



## Harambee Team July 2014

Harambee is a swahili word meaning 'working together'. Friends of Londiani have adopted this word as the title for their volunteer projects where teams of volunteers travel to Kenya each year as part of the Friends of Londiani volunteer programme. This is the story of the July 2014 Harambee.



# Friends of Londiani

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## Who are Friends of Londiani (FOL)

Friends of Londiani are an Irish registered charity (CHY16505) working in Londiani, Kenya since 2002.

- We work with communities to create better futures by improving access to water, health and education.
- We are bringing people together to build a thriving economy and provide a safe, sustainable future for everyone.

## How do Friends of Londiani do what we do?

The work that FOL are involved in is based on the needs of the community as identified by themselves. We act as a catalyst in making change happen and we focus on the following areas -

- **Water** - Access to clean water is a basic need and FOL is working to improve health, sanitation and food security.
- **Health** – We are committed to increasing access to health care in the communities, focusing on girls and women and increasing healthy homesteads in the Londiani.
- **Education** – We are enabling children to stay at school for longer, improving the environment in which children learn and enhancing understanding of development through increased knowledge and partnerships.
- **Economic Empowerment** – We want to increase household income, providing economic empowerment reducing poverty and creating sustainable livelihoods.

## Some key facts & figures

- Kipkelion and Londiani are sub-counties in a remote region in North West Kenya. They are part of Kericho County.
- \*The population of Kericho County is 758,339 of which 50% are male and 50% female and 43.6% are under 14 years of age.
- \*The population in Londiani town is 43,152 and in Kipkelion town it is 46,760.
- \*In Kericho County, 56% of households have access to improved water, 11% have access to electricity, 13.8% of the county roads are paved.
- Health conditions in this area include malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS, typhoid, respiratory illness and water borne diseases. It is estimated there 1 nurse per 1,823 population and 1 doctor per 15,000 population in Kericho County.

*\*Kenya County Fact Sheets Dec 2011 based on 2009 Kenya Census*

## Interested in volunteering on a Harambee Project?

Friends of Londiani organise volunteer projects to Kenya twice a year.

The dates for 2015 are -

**July** Harambee – 11/07/2015 to 01/08/2015 (2 or 3 week options)

**November** Harambee – 31/10/2015 to 21/11/2015 (2 or 3 week options)

To register your interest and find out more contact the FOL office (contact details at end of this report)



## Harambee 2014

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### The July Harambee team

The July Harambee volunteer team was made up of 8 people from Mayo, Cork, Tipperary and Kilkenny along with a project leader, project manager and local staff in Kenya including a driver, a cook and members of the FOL Kenya staff team. The project ran from July 12th to August 2nd and was based in Londiani, Kenya.

Each volunteer began preparations for the project months beforehand with the first of 4 days of training held in April to prepare them for the practicalities of the trip, inform them about Kenya's community health strategy; train them in the skills they would require for the project; explore community development; look at culture awareness and provide support and ideas for fundraising for the project.

During their time in Kenya the volunteers worked with 21 facilitators of the Lifeskills Peer Education course to add 3 new modules to the course content; seven Healthy Schools clubs on the HECA programme; 34 children were vaccinated during 3 Outreach clinics; 78 Lifeskills certificates were presented during two 5 day courses held; 21 stoves were installed in local households; 29 households were surveyed in advance of stove installation; 19 households were surveyed post-stove installation and skills were shared at two CME (continuing medical education) meetings at the Londiani District Hospital.

### Fundraising

Friends of Londiani rely on the generosity of supporters and donors who fundraise to support the community development programmes we deliver. Each volunteer committed to raising a target of €1,000 each to contribute to these programmes and between them they exceeded the target and raised over €10,500. In addition to this, each volunteer paid for their own costs to get to Kenya either from their own funds or through further fundraising efforts. FOL are very grateful to all of the friends, families, local business and members of the public who supported the volunteers in their fundraising efforts.

