

Global Education

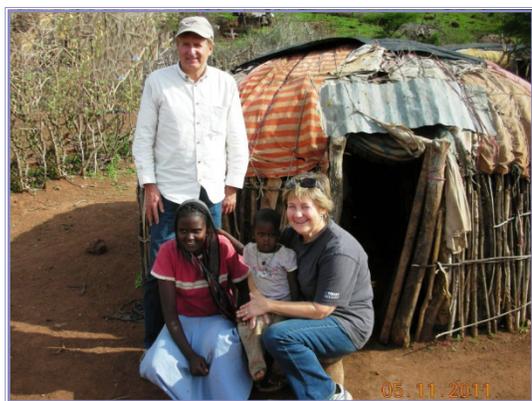
Responding to the famine in the Horn of Africa was our main challenge for July to December 2011. However, we were also able to host a total of 38 visitors to Sauti Moja, its partner agencies, and our beneficiaries. These friends of Sauti Moja witnessed the gratitude of beneficiaries, saw the changes that they contribute to, expressed fulfillment in making a real difference in the lives of vulnerable pastoralists and their communities, and were inspired to do more. An overview of their comments and experience, and the contribution of our college interns, follows.

Rotarian Donors

24 Rotarians and their friends came from Ontario to Longido, Tanzania, where they learned about our **HIV/AIDS prevention and care activities, which they had generously donated to**. They visited other programs as well, and had opportunities to gain considerable insight into Maasai culture and the socio-economic challenges facing these pastoralists.

These donors noted highlights from their visit: being invited into the homes of Maasai in Oltepesi; seeing a village drama in Mariowa that portrayed the risk factors contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS and promoted testing; hearing a Maasai woman speak about living with HIV/AIDS and encouraging others to live positively; observing preschoolers in Oltepesi; and learning about the challenges faced by school girls who become pregnant. Of course, there were also rave reviews of the extended wildlife safari that followed their time with Sauti Moja!

Several Rotarians made a commitment to finance a new classroom for the preschoolers in Oltepesi, and others decided to sponsor child mothers. We truly appreciate their responses, as the old classroom has not withstood the heavy rains of November and, due to increasing costs, fewer child mothers are able to continue their education.



Child Mother Sponsors

Karen and Lorne Anderson from Edmonton visited projects in Tanzania and Kenya, and said that they “were taken aback by the number of people that Sauti Moja’s work is affecting — not just individuals, but whole communities. **We were excited to meet the child mothers that we have been sponsoring**, as well as two others that Edmonton friends sponsor. We realize that all we are providing is a means for each girl to work toward getting an education and a future. They must have the dream and then do the work.”

The Andersons learned about family and social challenges faced by Grace, a brave Borana child mother who has successfully completed secondary school, but is still abused within her family and ostracized by the community.

They gained insight about **the importance of empowering girls in relationships by training them in sexual and reproductive health and life skills**. Ntamian, a Rendile girl whom they sponsor, recently had a second pregnancy, but is determined to return to school.

The impact on their sponsored girls was profound — emotional and highly motivational. Karen and Lorne summarized their feelings: **“We feel so privileged to have made this trip, and have Tim and the staff show us so much in a short time. This was a cultural trip that we won’t forget.”**

A Minister on Sabbatical

Kathy Platt is a minister at Sunset United Church in Regina. During her sabbatical, she joined Tim for three weeks in Marsabit, where she interviewed many widows, child mothers, and staff. Later, she and her husband spent a week in Longido. She wrote that **“Sauti Moja is not primarily about projects – it is about building relationships with people who can teach us much about heart, about faith, about life itself.”**

Like other visitors, Kathy struggled with why these women live in such harsh, difficult circumstances while she can live in relative comfort and abundance. She was profoundly impacted by her experience: **“My heart has been forever changed by the faces of these women ... I know that I have been graced with their compassion and their challenge to live faithfully and courageously.”** Kathy was further energized in her advocacy for women’s rights and social justice. Her stories have spurred several people to begin sponsoring child mothers and donating for widows. You can learn more from her stories at <http://kathyplattafrika.blogspot.com>.



University Interns

Kait Atkins (Wheaton College, USA) and Bram Dykstra (University College of Utrecht, Netherlands) interned with Sauti Moja Tanzania this year. Kait and Bram evaluated the effectiveness of our HIV/AIDS prevention activities in schools that are facilitated by community leaders, and examined the knowledge, attitudes and risk behaviour of primary and secondary school children. Their research suggests that **stigma and gendered power relations form more persistent obstacles to improvement of youths’ sexual health than ignorance of HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention.** This reinforces our approach: behavior change is a long process involving both knowledge and social change in a community.

Famine Recovery & Livelihoods

The ‘short rains’ started mid-October — earlier than normal — and continued with a vengeance! **Sauti Moja contributed to livestock survival with veterinary medicines and training as well as supplementary feed for goats and hay for donkeys.** We thank the Evangelical Relief and Development Organization (ERDO) for their financial support in this project. The livestock that survived drought and then hypothermia from the heavy rain will have abundant feed until the ‘long rains’ in late March. Goats were able to breed, and will produce offspring and milk in the next rainy season. Until then, our beneficiaries continue to be dependent on food aid for survival.



Darmi from Qachacha (shown left) says that her donkey and goats would not have survived without the feed and medicine that she got from Sauti Moja. She expressed thanks to Sauti Moja and to God!

Halima from Gororukesa noted that the feed supplement was a huge relief, since she didn’t have to spend as much time digging for roots in the desert. As donkeys do not eat these roots, she had to share relief food with her animals. **She thanked God that there is enough forage and water now, and hopes that future food needs are met.**

Halima from Qachacha prizes her donkey for the day-long trips they take to get water, so she especially appreciated the hay. She was deeply moved by the life-giving support provided by people who do not know her. She claimed **“never before have I known someone who gives such help [to someone they do not know].”**

With drought decimating livestock populations throughout the Horn of Africa, a lack of employment, and the multi-year process of herd growth, many more female-headed households became food insecure without means to recover this year. Our *1000 Widows Initiative* is more important than ever to address hunger.