

*"Learning is a treasure
that will follow its
owner everywhere"*

Chinese Proverb



Thank You from Brainhouse!

"We want to say thank you so much to ACEF for what it is doing for our children. You and the volunteers are helping to save these children, because what happens outside here is terrible! Do you know the children you see here today, before you came, had to go out after class to look for their own food. They used very unadvisable methods, like the young girls they go out to do prostitution to get money, others just roamed the streets, the compost heaps, looking for food to eat! We had ten year olds who knew how to deal a gun. These are not small things, you know that a child knows how to pull a trigger, but you don't know where he will pull the trigger. Maybe on you or me!!

I think you all have done so much for the security of our children and country. I am saying this without missing a word - our children are now coming to school, they are staying here. They have a home, where they can get a hug, get something to eat, where the teachers are friendly, where they do and learn things that are relevant to their futures and our country. They are safe.

Thank you so much, thank you again, may God bless you in very special ways.

Aggrey Okuma, Headmaster, Brainhouse Academy, Niarobi, Kenya



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Brainhouse Academy, Niarobi, Kenya**



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"We work so hard because we felt that the children in this environment, have lost their hope, we want to bring that hope back".

Words like these are the reason we as Trustees feel so passionate about what we are doing. So many folk ask, do we really make a difference, and does our money really have an impact? The answer is there when you read the message above from Aggrey!

Without the support of Akamba Children's Education Fund (ACEF), Brainhouse Academy, in the heart of the slums of Nairobi, would struggle to exist. So the Brainhouse leadership team and the ACEF Trustees would like to jointly say a huge thank you to each and every single one of you, our supporters, for helping make such a substantial difference to our young people in Kenya.

Teacher to Teacher

In April we took out the second group of volunteer teachers from Manchester Communications Academy, with the aim to support the teaching skills of the staff at Brainhouse Academy. They worked with the Kenyan staff, sharing techniques, ideas and knowledge. The impact was incredible – you could actually see the school growing in confidence. I was privileged to be part of a staff meeting when robust conversation took place around how to incorporate discussion periods into the lessons – just one example of valuable teacher to teacher development that took place during the week of shared teaching.

Kenyan Voice

Whilst out there, we also took the opportunity to learn from the staff, the community and the students about the impact ACEF was having. I was very moved and honoured to be in a position to ask people for their reflections and so much wanted to share some with you. Therefore I have ignored the normal content of our newsletters to concentrate on our Kenyan voice.

What Motivates the Kenyan Teachers

First of all I have always been fascinated why very skilled and talented teachers have given up their comfortable lives for our 946 young people. All the staff could be working in schools earning a salary and living in comfortable surroundings and yet they have chosen to live within the slum, earn next to nothing and teach these very vulnerable young people. When I asked why? This was the response I heard:

'We work so hard because we felt that the children in this environment, have lost their hope, we want to bring that hope back, by showing them love, giving them love, making them understand that it doesn't matter wherever they come from, whatever they have or don't have. They are not unfortunate because they were born unfortunate. They have a life and with life if you get something small you can still carry on with life and are somebody!'

Madam Mary, told me this story. 'A young boy was living on the street with his brother. He was doing well at Brainhouse, then one day he came to Madam Mary and said he needed to leave, that he had to go back to the village. He asked Madam Mary not to be angry as he will return to write his exams somehow. Madam Mary's response 'Where is he going to go. This is Nairobi, he is going to slide away or he is going to be shot with a gun. So I told him, No you can't go onto the street – go and get your books, your clothes, carry what you have to school. This is your life you are making here, if you spoil it on the wings, you spoil your life. So come, come and live amongst the living, whatever God has given us, we are going to share with you.' So the boy is here now, he is safe with us, he has a future.'

Impact of our Involvement

In terms of the impact we are having, here are a few golden nuggets, from hundreds of similar comments. Your contribution both in time and financial giving has directly resulted in these comments being made.

on teaching

"There is such a difference with having the English teachers here, we are getting more skills of how to do our work, how to teach the children, there is such an improvement. Every teacher is saying that they have noticed something which they are going to add or do when we are helping the children."

on nutrition

'ACEF has made a big difference. Teachers are now getting lunch. We can't afford to pay them well, because we have so little, but more teachers want to join us now as they can be fed

As teachers, we are happier as it is much easier to deal with someone who has something in their stomach, they are not as troublesome as those who have nothing in their stomachs.

on energy

"We have continuous lighting in the school now, children now can read anytime. They can come very early in the morning and switch on the lights, and the lights go on and stay on! We have a very big thank you to Mitsubishi for donating the solar to us."