### Location

The Harambee team flew into Nairobi and travelled by vehicle 220km through the Rift Valley to Londiani town. This was home for 3 weeks and the team stayed in the grounds of St. Kizito's Catholic Church where accommodation is provided and there are also facilities for trainings and gatherings. The 'landlords' as it happens are from Ireland – Fr. Martin Barry from Glanmire and Fr. Con Ryan from Tipperary. From here, the volunteers travelled out each day to villages, schools, clinics, homes and community gatherings.

### Community

Based in Londiani, FOL have a Kenyan staff of 12 who work with local communities to implement FOL's plan of action to make change happen. The people that the Harambee team worked closely with included men, women and children from Londiani and Kipkelion districts. They also worked closely with representatives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, community health workers, local volunteers, schools, teachers and students. FOL's aim is to work with communities to help create a better future for themselves by supporting them to make lasting changes and improvements to their lives. The Harambee

team followed this aim working closely with FOL's partners in the community and working alongside other volunteers from the community. They supported the community by sharing with them their skills and knowledge, facilitating opportunities for training to happen and creating cultural exchange by living in the community. They helped build a confidence and sense of wellbeing in the community that comes from knowing that people cared enough to come and help them in their efforts to improve the future of everyone in their community.

## Work undertaken

During the 3 weeks of the project, the volunteers worked on –

### Lifeskills Peer Education Facilitators workshop –

FOL has run peer education courses since 2002 in Kenya. Thousands of people have attended and benefited from information on sexual health, HIV/AIDS, relationships and communication. The course has 10 modules to it which include 3 new modules on Nutrition, Mental Health and Drugs & Addiction. Work on these 3 new modules began in 2013 and during the first week of the project, the July team worked with the local facilitators of the course to complete the modules, test run them and make them ready for delivery.

The topics for the new modules were chosen in response to requests from the community for information and discussion around each one. Like many other communities, the people in this area find that no one is speaking openly about mental health issues, the challenges facing people living in poverty lead some to illegal brew and other forms of alcohol and drugs and nutrition is an issue as people struggle to eat a balanced diet with the required vitamins, minerals etc. to keep them healthy.



Facilitators take a break for Chai during work on 3 additional modules to the Lifeskills course with volunteers Carmel & Maura



The facilitators divided into 3 groups and took one new module each to develop. Here volunteer Emer is working with the group looking at nutrition



Facilitators Maura, Alice and Emer



### Lifeskills Peer Education courses –

Two full Lifeskills courses were run in Kiptenden and Sugutek on week 2 and 3 with 78 people attending in total. What was required of the volunteers involved in this programme is a level of facilitation skills, a non-judgemental attitude, knowledge of the programme content and the ability to be flexible and creative! Trainings are held in the area where the community live using a church or a meeting hall of some kind as venues. This was a training environment without 'power point' or even electricity for that matter, and with the additional challenge of translation from Swahili to English, showers of rain on a tin roof that can drown out all chance of being heard and the very welcome and sometimes distracting addition of small babies and toddlers who come attached to their mothers.

The volunteers could see that the participants had put their lives on hold for the week of the course and it was obvious that there is huge interest from the community in participating in the Lifeskills programme. The outcome from participating goes beyond what is learned and understood. During the 5 day course the participants bond and relationships are formed that often become the foundation of groups who go on to tackle issues in their community from no access to clean water to female circumcision.



Photographs taken at the Lifeskills Course in Kiptenden in July 2014 – each participant receives a certificate of participation at the end of the course – pictured here with volunteers Ned & Carmel

### Healthy Schools Programme –

FOL's Healthy Schools Programme is based on the WHO Healthy Environment for Childrens Alliance (HECA) and it aims to provide a safe, healthy environment for children where they live, learn and play. The programme provides training for teachers and support for schools to make improvements to latrines (toilets) and clean water provision. Students in each school form a Healthy Schools club and FOL staff and volunteers work with them to help increase awareness of hygiene and sanitation issues and encourage them to transfer their knowledge into positive action in the school, at home and in the wider community.

Over a million very young children die every year in Kenya due to lack of access to proper sanitation and safe water. Many schools in the Londiani & Kipkelion Districts do not have adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities. Healthy Schools is trying to change that.

