

Richard Long & Co

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“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



‘We need a new dormitory for the girls as the one they are using is unsafe and too small’. These words have been reiterated many times in recent years by the girls and teachers at Mara Rianda Primary School. The girls were sleeping in very unsafe conditions. Two bunk beds would be pushed next to each other, five girls sleeping on top and five on the lower level. Ten girls to two sets of bunk beds!



The sleeping conditions were extremely cramped and health and safety a huge concern for us. After many lengthy discussions we requested that the school and community partner with us so they have a sense of ownership and responsibility. Once they agreed to this we gave the go ahead to Ambrose our ‘Fundi’ to commence building. We had plans already drawn in anticipation. Earlier this year the unsafe dormitory was demolished and the new building commenced.

The new dormitory will house 160 girls. It was agreed that we would have two identical adjoining buildings, with toilets and washing facilities. As water is always an issue, the facility for harvesting water was also to be included in the plans and we are considering means to use solar power, even though mains electricity is now available. We are now looking to install metal bunk beds and mattresses and hope to have all this finalised by our next trip. We can't wait to see the girls move into their new dormitories.



In February Nigel Hollingsworth, one of our Trustees came to Kenya with us together with his wife Alison. Nigel is a building surveyor and has been advising on the construction plans and also communicating with Ambrose regarding the building work. On the day we arrived at Mara Rianda Primary School to meet with Ambrose and inspect the building 'by coincidence' the district surveyors were also present to make their inspection. Ambrose was well prepared with high visibility vests and hard hats – rarely seen in the Mara!

There has needed to be a few changes from the original plan which Nigel and Ambrose have addressed by phone and email. However we were delighted with the building works and look forward to seeing it hopefully completed when we return in September. Unfortunately the building work has been hindered and delayed by much needed heavy rain. Always a blessing but making the roads impassable and drastically increasing the cost of sand.



We were welcomed at Mara Rianda Primary School with some traditional singing and dancing by the pupils.

When I first visited 15 years ago there were about 150 pupils attending the school, that has now risen to about 900! Here are the teachers at Mara Rianda Primary School some of whom have been teaching at the school for many years.

We have been asked if we can to assist with the cost of piping water from the medical centre bore hole to Mara Rianda Primary School, a distance of over one mile. This is because the original borehole at the school is no longer adequate for the number of pupils who now attend. Fortunately there is ample water at the medical centre. The cost of this project will be in the region of £15,000.



We have also been asked to assist with the cost of further work at Aitong Primary School. They are requesting help with relocating pipes that provide water to the school. Eight years ago the Charity funded the construction of a windmill at Aitong village, which is the source of the water, and the piping to the school. This now needs to be replaced, reinforced and laid along the road way. This project will cost in the region of £6,000.

As always if we are able to assist with these requests we will but the two new girls dormitories at Mara Rianda Primary School have been built at a considerable cost to the Charity and exhausted most of our available funds.

It is always a joy to visit Enkereri Primary School. Seeing it grow from the tiny crumbling classroom it was six years ago to the now government recognised school.



We were fascinated to see the cook and some of the mamas making pastries for the children. They were using a coke bottle as a rolling pin and then frying them in their own kitchen. The children loved them.



As I look back over the 15 years since I first went to Kenya, I am always amazed at what the charity has been able to provide. It is important to remember that none of this could have been achieved without the amazing help and support from an enormous number of people. Thank you for your support as I have said many times, it is literally life changing. Including mine!

We continue to provide support by way of books, pencils, footballs etc and of course chalk to other schools in the area. We always visit our sponsored pupils at the five secondary schools, which is a minimum 13 hour day most of it being on unmade roads. It's always a very welcome relief to return to Governors' Camp in the evening.

If you are a UK tax payer a bursary can be funded by monthly standing order of £30 for four years. With Gift Aid your donations will effectively be the full amount required to fund one child for four years of education. If you are interested in assisting a child in this way please let me know.

Support is always welcome and greatly appreciated. There is always a need for new books, sports equipment and general school supplies as well as assistance with capital projects. Should you wish to give any support please make cheques payable to The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust.

As usual I do apologise if you feel this letter is an intrusion and should you not wish to receive any further letters then please do let me know.

Should you ever wish to come and join us in the Mara to see first-hand the work we are involved in please let me know. September is normally the best time to join us as this is the time of spectacular migration.

Thank you once again for your interest and support.

Yours sincerely



Richard Long
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And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6 v8 (NIV)