

# ELAND

*Education for Leadership And Network Development*

## *Winter 2010 Newsletter*



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ELAND is a registered (501c3) community-based organization with staff located in Seattle, Washington and in Maasai Land, Kenya. With education a priority,

*We find and organize financial support for primary and high school level students to help grow the new generation of Maasai leaders. Out of poverty, into proud men and women.*

*We build college funds for students to help them continue their journey, and the journey of all the Maasai, toward productive modern life in Kenya. Out of the forgotten lands, into a place of equal standing and voice.*

*We create a positive, hopeful, and joyful awareness of the benefits of education to the Maasai people. When understanding changes, people change.*

ELAND's Founder and Director, Moses Kinayia was born in the Ngong Hills of the Great Rift Valley in Kenya. He has a Business Degree from Daystar University, Kenya and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the Institute of Public Service, Seattle University.

Being the first to go to school in his family, (literally running away from home with a desire for education), Moses has a great interest in responsibility and economic development. His dream lies in expanding the work of ELAND, reducing poverty and improving the economic future of his community, and networking with other non-governmental organizations in developing countries to promote socio-economic growth.

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you and your families!

It has been a challenging year in drought-plagued Maasai land, but communities like Kimuka continue to celebrate the gifts of family and friendship. Throughout the year families and neighbors help shoulder each other's burdens and celebrate joys. One way we at ELAND celebrate our joys is by sharing our accomplishments together and expressing our gratitude to those who have walked with us through 2009.



*Maasai cows, emaciated by the long drought ravaging almost the entire country, struggle to pick dry shrubs and fallen leaves.*

Please accept my heart-felt appreciation for your partnership. You play a vital role in advancing our mission to meet the urgent educational, health, and economic needs facing Maasai communities in Kenya today. We look forward to 2010 with gratitude to our growing network of supporters like you. Despite the economic uncertainty of the past year, our volunteers, donors and board members have kept our programs going. Thanks to their hard work and commitment, I am both proud and humbled to share with you ELAND's recent accomplishments.



*Maasai people have lost a livelihood they have spent all their lives building.*

### ***Maasai food relief efforts***

Mid 2009 I put out an appeal in response to the severe drought and famine affecting Kenya. We received support from many friends and, since July, we have been feeding over 129 households. Normally ELAND does not address issues of food relief but due to the extraordinary circumstances of the drought facing East Africa, ELAND has created this crisis response fund to save lives and help keep children of the most affected families in school. As

you read this update, the Maasai people are still on the move, traveling thousands of kilometers in search of grazing land for their livestock—their only source of livelihood and their dear lives. When Maasai families lose their livestock, they lose the means of providing food, clothes, education and medical care for their families.

Persistent drought, crop failure and skyrocketing food prices continue to cause acute starvation and increased school dropout rates. A majority of



*"Trara supati?" "How is your family?" - Kimuka residents visit during our project activities. During community gathering community members exchange news about family's status-news.*



Maasai children are not reporting to school and some have dropped out entirely for lack of school fees, which are beyond the means of families who

have lost their livestock. Overwhelmingly, poverty has kept girls out of school because families are reluctant to invest in education for girls. With men gone for months with the livestock, women and children are left behind to fend for themselves. In order to feed their children women have turned to charcoal burning, a high risk survival mechanism. Because of the failure of the short

*MPPC Friends Visit Kumuko Resource Center, left to right: Rev. John Hage, Elizabeth Hage, Trisha Bennett, Moses Ole Kinayia, Jane Cooper, Colleen Koban and Ann Hage.*

rain again in 2009 we have extended our appeal and feeding program to June 2010. Despite these challenges we have many stories of joy and happiness.

***The Kimuka Community Center: A milestone of community achievement***

Kimuka Community Center now serves students from three schools: Kimuka primary, Kimuka secondary and Kibiko-day secondary. The center opened in August 2008 as a result of financial support from our donors and community contributions of labour



*Kimuka Primary school Deputy Head teacher Mr. Kiranti directs pupils to receive school supplies from ELAND.*



and some materials. The project is important to the community for numerous reasons. First, it is developing an encouraging environment for education by providing rural children with resources that are lacking in their homes. In Kimuka village there is neither electricity nor running water. Families use kerosene lumps called tin-lamp, which give only dim light and emit carbon smoke into already smoky huts. Thus, a priority goal is to install solar panels in the center so that students will have a well-lighted place to study after dark. The project also will provide the community with a library for acquiring relevant academic knowledge and information affecting their lives. Please enjoy

yourself by reading more about the center on page nine.