Each school in the programme works towards ensuring that it has adequate clean water, clean latrines and hand washing facilities, a safe recreation area, no litter, safe food storage and, where needed, mosquito nets for beds. They also aim to offer ventilation in the school

kitchen, a fuel-efficient stove with chimney, use of renewable energy sources and no wasting of energy or water.

Children the world over love to welcome visitors and the volunteers were welcomed at each school with performances of singing, dancing and words of welcome. They worked for two days in each school with the student clubs doing activities to raise awareness and understanding,



Teachers of Chebewor Primary School with FOL Kenya staff member Chelat and Harambee volunteers Pauline & Aoife



Teachers & students of Jagoror Primary School with FOL Kenya staff member Chelat and Harambee volunteer Eoin

### Smokeless Stoves -

FOL is working with the Public Health Office in Londiani and in Kipkelion, to introduce a new fuel efficient stove to the District. During the July project, the team helped to install 21 stoves. These stoves are having a major impact on the health of the entire family but especially on the mother (typically the cook in the household) and small children, either strapped to the mothers back or playing around near the old open fire. However, as well as the health benefits, the huge bonus for the new proud owners of these stoves is the fuel efficiency, the stoves need only one third of the fuel used by open fires. It costs between €45 and €50 to build one of these stoves, which includes a training programme for installers and follow up visits to each household. The benefits are huge.



Mags moving bricks to the site of the stove installation



Eoin & Pauline getting to grips with mixing clay, water, sawdust & sand for the new stove





Example of the current open fire type stove – note the black on the wall caused by smoke filled room



New stove with chimney just completed

### Surveys before and after stove installation

As part of the smokeless stove installation process, a survey is conducted with each household to identify the kind of improvements that come in the long run in health and a reduction in the amount of wood used as fuel for the fire. Questions are asked of the head of each household about the people of the house, the buildings themselves, the cooking pattern in the day, the kind of health issues experienced in recent times and the type and amount of fuel used. The volunteers conducted this survey for each of the 21 households where new stoves were installed.

They also conducted 19 surveys of households that had the new stoves installed during 2012. These surveys are very important to measure the improvements the new stoves have made in terms of health and livelihoods for the families. The results are very exciting and a good example of the kind of impact that this community development programme is having in the area. As well as conducting the surveys, the volunteers had the task of inputting the information gathered into a survey monkey application.



This is Rose Keoch and her daughter at the smokeless stove in their home. Rose's comments about her smokeless stove two years on include – "No smoke, no back problems, no eye or chest problems. No burn injuries".

Rose has a small business cooking Mandazis (doughnuts) for sale and income from this has improved because the stove is more efficient and uses less fuel and therefore she has more time to give to her business that she otherwise

### Outreach Clinics –

Outreach Clinics are run by the District Health team to provide access to vaccinations and anti-natal care especially for new mothers and babies in remote areas of the district. These areas are difficult to access and without the clinics people would have to travel long distances on foot to reach a clinic. The outreach clinics are set up in churches and similar buildings taken over temporarily for the day. Large numbers of people turn up for medical assessment. As well as the vaccination and anti-natal programmes, Vitamin A supplements are given along with de-worming tablets, children are monitored for growth and for nutritional deficiencies, family planning is included and medical advice and referral provided for those who need it.

Some of the volunteers attended outreach clinics at Testai, Kiletian and Kunyak during the project. One of the volunteers, a registered general nurse in Ireland, assisted with giving the vaccinations. Other volunteers helped with baby weighing, registration and general crowd control. As visitors they were a very popular addition to the clinic and the community welcomed them and requested speeches and information about them and where they had come from. The outreach clinics also provide a platform for FOL to provide information about what they do in the community. The presence of the volunteers added to this as they were able to advocate for FOL and talk about the changes they have witnessed.



Young baby receiving a vaccination as part of the Kenyan child immunization scheme



Photo call for mothers and babies with volunteers Aoife, Maura & Pauline at Kunyak OC



### Maps & GPS

The volunteers were trained in the use of GPS units as part of their preparation for the project. FOL have been recording GPS points for the last number of years with the aim of creating a map of the area. The points recorded for example, include the households where stoves are installed, the location of FOL water projects, the schools in the area and local landmarks like churches, clinics, the hospital, water sources etc. Part of the role of the volunteer in country is to record these points and also

Photo shows Mags (volunteer) and John (FOL Kenya staff member)



## Trekking Route

During one of their weekends, the Harambee team took the opportunity to try out a pilot trekking route in the Ndubusat area which the community there are developing as a sustainable tourism project. The area is in the hills and it is very beautiful with stunning views, local people along along the route to meet and chat with and interesting projects to visit like a Bee-Hive Apiary.

