

# Richard Long & Co

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## “CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



The photo on the left shows Peter the headmaster at Mara Rianda Primary School with the numerous cups the school has won. The largest is for winning the Kenya National Singing Competition and the others are for examination results. Absolutely amazing. Our September visit included further discussions with the school committee regarding the need for a new girl's dormitory. The existing one is very poorly built, unsafe and extremely overcrowded.

We felt it important for the community to invest in this very large project by making a small financial contribution. This has not been easy for them but with some support they raised enough funds to make this contribution.

Ambrose, our builder, has drawn up some plans for accommodation for 160 girls. When completed, the dormitory will comprise of two blocks next to each other. Each block will be divided into 10 cubicles with four bunk beds, or 'double deckers', as they are known in Kenya. Latrines and washing facilities are also being provided and the building has been designed to include water harvesting from rainfall, a vital resource in the Mara. We need to buy 80 new bunk beds and they cost about £125 each. The school would also like to install electricity, but at present we do not have sufficient funds for this.







The project is now underway and as you can see the footings have already been dug out. We expect the building work to be completed by the end of March.



Jamie and I with our students at St Marys Girls School

As well as the major projects we continue to provide support by way of books, pencils footballs etc and of course chalk, for all the five primary schools we assist. To date we have provided bursaries for 108 students.

At Mara Rianda Primary School the students continue to do well, with good marks which enable them to attend better secondary schools. This year there are more girls than boys in year 8, which is the final year prior to secondary school. This increase in the number of girls receiving better education is a result of your support through the Charity. At my first visit 14 years ago there were only two girls in year 7 and no girls in year 8. Enkereri Primary School have just had their first formal National Exam sitting and their students will be looking for sponsorship.



Our pupils at the Maasai Girls School

We believe that our continued supply of sanitary protection is contributing to this as it allows girls uninterrupted study. Boarding at primary school is important. It enables girls to study longer and in a safer environment. If at home they would be sent to fetch water or be required to care for younger siblings, they are sometimes abused and child pregnancy is all too common. An educated girl will help reduce poverty in her community. The effects of girls especially receiving secondary education carry from one generation to the next. They have fewer children who in turn are more likely to be better educated and healthier.





Collecting water at Enkereri

At the beginning of this year we agreed to fund a lunch programme at Enkereri School for over 100 children. We are pleased to say that this will continue into the beginning of 2018. We hope to extend this if more funds become available.

Concern was expressed by the teachers and community about the safety of the girls that are now boarding at Enkereri, especially at night. I am pleased to say that we have the funds to pay for a fence around the school boundary which is considerable. Our builder Ambrose has the work currently underway.

Harvesting rain water from buildings is a principal and important source of water in Kenya. We have the ongoing problem with the maintenance of the water pump at Mara Rianda Primary School. Currently it needs replacing every two to three years. We are trying to encourage the school committee to have the pump serviced and maintained and when necessary replaced if it is irreparable. Breakdowns lead to weeks and sometimes months without the school being able to use the pump. For them, however, funds are desperately tight and there are always other priorities.



Two of the elders at Enkereri

The medical centre is a real asset to the community and is well used. The possibility of minor operations facilities are being discussed and the Charity may be able to provide some funding for this, but it needs to be assessed further and structural improvements need to be considered. At present they use solar power as a means of providing electricity. Mains electricity is now available but costly to connect. Should funds become available we would like to assist with this.



Visiting Kennedy's pre-school is always very special to me. Josephine, one of our graduates from Maasai Girls School has been helping him for a while now. The charity has now agreed to fund her salary. Josephine has had the benefit of a good education and is a real asset to the school. We are very proud of her.

James, on the left with Pola, was one of our very first students to receive a bursary. He is now a qualified chef and it was wonderful to catch up with him at a local camp. It is amazing to reflect how Josephine and James have been able to progress. With the support you have given their lives have been forever changed. Thank you.

My trip would never be complete without the three hour journey to Narok to visit our pupils at the five secondary schools. This constitutes a minimum 13 hour day mostly on unmade roads. It is always a great relief to return to Governors' Camp.

There are so many students needing support for secondary education. If you are a UK tax payer a bursary to support a child at secondary school 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 and I shall send you a standing order and Gift Aid form.

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 the best time to join us as this is the time of spectacular wildebeest migration.

Whatever your faith or belief, Christmas is a very special time of year. Pola and I are constantly encouraged by your interest, support and prayers and this we will never take for granted. May I conclude with my personal Christmas greetings and thank you once again for your interest and support, it is literally life changing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Long".

**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)*