***Education open doorways to community transformation: The story of Alice Seyiano.***

This newsletter also tells the story of Alice Seyiano— just one of many illustrations of how our sponsors' gifts are transforming lives and communities. Educational sponsorships for rural poor children provide doorways for communities' transformation. Please read Alice's story in the following pages.



*ELAND's sponsored student Regina Ripei helps interpret Trisha Bennett. Regina is 3rd year student at Moi University Eldoret. Our sponsored students are exposed to and participate in development efforts in our community.*

Education remains ELAND's most urgent priority for the people of the Maasai. ELAND provides tuition to educate Maasai university students, secondary youth as well as primary school children. In rural Maasai communities, school enrollment rates are still low and the dropout rate is alarming. Explanations for this human tragedy abound: family poverty; social cultural practices; the Maasai nomadic lifestyle; apathy toward girls' education and lack of well-equipped schools/educational facilities.

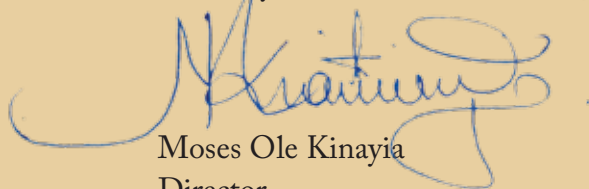
ELAND emphasizes education because it is transformational. It changes lives and unlocks every person's God-given potential. Without an education a child has little hope of breaking free from the destructive cycle of poverty and reaching his/her full potential.

The power of sponsorship is evident in Alice's life story as well as my own. *I was once a child without opportunity, and without the possibility of achieving my educational dreams.* My father did not believe in education, nor did he have the money to pay for it. Then, in 1996, a generous American sponsor offered to help pay for my undergraduate education. The same family later supported my graduate education. Without the support of this family, I would have nothing but unrealized dreams and hope stunted by poverty.

Today many young Maasai men and women are not fortunate like me. They are still at home without the possibility of achieving educational dreams. Others are married off at an early age or soon after high school if they are fortunate enough to attend school. *With your help, so many other children will achieve their academic and professional dreams.* To offer education and renewed hope to children and youth and to make a difference in people's lives please consider sponsoring a child through ELAND.

Having shared with you our latest news and achievement I humbly invite you to partner with ELAND, to offer education and renewed hope to children and youth, and to make a difference in people's lives by helping to build the capacity for the Maasai people. *Thank you for standing with us in this journey.*

Sincerely,



Moses Ole Kinayia  
Director  
ELAND



# *Alice Seyianoï – A Maasai Heroine*



A colourfully adorned Maasai girl emerges from the smoky manyatta (traditional Maasai hut). The bead work is breathtaking and the smile even more so. Meet Alice Seyianoï. It is easy to write her off as just another Maasai girl steeped in the tribe's traditions but looks can be deceiving. Born in 1985 in a polygamous family of three wives, twenty children and a first born of seven in her mother's house, she is not an ordinary girl in any sense of the word.

Normally, in the traditional setting of this community, she would have been circumcised and married off by the time she was fourteen to an old man somewhere. "Old man because they are rich with cattle and as long as you are rich, age is just but a number." says Alice. "You can get any girl." However, this was not the case with Alice.

"I attended Kimuka Primary School from 1992 and finished standard eight in the year 2000. As expected my father wanted to increase his cattle wealth by marrying me off because after all what else are girls for? "My grandmother knew better and had her battle lines drawn; there was no way her little Seyianoï was getting married off at such a tender age and just for mere cattle. Period!"

"My grandmother arranged for an escape to my uncle's place in Kaputei Plains when the issue of marrying me off to a wealthy old man cropped up. By doing this she was inviting a lot of trouble with my grandfather but being wise, she sent elders to my grandfather to explain the importance of education and thank God it worked. I was able to proceed to high school in 2001. However, despite all this effort, I had to drop out in 2004, not because of cultural barriers, but because of financial constraints. I was to stay out until 2005 when things looked up, thanks to my uncles who stood in the gap for me and enabled me to complete high school."