The project is being part funded by the Irish Foundation for Cooperative Development and the team visited the campsite which is being developed in Ndubusat as an overnight base for those on the trekking route.



FOL staff member Reuben explains how Honey is harvested and why Bee Hives work well as a community income generator



Photo call for volunteers on the trek with mountains stretching out in the background

In the long run, the project is intended as an income generator for the villages in the area as it is hoped to attract tourists interested in trekking and supporting a sustainable tourism venture in the process. In this set up phase, it is also creating awareness and creation of health villages in the area as the community strive to achieve all the components required of a healthy homestead including access to clean water, smokeless cooking, kitchen garden, malaria preventative measures, good sanitation, rubbish disposal and income generation.

## Other experiences

During the 3 weeks of the project, the volunteers packed in many other experiences such as

- visiting the equator line for a photo call;
- welcoming Esther Korir and her daughter from the nearby village of Lelsothet to talk about local customs and practices;
- welcoming local man John Maina and his brothers to display and sell some of their handmade crafts;
- meeting women from Somonaflo women's group who make and sell bags through the FOL online shop and other places;
- visiting the Londiani District Hospital where FOL are supporting the building of a maternal health shelter and where two operating theatres were built in recent years with the support of Irish Aid.
- And visits to the Classic Hotel & Butchery in Londiani for a soda at the end of a days work!



Volunteers Carmel, Pauline, Emer & Maura with Peter (team driver) at the Classic in Londiani

One of the volunteers, Carmel, shared her skills and knowledge as a specialist in wound management at CME (Continuing Medical Education) meeting with the staff of Londiani District Hospital.

Carmel pictured with members of the staff of Londiani district Hospital at a CME meeting



## Asante Sana ... Thank you

Friends of Londiani (FOL) would like to extend their thanks to the families, friends, supporters and sponsors of the Harambee 2014 volunteers who have given generously to support this project. Through your continued support FOL can fulfil its aim to support these rural communities in Kenya to make lasting changes and improvements to their lives. Friends of Londiani (FOL) would like to thank each volunteer for giving up their time and energy to the communities in Londiani & Kipkelion and for their hard work, commitment, enthusiasm, flexibility and good humour throughout the project. The final words of this story are taken from the blog posts on the FOL website written by the volunteers during the project -

*“As we pack to leave I also reflect on what we have really contributed to the people of Londiani. Yes, you can count the number of stoves built, the number of life skills graduates and the number of healthy schools programmes initiated. Yet I feel that our real contribution is more intangible.*

*We have borne witness to the difficult lives of the people. We have shown solidarity with those less well off materially than ourselves. We have been privileged to be welcomed into people's homes, given chai, sent home with bags of potatoes, offered rabbits — all as signs of gratitude from the people to whom we have offered our hand in support to help them*

*develop better lives for themselves. And as we leave we know that the work goes on. The FOL Kenya staff will continue the projects, more volunteers will come and FOL Ireland will continue to strive to raise the necessary funds — from Irish Aid, from fundraising events, from volunteers, and through sales of craft items, among others.*

*All of us are aware that there is no quick fix to poverty and under-development; it is a process that takes years, if not generations. But we also know that with the assistance of FOL at least some small rural communities can achieve so much more: healthier lives with less typhoid, less malaria, less bronchitis; empowerment of women as female circumcision is eradicated and girls are able to look after their personal hygiene without taking time off from school; and the generation of new sources of income with the development of a hiking trail and associated services. I board the plane in Nairobi with the knowledge that I've been privileged to be part of something special, however briefly. It will remain in my heart and my head forever.” (volunteer Ned Dwyer)*



Harambee July 2014 team including Irish volunteers and FOL Kenya staff members at the FOL office in Londiani

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