



A Special Appeal to Help the Young Children of Kenya

The Rudolf Steiner School, Mbagathi, Nairobi is a school located in Kenya, in the Eastern part of Africa. In this school there is a growing need, actually an urgent call for action to support a humanitarian need. We are sending out a special appeal to support 'Kindergarten Education' – an Appeal to help the very young – the 3-6 year old children.

The Rudolf Steiner School, Mbagathi, has since its inception in 1989 taken on a huge mission of teaching and caring for the needy children from underprivileged families, many of them overcrowded rundown areas.

Mbagathi School Kindergarten has places for about 100 small children. Year after year, the small school within a school prepares children to join primary school. At the start of every academic year, a new class One starts which has a capacity of 30 young children. Where there are more than 30 admission requests for a particular age, the extra children are placed on a waiting list and are enrolled depending on availability of space. The kindergarten has four groups of children; they enter as young as 3 years. The buildings are beside a beautiful, serene and natural area of the school compound. This offers good opportunities for free outdoor play for children with some playground equipment on the facility. Their days are rhythmical, warm and calming, a little paradise for children. This is a rich experience for these extremely underprivileged children living under poor circumstances while at home.

Kindergarten teachers undergo training at the in-house Kindergarten training in Steiner Education at the school; this is a part-time program which takes place with three annual modules. A total of 10 modules must be completed. The trainers are very competent and experienced Steiner educators from The Centre for Creative Education in Cape Town, South Africa. The children are therefore educated and taken care of by highly qualified teachers.

Recently a project to expand the kindergarten block has come to completion. The expansion enabled young children to enroll who had been on the waiting list for some time. More places are still available in two of Mbagathi kindergarten groups. As it is now, there is room for about 20 new children born in 2015 and 2016.

A higher percentage of these children come from dysfunctional and unstable homes. Some live with single parents, some are orphans who live with distant relatives living far away from school, others have irresponsible parents and are forced to stay with people who may or may not be family members; the case list is long and diverse in nature. Most of the families stay in slum-like areas.

Due to these prevailing circumstances, some children are accommodated here in the school's large boarding facility even though they are so young. They love being here where they grow and get opportunities to be children. They are taken care of by very





compassionate boarding parents. Whatever the case, children are admitted on request basis. A request might be from the parent, local government administrator, relative or guardian. Every child on the waiting list or already in class has one problem in common; **their families cannot afford to pay school fees for them and hence NEED sponsorship.**

How can we describe their lives and life-circumstances? Here is the picture: Watching the little ones in the kindergarten at the Mbagathi School, you can rejoice and marvel at the great kindness and warmth that radiates from them. When you arrive at the school, they eagerly open the little gate chanting out "welcome, welcome!" How can this be, when these little children's lives are marred with extreme poverty? This shows a huge impression of hope. The willingness of these small children to happily start each new day despite their life circumstances, this is touching.

In the following description, there are no names mentioned, because of the school's confidentiality policy. Children are wishing to join the school on a growing waiting list - hoping for sponsorship to be admitted to the Mbagathi School Kindergarten.

Stories of some of these children's lives

There is one 3 year old boy, where his mother, a 37 year old woman grew up in one of the largest and most vulnerable slum areas in Nairobi, Kibera, where waste, disease, human suffering and extreme poverty are conditions for thousands of people. This enormous area is filled with shanty iron sheet homes - there is real human suffering. Here is an indescribably raw environment for children to grow up in, where high risk of violence and abuse is always present. Alcohol and drugs are a major threat to children. Kibera is Africa's second largest slum area and one of the world's largest with around 250,000 inhabitants.

Only a few percent of the people have access to running water from a recently constructed water line, the rest fetch water from a large nearby dam, which over all the years has been unclean, heavily polluted, causing diseases such as typhoid and cholera. Toilet waste heaps up in old worn out plastic bags in huge mountains of rubbish next to the dam. In other places the "toilet" is a hole in the ground that is shared by about 50 families; when the hole is filled, it is the small boy's "job" to empty it and take the contents to the river that runs through Kibera.