Her grandmother's zeal for her little girl to be educated made her consult ELAND's Moses

Kinaiya who hails from the area to ask if ELAND could step in to see Alice through college. Though funds were in short supply, the old woman's passion got the better of Moses and he made all effort possible until she was enrolled in ELAND's scholarship programme. As of now, Alice is a certificate holder in teaching from the Presbyterian Teacher's College, Meru where she graduated on 7TH of August 2009 thanks to ELAND's intervention and working hard. The scholarship enabled Alice to get a teaching certification. Why did she choose to do teaching in particular? "A teacher is a custodian of a society's future; you get to impart knowledge to the young & growing minds and transform their lives forever. You nurture the talents of the children and develop leaders.

Good education and effective transfer of skills sustains a nation and any development endeavor. I see myself as a development facilitator. I see my students in the near future shaping national and local policies. In the current situation, our rural children cannot compete effectively with their counterparts in cities and towns."

"Our schools are understaffed and have far less than adequate educational resources at their disposal. However, despite the uneven playing ground, my students and community at large draw courage and inspiration from my life story. I would love to remain a role model and a real life story for other girls in my community to look up to. I always tell them that by working hard with determination even the sky won't be a limit." That's Alice for you or Miss, her classroom name.

Looking back at where she has come from, Seyiano said, "It was because of the support and encouragement of my grandmother and well wishers like ELAND's Moses that I was able to go to school and pass my middle and high school exams. " Alice worked very hard to maintain good grades in school. Going to school was not always easy for Seyiano. Like all other Maasai girls she was expected to help her grandmother repair the family hut, help in taking care of her siblings, help to hew firewood, fetch water, help prepare meals and tend animals. "

From early on my grandmother taught me the distinctive domestic tasks of girls and I didn't want to give girl-child education a bad name by absconding my duties as a girl!"

"Every morning and evening of my eight years in elementary and middle school, I walked four miles to and fro Kimuka primary school. During the dry season I carried water in a five litre container to keep me all day. At school we did not have water and every student was expected to bring his or her own water. My walk to and from school was longer during the rainy season. I had to maneuver through the Eluai (the swampy and water-logged black cotton soil area) between my home and school. On rainy days, I could not cross Ololosokuan river unless I walked to Ilmotiok crossing point. Ilmotiok was a particularly tricky crossing as it was very rocky and one had to hold



*"My grandmother arranged for an escape to my uncle's place in Kaputei plains when the issue of marrying me off to a wealthy old man cropped up. By doing this she was inviting a lot of trouble with my grandfather..."*

on the branches of the trees .”

“On arriving home from school, I would take off my school uniform and change into my everyday clothes that I had worn for so long that they could not take any more patches. I used to join my siblings to help my grandmother bring home the calves, lambs and kids. Once the rest of the herd got home, I would help milk the goats then the cows. At seven o’clock every evening I would join my grandmother in the other households chores such as cooking, cleaning dishes and putting my young cousins to bed later in the night. By the time I was thirteen years old, I had already acquired passable skills in cookery and nutrition from my grandmother.”

“It wasn’t until I was done with my household chores that I would be able to look at my books and do my homework. I worked hard under the dim light from the kerosene lamp which used to cast scary shadows sometimes. I used to sit in the middle of our bed stretching out my legs to act as a table while holding the lamp between my knees.” Laughing nostalgically Alice quips “Sometimes the lamp had just but a little kerosene and I would be praying that I would finish my homework before it went off. Sometimes I would read until the lamp went out after running out of kerosene



*Alice with some of the girls she is mentoring and her grandmother*

and this would invite trouble from my poor grandma. While she would encourage me to work hard and do well at school she was struggling financially and unable to buy kerosene every day. However, our quarrels were always short-lived.”

“During the weekend and holidays my homework was always shelved until I finished the never ending domestic tasks. On weekends I would wake up early to milk cows and prepare the family breakfast before I turn to the other tasks of replenishing firewood and water stocks. I also had to make sure that I collected fresh cow dung for plastering our hut to add a few more layers to the walls and roof to make them thick enough to prevent leaking during rainy days.” On how it is like to be a girl in the Maasai community, Alice said “I think I am fortunate to have had such a supportive grandmother. From early on she was very protective of me. Unlike many girls between the ages of ten and fifteen, or just before circumcision, who were encouraged and allowed into the company of the warriors (morans) with whom they engaged in casual sex as they wished when they accompanied the warriors to the meat camps called *olpul* where they ate a restricted diet of meat and herbs, my grandmother could not allow me to join them. She discouraged the practice and called it a waste of time. My grandma was wise and I am very proud of her. Thanks to her, I was not made a mother at sixteen like most of my friends and now am a certified teacher. I can now help shape the destiny of my community by teaching the children.”

