



Empalakai Community Borehole is Operational!

For the people of Empalakai, something wonderful was growing in their midst. Ground was broken, foundations were dug, and concrete poured for the new structures – the community water point, livestock troughs, latrines, and powerhouse. By the beginning of September, construction was completed, the generator was delivered, and the pump installed. Water flowed through the system, and the committee was instructed in the operation and maintenance of the equipment. Now, water is available every day and it couldn't have come at a better time! The drought is wreaking havoc, but the borehole is providing clean water close to home for people of Empalakai.

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WATER IS LIFE KENYA

Staying CONNECTED

Winter 2022

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

Our work moves forward, thanks to your generosity. However, it has been a bumpier road than usual in Kenya this year.

The main reason is that drought and inflation have heaped huge stress on people, making basic life necessities unaffordable. In the region where we work in southern Kenya, drought has devastated the livelihood of farmers.

Non-existent rain for two years has weakened livestock and made harvests fail. The situation has been exacerbated by the depressed economy caused by uncertainty around the Kenyan election and the global pandemic, which paralyzed tourism in Kenya. An extra school term piled more expenses on families as the Kenyan government tried to catch up for time lost during the pandemic. You can see Joseph Larasha and Dorcas Mutero talking about the drought on Facebook.

As we constantly evaluate conditions to make sure we are most effective, we decided to continue the Hope for Widows Pilot program. The women are full of hope and look forward to receiving their small business grants.

Please join with us in praying for rain to come soon. We are SO ready for this drought chapter to close! We are pleased that our water projects continue to supply life-saving water.

THANK YOU

Joyce Tannian

(Below) The landscape and animals provide stark evidence of the ravages of the drought



(Below) Joseph Larasha presenting to the Amboseli widows



The Most Valuable Lesson We Have Learned

We learned that developing people is the most important thing of all. For any new water project or LAB group to work, for any new behavior to take root, the critical work is (a) introduce it to people, and (b) identify the people who are interested and motivated to change, and are willing to try it out, and who want to lead others. Then we empower them to be vehicles of idea transmission and examples of behavior change.

An implementation process that allows time for training and community mobilization works much better than rushed implementation. There are many organizations who promise to “give people water”, but don’t invest in training or building community buy-in. We have learned that the key to good borehole management is to develop community support by involving them in project design, and requiring community contribution – even if it takes a few months – and then providing periodic training, for this is what will cause the water project to have deep roots and provide uninterrupted, reliable service for the next 20 years. In addition, when you build up people, they will go on to apply what they’ve learned to other activities. For example, water committee members are also members of the school committee and the church committee. Solving problems and mobilizing community resources are now part of their skill set.

Of course, water is an urgent need and we would like people to have it as quickly as possible, so the temptation is to skip the community consensus building steps. However, communities have had their water problem for a long time. So, waiting a bit longer while building up community buy-in is worthwhile, since it can be the difference between success and failure.

Check out our updated website – <https://waterislifekenya.com>



Hope For Widows

At the first Hope for Widows meeting, we asked the group what they were expecting. The women said that they thought we were following up about the land we had helped them with in 2021. We said, “no, something better than that. We are inviting you to join a program we have developed for you, after realizing that (1) you are trying hard to make ends meet, and (2) you face extraordinary challenges as widows.” They were extremely happy, grateful and eager to hear what we had to offer.

After our initial meetings with them, we saw that the original training curriculum we developed for them needed to expand. To personal empowerment, business skills, agriculture, livestock as a business, and women’s health topics, we added women’s rights, nutrition, and planning for your child’s education.

By the 2nd training we realized that our top goal would be achieved. That was – to help the women be part of a community that would help them develop confidence and a sense of belonging. Very soon, the women bonded and shared their experiences. When the younger widows saw the resilience of women who had been widowed for more than 20 years, they thought, “if she can make, so can I!”

We face a challenge in helping them become more stable financially, especially with the pressure of the current drought. More than half have already tried some kind of business to make ends meet. But business is tricky. In the past they invested a small amount of capital (\$50), but then when the time came to pay school fees, they used everything, including their capital, and were left with nothing. The key is the separation of business money from household money – easier said than done! We are hoping they can learn this discipline to launch them into more economic stability.



WILK Out And About!

September 18: WILK participated very successfully in Newark Community Day. We had a raffle and games, and our beads were a big hit. U.S. Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester (pictured below) stopped by to admire our work and our products. So many new people heard about Wilk, and we had a fantastic team of volunteers.



September 26: Joyce and Aaron were invited to present in First Year Seminar classes at the University of Delaware. We want to teach students early about our worthwhile mission, and hope to encourage volunteers .



October 2: Joyce as at the Church of the Loving Shepherd in West Chester, where she gave a sermon reflecting on how we are all called to move with God in the world and what that might look like. We were fortunate to be able to share the joy of our beaded handicrafts.



October 16: Joyce performed at **Music, Water and Life**, a **Concert Celebrating 15 Years of Water is Life Kenya**, at Newark United Methodist Church



And More Up Ahead!

Friday, November 11: The **Rotary Wine Appreciation Fellowship** is hosting **Changing Wine Into Water** event to benefit WILK at Deerfield Wines in the Shoppes at Louviers from 5:30 – 7:30.

Introducing Aaron Lemma



Aaron is our new Outreach and Operations Manager, and you will be hearing from him through our emails. Or you may want to call our office to say hello. Aaron is a leader with a passion for the natural world, efficient systems, and communicating important concepts across generations, demographics, and continents. After completing the Alliance for Catholic Education at Saint Joseph's University, Aaron has jumped into Water is Life Kenya ready to increase donor pools and develop key relationships, all to ensure this critical work of empowering indigenous communities in Kenya continues into the future.

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!

Please
DONATE

5 ways to donate today

Check

Checks made out to:
Water is Life Kenya

Online

waterislifekenya.com

Text—to—Give

(302) 449-7349

Stocks

Contact us for steps

(302) 894-7335

Make WILK a beneficiary of your will.

Food and School Campaign Update



With generous support from you, our dear donors, we used \$4500 to do our first food distribution to two schools of over 900 children total, and 150 families in the community of Ilmarba. The drought is relentless, and everyone and everything is affected.

To provide nourishment and hope to carry on during this extremely difficult time, we have committed ourselves to another food relief effort for 1000 families, targeting the most vulnerable, as well as providing fuel to our boreholes. We pray this will help people make it until the rains come in November.



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You can make a difference

Become a sustaining donor today!

We want to give a big shout out to our monthly donors. Over the past year, their generous giving totals over \$8,576.

We invite you to join this team of donors by becoming a sustaining donor.

It has a two-fold benefit: a revenue stream we can count on and lower fundraising costs. A Sustaining Donor makes automatic monthly donations through our website using a credit card. You choose the amount you want to give each month. You can increase, decrease, or stop your gift at any time. Visit our website, waterislifekeny.com, click on Donate to follow the steps. It's simple and fast.



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Is it too soon for a whimsical Christmas ornament that echoes the colors and themes of winter with our vivid Water is Life Kenya beaded handicrafts? Plus, Artisan-made jewelry that makes a unique gift for the special people in your life.



Gift yourself or someone else with a gift that gives three times.

Visit our website www.waterislifebeads.com to order yours today.

