



BUKATI: Maize and beans and the fish pond

Bwaliro: Digging the pond

Making gravel from rock

Girl waiting for school

### January 2011 Children of Bukati (COB) Newsletter – Plans for Three Schools

Dear Donor, The Bukati School is rapidly reaching the goal of self sufficiency. Although the numbers of students attending the school continues to grow, our donations to the school are able to decrease. In December, we purchased doors and windows for the kitchen, a liner for the fish pond so it retains water year round, watering cans for the students to water the tomatoes in the green house and repaired the well. As the other projects mature, there will be more fish, milk and eggs to sell and the trees will provide fruit, nuts and lumber. Seeds from the mature trees (sesbania trees) are used to plant new trees for the tree nursery. Slips from the banana trees at Bukai were sold to Bwaliro for their permaculture project.

We sent some money to Bukati in December to purchase maize and beans to feed the children this term. The need was not as high as before because the school raised money by selling seed-grade rice, milk and fish. The dry season in Western Kenya is January to March. This is the one season of the year when Bukati is not able to provide sufficient food to feed the children from the land we purchased. It is also the season when the need for food is the greatest – the subsistence farmers, who are the guardians of the AIDS orphans, struggle to feed everyone in their care. Hunger is everywhere. As many of you know, I am conducting research work with smallholder pig farmers in this region of Kenya. Pigs are often sold during the dry season so they can purchase maize (corn) to feed the family. We expect the harvests will be sufficient during the next two terms to provide food for the children from May through November.

The Bwaliro Primary School was a hive of activity in November. The staff and students at the school worked with the Canadian permaculture team and two Kenyans; JB who is the teacher from the Bukati School and Patrick who is from Nakuru in Kenya. The school compound was transformed – using each available section for vegetable gardens, trees, rice fields, fish ponds and swales for water capture. The compound was fenced with wire and then will be reinforced by a live fence of kai apple trees. Fruit trees that were new to the area (such as coconuts) were grown in the yard. An These, just like the rice grown at the Bukati school, will have high value as an item for sale. At Bukati the rice is harvested and sold as seed because its value is so high. Unlike at Bukati where we started with a lunch program and slowly added the livestock and permaculture for self sufficiency, at Bwaliro we began with the permaculture. We hope the community will be self sufficient in 3 years.

Many other problems at Bwaliro were addressed in November. The classroom floors that were pitted were resurfaced. Only 3 classrooms needed the floors completely redone. The other rooms had the holes filled in and then the floors were resurfaced. The rocks dug out of the ground for swales and the fish ponds were pounded into gravel to be used on the floors. All children who had jiggers infections were taken to the local clinic for treatment.



**Pitted floors**



**Resurfaced floors**



**Digging the well**



**Teaching the children about permaculture**

A kitchen was built and the necessary supplies for a lunch program such as large cooking pots and spoons were purchased. We also bought efficient stoves similar to those being used at the Bukati Primary school. They use 1/3 the amount of wood needed for an open fire and reduce the amount of smoke exposure affecting the cook and the children. Ultimately, the permaculture project will provide an income for the school for the purchase of food for the lunch program. For now, the food for the lunch program will be purchased by our funds. We bought sufficient maize and beans to feed the children during this first term. Although there was a well on the property, it was contaminated with dead rats. A new well is currently being dug. It will be covered with a cement lid and fitted with a hand pump. The well will provide safe water for the children and enable the school to offer the lunch program. The school's large tank that holds rain water was repaired in November and fitted with a proper tap. This water will be used to water the trees in the nursery, the tree seedlings and gardens planted on the school property. Augustine, the principal, told me last week that there are new children coming to the school each day. He has been enrolling new children every day since the beginning of the term in January. This is reminiscent of the rapid expansion at Bukati. The lunch program brings the AIDS orphans to school, enhances the health of the children and gives them hope for the future. The young girl in the photo is eagerly waiting to attend. This is the first measure of success!

Through the generous donations of individual families and groups of individuals we are supporting 11 high school students. We support 4 boys and 7 girls. Three of these children will graduate in December. Two grade 12 children have leadership roles – as head boy and dormitory supervisor.

Our goal for this year is to raise sufficient funds to assume the responsibility for a 3<sup>rd</sup> school that is located in Samia. The school owns only 1/2 acre of land and is in a desperately poor area with dry, rocky land. As in Butula, the proportion of AIDS orphans is high and most of these children do not go to school. The project is ambitious, because we need to first raise the funds to purchase land and then to develop the permaculture project. If you know of a group looking for a speaker where we can share this story, please contact us at the address below. I sure this goal is achievable.

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Thank you for your ongoing support of these children through this project. Together we are making a difference in the lives and opportunity for the children and their communities. Sincerely Cate Dewey ([www.childrenofbukati.com](http://www.childrenofbukati.com))