For the past three holidays, Alice has been mentoring and tutoring several Kimuka elementary and middle school pupils. With several of Alice’s type in the area, there is a glimmer of hope in the future of the Maasai girl child and in Alice’s own words “It will be a new dawn for my community.”

## *The Kimuka Community Center: A Milestone of Community Achievement*



A herd of giraffes looks on curiously as the small station wagon makes its way past. The destination is *Kimuka*, a tiny town centre at the foot of the Ngong hills range. Standing against a backdrop of the scenic hills is a magnificent modern stone & mortar structure; the Kimuka Community Resource centre.

Despite facing numerous challenges, especially the issue of stocking the centre with enough books for the knowledge-thirsty students who throng the centre during weekends from the moment it is opened early in the morning til the moment it is closed late in the evening, the fact that the

surrounding community has embraced it as their facility has greatly helped things. The community has continued to support the centre by pooling the books in their homes at the centre and together with book donations from well wishers, the centre has taken great strides in the direction of promoting education in the area.

Due to the difficulty the area children face in reading at home, especially the neverending household chores, lack of reference material and unconducive reading environments at home, the centre is a most welcome intervention. Kimuka Primary school students and Kibiko High school students come to the centre mostly on the weekend because the school classrooms are closed. Kibiko High school students find it easy to walk one or two kilometres to the centre than to walk eleven kilometres to the school over the weekend. Most of the students come from homes that do not have modern housing.

The facility whose construction began in December 2007 and was opened to the community in August 2008 was long overdue in the area in which education is trying to get a foothold. Built with donor funding and the community supplying the labour and part of the materials, the centre was able to actualise. Another milestone of ELAND initiative now serves three schools; Kimuka Primary, Kimuka and Kibiko secondary schools. A tour inside one of the traditional Maasai houses reveals just how the architecture is not meant for studies. A typical Maasai house called a manyatta is rectangular in shape with a slightly domed roof and is built with wooden sticks and saplings intertwined with grass and plastered with cow-dung.

The inside of the house consists of a small bed for the mother and a big bed for the children, husband and guests. In the centre of the house is the fire place-made of three cooking stones. Parallel to the children's, husband and guests' bed is the pen for calves too young to be exposed to the hazards of

the torturous cold of the night. Near the perfect arch that crowns the narrow entrance and next to the mother's bed is the rack for the goat kids and the lambs. Next to the fireplace is the firewood storage place and above the firewood area is a small hole for ventilation.

Between the firewood area and the mothers bed is a small raised dish rack. Underneath the dish rack are the calabashes and gourds, cleaning kit of olive wood, tail brushes and a wooden scrubbing stick. Small holes are made through the bedside walls and on the roof above the fireplace to act as ventilators and to let in light.

In Kimuka village there is neither electricity nor running water. Use of charcoal, gas, and electricity is unknown in the village and many Maasai have yet to comprehend what it means to "develop" in terms of new technology and keeping pace with national and international trends. For most willing to have electricity or solar panels in their homes, the high cost of installation hinder from doing so. So families use kerosene lumps called tin-lamps which have but only dim light. Not to mention the constant carbon smoke it emits in the already smoky hut.

In the recent past Maasai women have started to make bead crafts for sale. So during the night mothers and children compete for the little light available in the house: the former to make the crafts which are a means of livelihood and the latter for doing homework. As expected the matters of livelihood take precedence. Since education in this community is not seen as a priority, homework is shelved as the mother works hard to make crafts for sale through the night. This has led to a lot of complaints by many women about eye problems and neck pain as they spend so many hours beading in a poorly light house. Center



*Inside the Community Center*

This leaves Kimuka Community Resource Centre library as the only conducive reading place out of school, even though it can only be used during the day because it also lacks electricity. ELAND has listed as a priority the installation of solar panels and suitable furnishing at the Resource Centre so that it can be used at night by students. "We are going far" said Moses, ELAND's programme manager whose office is also housed within the facility. We are looking forward to the cultural museum we hope to set up also within the centre." This is hoped to assist with the exhibition of the culture-rich community's artifacts. This will go a long way in preserving the quickly-disappearing art and culture of the community. Also ELAND is in the process of carrying out a major books drive to stock the library with appropriate books for the many students who prefer to study there.