His mother has for her whole life fought to leave the slums. They now live with the boy's grandmother in a deprived area behind the Masai Lodge Road along which the school is located. She has two children, one aged 19 and the little one; their fathers have never been involved in their lives. The mother has never had a permanent job, she has made it through life by randomly working, looking daily for work with no assurance, anxiously waiting to see if she gets lucky. A daily rate for "casual work" at best 3 Euros.

Another case is of a small boy and his mother, who for most of her life has been in a wheelchair. She suffers from severe epilepsy, as there has been no money for medical treatment, and the disease has evolved. Since she was a child she has been begging for money from the cars that stop at the traffic lights in downtown Nairobi. During a seizure she toppled over and fell down into a large pot of boiling porridge and was severely burnt. This caused a disfigurement to her face and burnt her hands so bad that her right hand cannot





be used. Today she is trying to make money by selling potatoes and onions at the entrance to Nairobi City Centre. Her little boy now lives near the school with his grandmother. His two older brothers live with his father far away from Nairobi; this father has no contact with the mother or her little son.

The third case is of a child whose father has been in prison for the last four years - the child's entire life. The imprisonment is due to theft and other crimes. The mother lives in a part of our local town's slum called Kimandino, with four of her seven children. The three eldest children live with their grandmother in Western Kenya. The mother earns money by washing clothes for people.

A fourth case is of a child who lives with his mother who is single. She sells bananas every morning at the market square. This means that she has to leave home at 3.00 am every morning to pick up bananas and bring them to the market in her shanty little stall. There is an older sister of 12 years. The three live in a small one-room house made of corrugated iron sheets with an uneven clay floor which becomes muddy in the rainy season. They all sleep on thin mattresses on the floor.

A fifth case is of two small three-year-old girls who are the youngest out of a family of eight siblings. Some of the elder siblings are in primary school at the Mbagathi School. The two small ones are now waiting for sponsorship. The large family is at a high risk because the hardship and adversity experienced has caused a mental disorder and probable depression for the mother, making coping in such an environment almost impossible, not to mention the task of taking care of the children.

The home is a single room with a dirt floor. The houses are normally small and under-developed, made out of corrugated iron sheet approximately 10 x 10 metres. It is arranged in such a way that the sleeping area is at one end, the cookware at the other end and the sitting area on another side. In this particular home, everything is in a mess. While coming to school, the kids are dirty and unkempt and are often hungry after not eating a proper meal. The father in the family has an old motorbike, and he is one of the hundreds of men trying to make a living by running a "motorbike-taxi" up the dusty Masai Lodge Road, where the school is located. All the children in the family have an expression of melancholy on their faces and in their minds, and the school wishes to bring them out of the situation. This is only possible when these two girls find sponsorship to keep them happy in school.

The last child described here is the child of a single mother with no job and no home. A family felt so much compassion for them that they have adopted them into their family. Note this family is also very poor and all income comes from selling corn in the market.

These are just sample stories to give a clear picture of the need for sponsorship. All the other little children are like those described above; they carry their own special stories and are in dire need of rescue through sponsorships. What is crucial, and maybe the most touching and interesting, is the question of what it is that leads or guides these children and these families to the Steiner School with its creative, vibrant and human-building pedagogy? A new way of life can develop - a life devoid of the burden of human challenges and poverty.





What is needed are people who are willing to pay monthly amounts, for school fees for these children. 33 Euros per month per child covers approximately half of the cost of kindergarten school fees. It is of course possible to pay the full amount of 66 Euros which is full sponsorship for one child's school fees. Boarding fees are also needed if the child boards.

You can as a sponsor pay the Euro 33 for a named child. You will receive a photo and annual updates on the child's development, and you can, if desired, through the school administration have some correspondence with the child.

Or you can as a sponsor pay the monthly amount as a general contribution to school fees. It helps the children exactly the same way.

All amounts go 100% to this purpose! All details about signing up for sponsorship and payment are in the following details:

Rudolf Steiner School Mbagathi Nairobi Kenya

Website: www.steinerschoolmbagathi.co.ke

Email: Judith.Brown-School.Leader@steinerschoolmbagathi.co.ke

Donation account:

Account Name: Steiner School Education Trust

Bank: Commercial Bank of Africa

Euro Account Number: 6433850052

SWIFT Code: CBAFKENX

Cable Address: COMAFBANK

Keyword: Special Kindergarten Appeal

Your donation will be forwarded at 100%