on water

"We have water non-stop thanks to the solar, the pumps and the water tanks"...In many ways

"The children are happy, we do not have drop outs now, they get something to eat, the girls are looked after, we have intensified the sport, and they have a place to sleep. They are content."

on infrastructure

"You have made some great, great changes to the school – you see we now have boys and girls dormitories with beds and mattresses, see that tank over there – in previous years we did not have access to easy water, now we can practice health hygiene, after you visit the toilet you can easily wash your hands."

on life

"In some previous years we didn't have food, because of you now, we have food and water – this is life and you have provided us with both."

on learning

The benefits are felt in the school but also in the families and communities. "ACEF has upgraded the school, the children are happy because they are being taught by teachers from other countries like the UK. They feel blessed that they can be taught, you see I meet those parents who have troubles with their children, as they now don't want to go home, they want to just come to school, so that they can be taught by teachers from the UK."

For me though, it is more than just providing the infrastructure, it is about providing the support so that the leaders in the school can do the very best for the young people in their community. One day these young people will be able to become the leaders of a new more prosperous community. The achievement of this ideal is summed up by the wonderful head boy:

'You can be tempted to do something bad, like stealing, rape, do drugs and this is what we are trying to eradicate. You don't burn inside, no I can't! I want to live, I want to help change our society positively so that we can all one day be considered good people. In our Kenya we know we have one of the biggest rooms in the world, but it is a room that needs improvement. I want to be part of the improvement. Maybe one day my children will have some history lesson about me, which would be good!'



"The children are happy, we do not have drop outs now, they get something to eat."



"...we have been able to study using the solar, even the teachers can work at night."

The value of your contribution

I hope you can see by this newsletter that you are having the most incredible impact on the young people who attend Brainhouse Academy and the local community. It is not just about feeding the students, or improving the way they are taught. The achievement is way, way beyond the infrastructure, the feeding programme. Together you, me and everyone else involved in ACEF in the UK, are providing the means for hope, a future and young people who want to promote and take responsibility for positive change.

This is so much more than we ever dreamed, however we still need your on going support as we have the daily challenge of feeding our teachers and students, providing them with a home, improving the infrastructure and delivery of the school, supporting young women to be able to attend school and hopefully in the future provide them with skills to go out there and earn a living.

This cannot be done without your amazing financial support. You can support us by:

- Signing up to a monthly contribution through <http://www.justgiving.com/acef>
- Or making a single donation through <http://www.justgiving.com/acef>
- Taking part in a sponsored bike ride around Worcestershire on Sunday 16th September. To find out more information and to register your commitment please email Alison and Andy on alisonhalford@gmail.com.



"One day these young people will be able to become the leaders of a new more prosperous community."



"Together you, me and everyone else involved in ACEF in the UK, are providing the means for hope."

Thank you

Seeds for Africa have been amazing support over the last two years. Their latest contribution enabled us to buy a 10,000 L water tank, the pump to bring the water up from a stream under the school, the tyres to create a vegetable garden and of course the seedlings. The contribution from this vegetable garden, augments our feeding programme.



"You have made some great, great changes to the school - you see we now have boys and girls dormitories with beds and mattresses,

Volunteer

If you want to help any way or join us on one of our trips please do send me an email and we will welcome you with open arms. Email: liz.formby@acef.org.uk

Special Request

During our last visit, we had an amazing request from the children. They told me they had never held a book, had never read a book and they now they had light at night, they wanted to read to improve themselves.

I was determined to achieve this for them and to hopefully start a library for them as a Christmas present. On my return to the UK I spoke to Book Trust who have donated 1,500 books to us, which will meet the reading needs of the whole age range of our students. Also Queen Victoria Primary School have donated another 400 plus books and are doing all they can to raise money to help get the books out to Kenya.

Despite, their efforts, we need help!

The challenge is how to get these books out to Kenya. I am looking for advice and support in how we do this. Either contact names of people who might be able to provide me with advice or arrange for the transport of the books or support a fundraising programme to help pay for the transportation.

If you can help in any way, please ring me on 0121 745 2597.

booktrust
Inspiring a love of books

Special Event

ACEF will be holding it's annual bike ride through the countryside of Warwickshire, after we had to cancel the event earlier this year due to the summer storms. Due to the change of dates we have been left short of marshals and first aiders. If you can volunteer your time to help out or would like to take part in the bike ride please contact Alison at alisonhalford@gmail.com.



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