



**Winter 2016**

*Partnering with Communities,  
Expanding Opportunities.*

## Women Helping Women Across Borders

A creative group of twenty women in Kenya meets weekly at Miale ya Tumaini in the slum of Kware to offer support to each other during hardships and share the arts of beadwork and basket weaving. Many of the women are elderly "cucu's" (the Kikuyu word for grandmothers, pronounced "sho-sho"), who have been left to care for grandchildren whose parents are no longer living or are unable to care for them due to abandonment, HIV/AIDS-related complications, and other health issues.

The emotional support these women share is enriched further by the prospect of continuing to find ways to generate income for their families with their craft.



**Cucu's weave kiondo baskets to support their grandchildren.**

## A Kiondo Collaboration



Across the world, in Appleton, Wisconsin, a small women's knitting group hoped to raise awareness for Kenya Works with the sale of alpaca yarn kits. The group contacted Kenya Works Executive Director Julie Schaller-Schmidt, and an idea was born to connect the two women's groups through the love of their crafts. Kenya Works was more than happy to be a part of such an inspiring collaboration. The Appleton knitters' yarn kits would be placed inside the baskets made by the Miale women. Once the Wisconsin knitters received the handmade kiondo baskets from the Miale women, one group member, Shannon Kennedy, shared her enthusiasm with Kenya Works: "These women are amazing. The recipients of these kits will be blessed with the wisdom of the grandmothers!"

Miale Executive Director, Diana Wambui, observed the unity of purpose and compassion between the two women's groups: "These women remind me of relay athletes passing the baton. Each participant wants to finish the race and does her part well to accommodate the next person. The dedication these women show for their craft and families is so different, yet so similar. The women in Kenya are driven by the love of their children and grandchildren. They are mindful that another group waits on the other side and want to ensure that their work is done on time so that they can put food on the family table. The American women are moved by love, too, and work to make and sell the magnificent fabric kiondos to honor and support the needy Kenyan families through Kenya Works."

We at Kenya Works are inspired by the remarkable spirit of compassion and cooperation that has brought together these two women's groups, as they reach across the world to connect for the greater good.

## Kenya Works Believes in the Power of Education

We work with communities in Kenya to improve school infrastructure and contribute to programs that support growth and opportunity for pre-primary, primary and secondary school students.

As part of our mission to empower students through education, the **Kenya Works Scholarship Program** was formed to ease the financial burden for the most vulnerable. Since Kenya introduced free primary education in 2003, the expenses for student uniforms, textbooks and desks have been the responsibility of their families. In secondary school, the costs increase dramatically. For many, these costs keep the dream of education just out of reach.

**“Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world.”**

**- Nelson Mandela**

## Benter Begins a Bright Future



Our Scholarships are life-changing. They offer impoverished students the opportunity to get an education, often the only means to move out of poverty and toward a better way of life.

A bright young orphaned girl named Benter is one fine example of the immediate opportunities brought to Kenyan children through the generous support of our donors. Young Benter attended primary school, but was obliged to work long hours as a maid for her extended family, leaving her no time to study. With the help of a Kenya Works scholarship, Benter will attend a boarding secondary school in January.

The joy and relief of being rescued from a life of servitude is apparent in Benter's letter:

To Kenya Works,

“My name is Benter. I am fourteen years old. My father died when I was only one year old and left us with my mother, who was unwell, too, and passed on one year later. The death of our parents caused us a lot of problems in our lives. My siblings and I were forced to pass through the hands of several relatives.

When I passed my KCPE (Kenya Certificate of Primary Education), I knew that my chances to enter secondary school would still be minimal. All of my sisters got married at a very early age because of the lack of parental support and school fees. Soon, I would be married off, just like my sisters. This caused me great psychological trauma, because even though I had done very well in my primary education, I could not afford to continue with my education.

But God is faithful, and I am very grateful to Kenya Works for giving me a boarding school scholarship. I can finally see light at the end of the tunnel. I am working very hard since Kenya Works has given me an opportunity to fulfill my dreams.”

Yours faithfully,

Benter

## Makini Pad Initiative Continues to Flourish



The Makini Pad Initiative continues to make great strides with Kenya Works producing its own more comfortable, durable, eco-friendly - and now blue colored - Makini sanitary pad. The product name has been officially registered and is being distributed to schools throughout Kenya. Since April, Kenya Works has supplied pads to more than 5,000 girls. In January 2016, we will present our Makini Pad to the Kenya Bureau of Standards, making our pad the first reusable, eco-friendly, certified sanitary pad in Kenya. Menstrual management is difficult for adult women and young girls in Kenya. Because the access to safe and effective sanitary hygiene products does not discrimi-

nate, our Makini Initiative program is now being introduced to women's groups. The Makini Pad was brought to four Maasai women's groups in Kajiado County. One young woman, Naisenya Nashipae from Magadi, shared her appreciation for her new Makini Pad:

"I want to thank Kenya Works and the team for making us see the light of tomorrow as Maasai women have been forgotten for a long time. Now I can stand in front of men even when I am in period because the pads and panties that were given to us have sent away the shame. We were using old clothes and staying away from our husbands. Thanks Julie! Thanks Cosmas! Thanks TOT team. Long live Kenya Works and God bless you all."

Nasaru Korio, also from Magadi shares her thanks:

"This is the day that the Lord has made! In Maasai culture we have never used a sanitary towel or wore a party, but when Julie empowered our community through the Makini Pad, now we can smile and feel like any other woman in Kenya. We are proud that we will never lack pads through Kenya Works. Thank you."



Kenya Works is committed to this education and dignity initiative for girls and women throughout Kenya.

### Did you know?

- ✓ Only 5% of rural Kenyans have access to electricity?
- ✓ Kenya Works has distributed 835 solar lanterns, bringing safe, reliable light to students and their families.
- ✓ 65% of Kenyan women have no access to sanitary hygiene?
- ✓ Kenya Works has provided sanitary pads and panties to more than 5,000 school-aged students and women.
- ✓ Living with poverty, food insecurity, and a poor understanding of basic nutrition, many children in Kenya do not get enough nutritious food?
- ✓ Kenya Works is making a difference by feeding more than 1,850 school-aged children a nutritious meal every day through our partnering organizations.
- ✓ Kenya's HIV/AIDS rate among adults is 6.3% versus .6% in the United States?
- ✓ Kenya Works educates girls who take part in our Makini Pad Initiative, providing information on HIV/AIDS and unsafe behavior.



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Kenya Works is a 501c (3) nonprofit organization incorporated in Wisconsin. Your donations are tax-deductible.

*Please count me in! I would like to donate to Kenya Works:*

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Kenya Works  
P.O. Box 1572  
Appleton, WI 54912