

Latest developments in Kimlea Centre (May 2010)

Mentoring through student's mothers

This year we have introduced a new system of mentoring the girls through the students' mothers in collaboration with their class teacher and mentors. The mothers of each class meet once a month with the class teacher who talks to them on a moral issue affecting that specific group of students. After that the mothers, the teacher and the mentors brainstorm on ways of solving the problem and together they come up with a resolution which each one implements at home with their daughter and the teacher monitors the girls in the class.

Three girls who benefited from the mentoring programme

The mentoring has assisted the students a great deal as in the case of **Mercy Kamau**, who will complete her training in December this year. Her parents sent her to Kimlea more or less to get rid of her at home where she had stayed for



one year doing nothing after she refused to pursue her secondary education from form two. After a few months in Kimlea, she told her mentor, "This is where I needed to be in order to find happiness in life". She is very happy in Kimlea and is doing very well in her training. Whatever she learns in her mentoring sessions, she goes and organizes a get-together with her cousins at home to tell them about it and they in turn put it into practice.

We have set up a system to assist students whose parents are far away or are dead. For example **Anne Mwaura** is among the internally displaced people who have benefited from Kimlea. In 2008, hundreds of families in Kenya were forced to leave their homes after the results of an election erupted into tribal conflict. Anne's family fled for safety to Limuru [Kimlea is in the Limuru area]. As her parents could not find jobs in the area, they returned to Kitale as soon as there was a bit of calm in order to work on their farm. Anne was left alone to fend for herself and continue with her training in Kimlea. To earn her living, she works in the school on the weekends and holidays. It is impressive how responsible and happy she is doing anything she is asked to including cleaning the clinic for one hour every evening and on Saturdays. She earns enough for her food and house rent such that her parents do not need to worry about her.



Another student, **Leah Njau** is going to finish her training at the end of July and is now a happy and focused girl. When she started her training in September 2008, she was totally demoralized by the situation of her family. Her parents died of HIV/ AIDS when she was ten years old and



she has been brought up by her older brothers and sisters. When she finished form four, her brothers and sisters did not want to help her in any way and she ran away to her aunt who introduced her to Kimlea. She has to walk about ten kilometers to reach Kimlea every morning and evening. In addition to this, she had little or nothing to eat at home and no money to cater for the usual needs of a young woman. During her first year, she was so discouraged that she often thought of discontinuing the training; but with the encouragement of her teachers, she is now determined to finish her training and longs to come to Kimlea every day. Besides mentoring her, we have also managed to find a job for her every holiday so that she can earn some pocket money.

A further new task: Helping the students to find jobs

This is another programme we have introduced in Kimlea where we find jobs for the extremely needy students in order to earn some pocket money. During the term, some students work in Kimlea on Saturdays while during the holidays we find them jobs, mostly in homes. This way they are able to practice what they have learnt in school such as cookery, house-keeping and laundry. They enjoy it a lot because they experience life in the city, for those who find jobs in Nairobi. This also boosts their self-esteem because they realize they are able to work well without the supervision of their teachers. This prepares them for the job market in the future.

Our new bus

Another very important development is the acquisition of a new 52-seater bus. We have been having a 33-seater bus and with over 100 students, we had to make three trips every morning to collect the girls from strategic points and bring them to Kimlea. In the evening another 3 trips was necessary to take them back. Now we have a longer day in school because we save on travelling time and can achieve more in a day besides saving on fuel.



The new 52 seater bus arriving in the morning.

We have extended the Kimlea Medical Clinic and there is a laboratory where the students from the school can be tested and receive treatment being sure of the actual disease they are suffering from. The clinic is also open to the parents, brothers and sisters of the students and all those living in the nearby tea and coffee plantations.



Blood sample of a patient is taken at the Kimlea medical lab.

Income generating projects

We also have income-generating activities run by the home-science department such as marmalade which is doing very well. We make what we are able to sell at the moment. We are looking for money to buy a deep freezer so that we are able to produce a lot and store it.

From the agriculture classes, an income-generating project is that of bee-keeping which was set up last year but due to drought experienced then and later excessive rain, which is not conducive for the bees, not all the hives have been colonized. We have contacted an expert who will help us to colonise all the hives and hence we hope to have plenty of honey to sell to subsidise the cost of running Kimlea.



Kimlea students at the apiary (bees).