

# KENYA WORKS

SUMMER 2013



## Luhya Women Find Help at REEP

We were on the unpaved road south from Batula to REEP about 15 miles from the Uganda border. The night before a deluge gutted the road. All week we'd heard of shootings across the region. AK-47's, bad roads and mosquitoes weren't going to stop us from meeting Mary Makokha, Director of REEP (Rural Education and Economic Enhancement Programme).

Mary is a member of the Luhya tribe, the second largest ethnic group in Kenya. Mary graduated with a degree in journalism and returned home to help the women of her region. The Luhya are paternalistic. Women are property. They aren't educated and can't inherit. The greatest threat a girl receives is, "Who will marry you?" In 2012 603 girls disappeared, and 2,000 were raped, the youngest just one year old.

REEP is a safe haven for girls, women and even men who are abused. It legislates for change, so that their brothers-in-law don't automatically inherit widows. It has helped in the conviction of  
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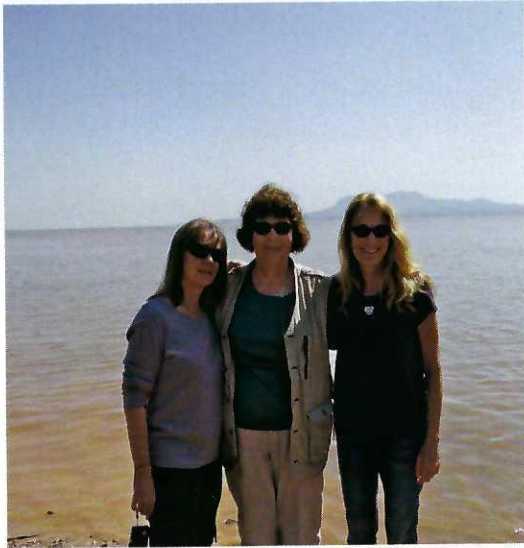
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Change at the helm of Kenya Works

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Slum school needs a roof and floor



**Karen Jick, KW board member, Mary Stusek and Julie Schaller-Schmidt on the shore of Lake Victoria**

## **Julie Schaller-Schmidt Takes the Helm at Kenya Works**

On September 1<sup>st</sup> Julie Schaller-Schmidt will become executive director of Kenya Works. When I started KW in 2004, I thought I'd be involved at least until I turned 98, but family health issues intervened, and I must retire.

Julie has travelled to Kenya ten times since 2008 to oversee her own U. S. Venture/Schmidt Family Foundation projects at VICODEC and Care for the Earth. Twice we have gone together to help facilitate the transition.

Kenya Works is a labor of love for me. I am proud that with your generosity, KW reached many poor Kenyans. The biodiesel plant alone helped 2,000 small farmers. Hundreds benefitted from the libraries, school uniforms, microfinance, brickmaking, scholarships, new classrooms and supplies.

It is satisfying to know that nearly 98% of all money donated to Kenya Works went to work for Kenya's poor.

I could have no better successor than Julie and no better donors than you. Thank you.

Mary Stusek

## **Pamellah Okoko Bought a Sick Cow**



Life is a struggle for the women of New Hope Widows Group. Each one told us her life was much better thanks to the KW microfinance loans. Yet as we went around the group of 17, and listened to their stories, it was obvious their lives have no buffer.

Pamellah Okoko bought a cow for 20,000 shillings. It was sick and died. She took out another loan and bought another cow for 20,000. This one she sold the next day for 22,000. She then bought goats, sheep and hens and repaid the loans.

Rose Ochieng started a small business selling dried fish, onions and tomatoes. She prospered. Her child became sick and was hospitalized. She couldn't tend to her business, and the hospital costs took all her savings. Rose has started over again.

Sarah Auma has nine children. She started a donut business with her microloan. She now sells donuts to the schools. Her earnings pay for food and school fees.

Although each widow believes the loans "affected my life so much", to us it is life on the brink.



## Mathare Has Spirit

Despite U.S. State Department Warnings, we are drawn to Mathare on every trip to Kenya. It is 500,000 people clinging to life in a Nairobi valley rocked by gang violence and chang'aa (illegal brew). When I exit, I am relieved that I made it out alive.

It is the public school that keeps us coming back. The teachers are uncommon. Although they make \$2 or \$3 a day, they pay school fees for orphans and poor and work hard at extra-curricular activities. You wouldn't expect to hear the term "performing arts" in Mathare, but the school promotes the arts and soccer to engage and retain students. (The soccer team had one ball. Thanks to Abby Jensen, age nine of Sherwood, WI, we were able to buy eight good quality soccer balls. Abby makes and sells brownies to fund raise for KW.)

Kenya Works has made small contribution like desks and school supplies, but the school desperately needs textbooks and a roof. The books are essential for the students to pass exams and break this poverty cycle. The books will cost \$2,450. We would also like to reclaim a classroom. The iron sheets, posts, nails and floor will cost \$4,100. Please help a child escape poverty.

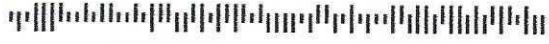
## REEP (cont.)

531 rapists since 2008. REEP provides classes on teenage parenting, child-headed families, step parenting. REEP is responsible for lowering the HIV-AIDS in the Batula area from 32% in 1998 to 5.4% in 2011. It works to break the cycle of violence and abuse.

REEP is the single most impressive organization we have seen in Kenya in nine years. Mary Makokha is a blend of Albert Schweitzer and Mother Therese. She is effective, fearless and strong and deserves help. KW wants to partner with REEP to build a rescue center for women and children. Presently victims must return to the scene they fled. If a girl is raped, beaten and has her teeth knocked out, her father and brothers get a cow from the perpetrator. The victim gets nothing. Help provide refuge and solace. Help even the score.

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