



Triumphant Opening!

We celebrated the opening of the Olmapinu Borehole in this joy-filled Ceremony last October. Here are WILK Co-Founder Joseph Larasha, WILK Co-Founder and Director Joyce Tannian, Mkombozi, and Mama Leyian with the opening ceremony sign. We also see the ladies exult at the opening of their new well.



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Summer 2022

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

I am grateful and excited to share that we received a 3-year grant from the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities. Half of the grant will fund our cornerstone water, sanitation and hygiene program. The second half is for a new subprogram of our LAB program, Hope for Widows.

You may be asking “why widows?” Well, we realized our LAB training wasn’t capturing the poorest of poor ladies. Through interviews, we learned that a disproportionate number of the poorest ladies are widows. Seeing the extreme poverty and marginalization they face, we were moved to think how we could help them.

For the new program, we extracted the successful training elements of our LAB training, substituted an outright grant for the loan since they are starting from very low financial capacity, and will launch this month. The target is to give them skills, build confidence and financial capacity, and connect them to women like themselves to build a strong community. In future, if they are interested, they may also join the full LAB program. Stay tuned to hear how the pilot program rolls out!

*THANK YOU,
Joyce Tannian*



(Above) Oloirien Chairlady receiving certificate at the LAB program graduation

(Below) Oloirien group at the LAB program graduation



Empalakai Borehole Drilling: New life in Empalakai

This time, you need to “walk in their shoes,” I thought after hearing Empalakai ladies talk about the steep, tough way to water they must walk every day. So we said “let’s go.” Ladies led us down the hill and into the river. I filled up the jug, hoisted it onto my back and clambered up the steep hillside. It gave me deep appreciation for what Empalakai women faced every day. It’s a tricky walk requiring strength, balance, endurance. It was easy to understand why on the day of drilling they stood watching in amazement as water poured out of the ground. Of course they prayed and hoped, but nothing compares to the actual sight of it! Seeing the water gush out, we rejoiced because our team, which includes you, our generous donors, has



Empalakai women at the river



Empalakai boss Joseph Larasha supervises at the well

accomplished this through all our efforts and contributions. They now have clean, abundant water. We are removing them from their daily struggles! We were blessed with another successful well drilling. We reached first water at 70 m, finishing when we reached 220 m (722 ft). With the information about the borehole yield from the test pumping (6000 liters per hour or 26 gallon per minute), we are ready to install the appropriate size of pump and generator. By end of July we will complete construction and installation at the site. The Empalakai community has contributed for the construction of cattle troughs, delivering their materials – sand, stones, cement, etc. – so that all can be completed together.

Achievements Shared: LAB Graduation Ceremony

The Livestock as a Business (LAB) Graduation Ceremony crowned WILK’s spring activities. We celebrated the completion of four years of training and loans in a ceremony hosted by the 19 members of Oloirien Women’s group of Imbirkani, Kenya. The other 3 graduating groups were Sing’o Women’s Group from Esukuta (14 members), Naboishu Mixed Group from Oloilalei (11 members), and Enyuata Mixed Group from Lenkiseem (15 members).

Songs, dances, gift giving, speeches, prayers, and feasting made the day one to remember. The event was organized by the groups themselves. We admired their skill in orchestrating all the details. When I asked about how they pulled it off, one of the leaders said “we learned through the trainings you gave us how to make an action plan. We learned how to plan, budget, coordinate, break down and delegate tasks.”

WILK contributed and awarded livestock prizes at the ceremony, and visitors were impressed with the excellence of the event. The livestock prize-giving was a crowd favorite! The common comments of the group members who spoke about the benefits of the LAB program were that they were grateful to be part of it, sad to leave WILK and the other groups, but looking forward to continuing improved livestock keeping through the recently formed livestock cooperative.

All groups at the LAB graduation ceremony



The goal of the event was for the groups to receive public recognition of their hard work and achievements, especially for the women who have become so strong in livestock business and leadership. They are proud of themselves that they now can purchase, own, care for and make a profit with good breeds of cattle, which traditionally belonged to men.

On the spot, we received requests from other women’s groups in the area to join our program!

Groups testified how they mastered topics vital to the Maasai community: livestock rearing, breed selection, and drought cycle management. The LAB ceremony revealed a successful pathway to improving their livelihoods.

Challenge of the Drought

Frequent and recurring droughts are a serious challenge to life and livelihoods in the Amboseli Ecosystem where WILK works in southern Kenya. This year's long rains failed following the poor rains of 2021. Livelihoods like livestock keeping or crop farming are threatened. Families worry about making ends meet.

The Kenyan national drought management authority report for June states that our county of Kajiado is in "Alarm" stage, with fair to poor pasture coverage, longer distances than the long term average for people and livestock to trek to water points. Drought and higher fuel prices have pushed up prices of staple foods like corn and cooking oil, while poor prices in the livestock market and worsening condition of animals mean people have less money in their pocket.

On the plus side, our water projects are functioning and providing ample water for their members (*such as this little boy on the right*) and their livestock. Past and present members of our LAB groups have been implementing learned strategies to avoid livestock losses so far.

The biggest stumbling block, however, is the lack of pasture. Since last year, people have been migrating. It is every family for themselves. Heads of households reconnaissance about where there is still pasture and move with their boys and herders.

WILK's Co-Founder, Joseph Larasha, has moved with his cows four times already this year. He reported that the place he recently left, Eluanata, had an influx of tens of thousands of cows from Mashuuru, Metoo, Tanzania, and Loitokitok, coming from hundreds of miles away. The cattle used the local dam, finished the water and then had to move on.

Since we have been working on drought resilience with our LAB groups we have seen good performance in the selection of good breeds, good care and the timely selling of livestock. But the least developed resource is pasture, its storage, conservation, and improvement.

We will be tackling this question in our upcoming LAB trainings to brainstorm what can be done to plan, improve, protect pasture so that, as much as possible, food can be available for cattle and families can maintain stable livelihoods. You will soon be hearing more about this important topic!



Great Add-ons!

Based on the strength of our clean water projects and LAB groups, projects are growing and receiving resources from many organizations. Both water management committees and LAB groups show cohesion and achievements of their goals and good networking strategies. They apply for help and have been getting it! Here are some examples:

From the County Government of Kajiado:

Risa Borehole received a generator and Enkong'u Narok Borehole received a 50,000 l concrete tank.

From the Government of Kenya's KCSAP Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Program:

LAB Groups: Ilmarba Group, Oshumu Group, Enyuata Ang, Oloirien Widows, have received training, seeds, cattle, goats.

From Amboseli Ecosystem Trust:

LAB Groups Ilmarba, Olningo, Iltuati, and Oshumu will have the opportunity to join the beehive livelihood, and pasture improvement programs.

DONATION CORNER

Please consider making a generous tax-deductible donation to Water is Life Kenya today. With your help WILK has made significant progress in our work to transform the lives of the Maasai people of Southern Kenya. Your support is vitally important to help us continue this life-changing work we are doing. Thank you!

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Shilishili dancing at LAB graduation ceremony

*Joy
At
The
End!*



Oloirien LAB graduates with prize ram



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