Nepal, came to Meru to work with International Peace Initiatives (I.P.I). They came here to fulfill the practicum hours required for their study. They both study Conflict Resolution in Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, USA.

Their decision to come to Meru was based on the desire to experience new culture, to travel and share their knowledge and experiences with others living under different life conditions. After evaluating several organizations around the world, they choose IPI because of its effective projects which focus directly on promoting sustainable peace in the local community.

With Dr. Karambu Ringera, they identified what will be beneficial for the local community as well as for the organization. They started the project with an official name; Peace Club, which took place in three schools- two primary and one secondary. The reason for creating such a club was to promote peaceful co-existence, conflict resolution, nonviolent communication and to raise awareness about the negative side and cost of a conflict in the community.

Kenya witnessed political struggles and violence in 2007/2008 after the disputed presidential election among several tribes. The situation in the country is now relatively peaceful , although discrimination, social and gender inequalities are still present. General election probably will be held in 2012 or 2013 in the country. Therefore, addressing the consequences of a conflict in society will bring positive changes in the future to its people.



*Riya helps make dinner for the KACH children .*

The schools and teachers welcomed the idea. In the secondary school they had a curriculum ready for such a club, which was convincing that the need was there. The two graduate students, continued meeting with students once a week for an hour and a half in regular basis. The interest was big enough and the average number of students attending the meetings being forty.

Every meeting had a different topic related to conflict resolution. Among the many topics discussed with the students included; the difference between peace and war, what is conflict, and underlying issues like emotions .



*Zuzana Helps out at the KACH kitchen with her Purity one on e of the cateress .*

The two had an elaborate plan which involved meeting with students for eight weeks to create a sustainable peace project, which would last even after they had left.

Their idea for the project was entrenched on the principles of empowering and facilitating student leadership skills. This would witness leaders from every school take the responsibility of promoting non-violence among the students. In addition, the best two students in the peace clubs from each school would be awarded as a peace ambassador for using their conflict resolution skills in real life settings.

**IPI is a fertile learning ground especially in the area of peacebuilding and we would like to recommend the organization to all Peace and Conflict resolution students out there.**

**Says Riya and Zuzanne**

## International Women's Day

**O**n 8th March 2012, International Peace Initiatives joined other women in marking the International Women's Day. The event was marked with a walk from Ruiru market to the Catholic Church at Ruiru where brief session on Women Empowerment took place.



*Dr. Karambu addresses women during the International Women's Day .*

The theme of the day was; Empowering Women For Pro-active Peace. Every speaker at both events re-emphasized on the major role that women play in the peace building process in every country. The event was also marked with song and dance as the women reflected on the milestones achieved in fighting for their

rights .

Women were urged to take their place in society if they didn't want men to continue taking advantage of them. The District

**" Lets us (women) not concentrate on the posts reserved for women by the new constitution, but also challenge men by vying for the other political offices. This is the only way we will realize equal political participation."**  
**Dr. Karambu**

Officer of the area; Mr. Mohamed Mohammad called on women to continue their fight for their human rights and assist other women in seeking redress whenever their rights are abused.

He also challenged women to come out in large numbers whenever they are called upon to celebrate the International Women's Day. In her address, Dr. Karambu Ringera challenged women to be more active in politics and support other visionary women who will be seeking political leadership in the coming elections. She advised the women not to put all their efforts and resources on the posts created for women by Kenya's new constitution but to also challenge men by vying for other political offices in the country as this is the only way of ensuring equal political participation.



*Dr. Karambu joins other women in celebrating the International Women's Day .*

The importance of a woman's health was also highlighted and women were advised to seek counseling and medical help whenever need arises. They were also encouraged to forge reliable friendships and join women's groups for economic empowerment.

"It was not the first time for me to march during the International Women's day. However, marching with women from Meru was totally different and wonderful experience. Dancing, singing, appreciating one another created positive atmosphere full of respect, hope for better future and encouragement for all women." Riya IPI volunteer from US

I.P.I also hosted two other events after the International Women's day: The Women Listening Event and a Community Peace Forum . The Women listening event was attended by around 40 participants. Men were also invited for the Women Listening Event. At this event both genders were granted the opportunity of sharing their experiences through life. Both genders from all walks of life shared on their past and current personal experiences. They also shared their future expectations.



*Women listen keenly to other women during the Women Listening Event .*

During the Community Peace Forum, issues such as drug abuse among the youth, unemployment and alcoholism were identified as the major causes of conflicts in the Kithoka Community. Community members suggested that youth should be engaged in community projects as a way of engaging them in meaningful income generating projects for personal development.

Another common community problem that was identified in the forum as a major cause of conflicts in homes was the issue of absentee fathers. Men were called upon to take up their family responsibilities if genuine peace is to be achieved in homes. It was agreed that there exists a need to have more forums which will have all stakeholders suggest implementable solutions to the community problems.

## *Community Peace Forum*

**By Antony Kiarie**

**I**n the words of Marianne Williamson, “In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart there is the power to do it.” Kithoka location is in North Imenti Constituency, Meru County, Kenya. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012 the community decided to hold a community peace forum through which community members identified issues affecting the community. In fulfilling its goal of serving the community and building a peaceful society, IPI hosted the forum at Kithoka Amani Community Home (KACH). The goal of the forum was to find ways of enhancing sustainable peace.

Premised on the Ubuntu Philosophy; I am because You are, the community resolved to learn something new in the forum so that they can cope with each other. For a peaceful community, leaders in the community asked community members to learn how to communicate and forgive those who wronged them.

During the 5<sup>th</sup> May Peace Forum, the community identified various challenges affecting them. The issues that were raised included; drug abuse, education, water, unemployment among the youth and alcohol. All stakeholders were asked to help find sustainable solutions to these issues.



*Kithoka Community members discuss issues affecting the community directly.*

It was also resolved that for jobs creation it is important to share expertise among the community. This would equip the youth with various crafts that would enable them start income generating projects.

Leaders in the community were challenged to be role models for the young. They were also asked to provide leadership in all community issues instead of shying away. For a peaceful community, members agreed that all conflicts should be resolved peacefully.

For a peaceful community, members envisioned the following peace images: Trust, Security, Love, Education, Cooperation, Hard work, Truth for Justice and Honesty. Community issues that were categorized as follows: Gender; Domestic Violence, Education (high school drop outs due to early pregnancy, poor parent-teacher relationship and drug abuse) Unemployment, and Communication.

Priority issues that were dealt with at this forum included alcoholism and substance abuse. The community came up with the following urgent action plans that needed to be undertaken to realize a reduction in alcohol and substance abuse:

Action	Responsibility to be undertaken by
Solicit for 500 signatures against distributor	Asst. Chief will coordinate
Announcement in public places	Asst. Chief
The community decided to put to a stop alcoholism	Community members
No unlicensed shop & bar should sell alcohol within the residential areas or schools	Asst. Chief with support of community

Another important community issue that was discussed was the continued negligence of the Boy child. The community agreed that community efforts have been directed towards the rights of the Girl child such that those of the Boy child have been ignored.



*A community member jots down points from other community members.*

This was said to be a great contributor to early boy child school drop outs leading to an increase in insecurity and crime in the community in the course of growth among young

men. The community agreed that parents should be encouraged to listen to the needs of the boy child in as much they do to those of girls.



*The Assistant Chief Miss. Judy Kathambi belabors a point during the forum*