*From left, Rev Allen Belton of the University Presbyterian Church Seattle, Rev Ole Koipa of Kimuka Presbyterian Church and Noorparakuo Malit admire books inside Kimuka Resource center.*

As dusk sets and shadows start to gather, the centre stands as a monument in the backdrop of the parched landscape and temporary structures which adorn the area. There is no doubt indeed that the future looks bright for the area's aspiring scholars thanks to the concerted efforts of ELAND and the community.

# ELAND Programs

ELAND's educational goals extend beyond school sponsorship to a number of other educational and awareness-building programs. In addition to our educational programs, ELAND is involved in poverty reduction and economic empowerment programs which emphasize opportunities for women and youth.

*Educational awareness and sponsorship programs seek to:*

- Support primary school and high school sponsorship
- Create college funds for those who qualify
- Create awareness of the importance of basic education for all

*Child rescue and retention programs seek to:*

- Rescue girls from female genital mutilation and early forced marriages
- Rescue boys and girls from the child labor force
- Rescue orphans and child parents at risk of being abused

*Health care and health education programs seek to:*

- Increase understanding of transmission, prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and other STIs among the Maasai people
- Create awareness of the prevention and treatment of communicable diseases
- Build and improve health facilities in Maasai rural areas, facilitating the training and equipment of health personnel among the Maasai
- Increase the knowledge and benefits of family planning
- Raise awareness and sensitize the community regarding the health risk of female genital mutilation

*Our program to conserve and preserve the Maasai indigenous knowledge/culture and improve natural resource management seeks to:*

- Educate the Maasai youth and the world on the importance of the Maasai indigenous knowledge and heritage (through documentation, story telling, cultural festivals, and cultural exchange programs)
- Educate the Maasai people, the pastoralist, and the rest of the world on the importance of sound environmental conservation
- Create awareness of the threat facing wildlife and support the conservation of the same through international volunteering and documenting the endangered species of the savanna grassland
- Advocate for culturally sensitive development projects and to influence policy development in the local and regional levels of leadership

# URGENT: Help Needed for Maasai Food Crisis

An estimated 10 million Kenyans are facing a food crisis, according to the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN). Drought conditions, soaring food prices, and political instability disrupted farmers' lives and cut grain production dramatically. Hunger, disease and starvation are rising.

Two consecutive years without significant rainfall have resulted in a food crisis in Kenya. The dry spell has caused an acute shortage of pasture and water. Women, whose husbands have taken the livestock to seek pasture and water, and children are bearing the brunt of the famine.

The Maasai tribe of Kenya needs help in particular. With the widespread loss of livestock, the Maasai's main livelihood, families have lost the means of providing food for their families as well as clothes, education and medical care. Food distributions are urgently needed in vulnerable Maasai communities. ELAND's volunteers on the ground in Kenya are standing by ready to distribute food to the poorest households.

You can make a difference in one person's life in a very dramatic way. Your donation will provide a member of the Maasai tribe with food, clothing, medical care and, possibly, education. ELAND, which specializes in food distribution, education and medical issues, for the Maasai tribe, will distribute your donation to a household in need. ELAND is targeting 100 of the poorest households, averaging six persons each, for a total of 600 people who have been hard-hit by the current drought

## Your donations help to fund ELAND programs

**WAYS TO SUPPORT ELAND:**

Help us develop our projects to meet the

**SPONSOR A CHILD**

**Primary School Sponsorship**

- \$30 per month/\$360 per year, you will provide school tuition and supplies for a Maasai child for one year.

**High School Scholarship**

- \$55 per month/\$660 per year, your donation will provide school tuition, school supplies, room and board and some medical expenses for a Maasai child for one year.

**University Scholarship**

- \$2400 will fund a Maasai student's middle college education for one year, covering tuition school supplies, room and board, and some medical expenses
- \$4600 will fund a Maasai student's university education for one year, covering tuition school supplies, room and board, and some medical expenses

I want to Partner with ELAND and I want to help a family

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Method of payment: Check (made payable to ELAND) -or- Charge my:  AmEx  MC  Visa

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Security code \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Name on the card \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**DONATE TO OUR GENERAL FUND:**

urgent educational, health and economic needs facing the Maasai community.

- A one-time donation of \$10 you help feed one person for one month.
- For the cost of a cup of coffee, you can help keep four people alive for a day. (\$4)
- \$40 will feed a household of six for a month.

Please detach and send to: ELAND, P.O. Box 21844, Seattle, WA 98111



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**ELAND**

