
ABA NEWSLETTER

JULY 2014



HIGHLIGHTS



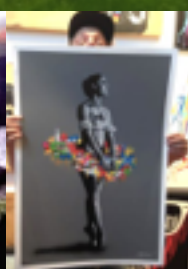
**VISIT TO
ULRIKE`S**



**PLOT HUNTING
OVER?**



**PARENTS ABOUT
NEW SCHOOL**



**MORE
FUNDRAISERS!**



**AFTER SCHOOL
ARRANGEMENT**



Summary of July happenings

We are now in August and the kids at ABA are on holiday for one month before school opens again early September. I (Lindsay) am back in Norway, surveying the land until I return to Mombasa in the middle of November. I have delayed my return trip a few weeks to touch base with our norwegian team and also promote our school to new people and organisations.

- To be honest, these six weeks in Mombasa were quite challenging. My main agenda was to complete the purchase of a property for our new school (the one I have written about before was infected with so many problems, we finally gave it up). - As if trying to buy land in Kenya isn't hard enough, a lot of unexpected scenarios arose as well. Nearly all my friends ended up in extreme situations (death, domestic violence, sickness, surgery, families in debt, people kicked out of school and their houses, the list goes on...). Never before have so many people asked for assistance. Some have been helped, some have not and having to say no to hardworking, loyal individuals has really taken a toll on me... However it has also strengthened my belief in our project and the importance of providing education not only to children, but adults as well.

To all of you who are spreading awareness about ABA School, who are donating their private money, who are fundraising and promoting for us, you are simply amazing...

- Lindsay



Hamissi and me (Lindsay)

After school arrangement

In the previous newsletter we mentioned the idea of having an arrangement for the kids after school and before the vacation, we implemented this 5 days a week.

After classes they were given supper before they left. So far it seems to be working, our chef Asumptor stays two hours longer and her kids join us for dinner. Our watchman Ezra starts two hours earlier.

The kids are learning about washing their own dishes, etc. and it's all just one big, happy, satisfied family!

Our food budget has obviously increased, but so has the funding from sponsors :)

These two kids below are Asumptor's children (our chef). They attend a nearby school and join us for meals.



Visit to Ulrike and Vidia's farm!



Ulrike and Vidia are becoming very good friends of ABA and just recently we were invited to their farm for horseback riding!

Ulrike is passionate about animals and for a while we have been talking about the importance of the children spending time and interacting with them.

There is so much animal abuse in Kenya and hopefully by exposing them to animal behaviour and care, they will treat our friends with respect and understanding. Peace and Love over and out.



Above:

A few of the kids were a bit nervous when Ulrike brought out the horses and they realised how big they were...

Right:

Saidi-Kithi and Saida getting ready for the ride!





At the manege



Christian and Ulrike



Murimi



Maggie



Salma



Mercy



Saida



Vidia showing us how it's done



Mbaya



Running competition between Mbaya and Saida



Then between Norah, Tina and Sophy



Supper in the free



Vidia, Tina and dog



Beth, Zeitun, Lindsay and Twister

At our school we don't have enough space for proper Physical Education, so by visiting this place on a regular basis we can finally get those bodies working! All the 5 dogs and 7 cats at the farm are from KCPA (The Kenya Society for the Protection & Care of Animals) and Ulrike also suggested we visit them and talk with their veterinarian about animal care. Read more about their work here: www.kspca-kenya.org



Ulrike, dog, Vidia, Tina, Mercy



The kids on a (very slow) ride in the pick up



On our way home in the bus

Status on new plot

This is an issue I have not mentioned since we «FINALLY GOT THE PLOT ON MY BIRTHDAY» (In January) - which we apparently didn't... we had dreamed about and struggled with it for so long that the idea of starting the search for a new one was too depressing.

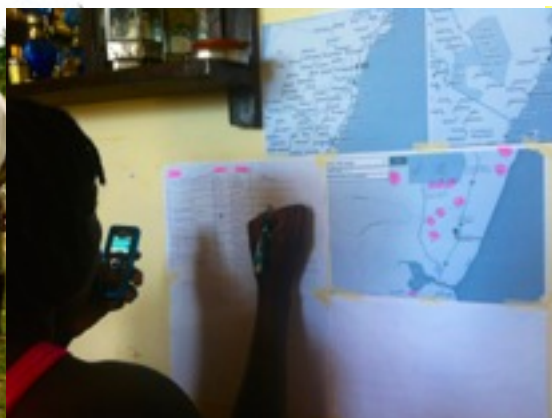
However, while I was in Norway earlier this spring, our amazing project assistant Annet went plot hunting with a few «must have notes» on the list; a) the plot was to be bigger than 6 acres, b) the soil had to be of a character that allows using it for construction and c) the slant on the land had to be steep enough for passive irrigation. - And the papers of course.

- Looking for land on the coast is a nightmare; -phoney agents, phoney title deeds, you really need to be a detective, interrogating neighbours, visits to village chiefs, bribes, african time, everyone is related to everyone and need cash to give out information, search of legitimacy of papers... In short, it takes time, but it's doable. And we are almost, almost, almost there. Hopefully by the next newsletter I confirm the purchase - so to all of you out there, pray for us, send vibes of love and progression :)

This plot is in an area called Kilifi, on the coast, an hour north of Mombasa town. And its 10 acres!!!!



Above: Annet plot hunting (the only chick)



Annet marking out plots to visit



Annet working like a dog



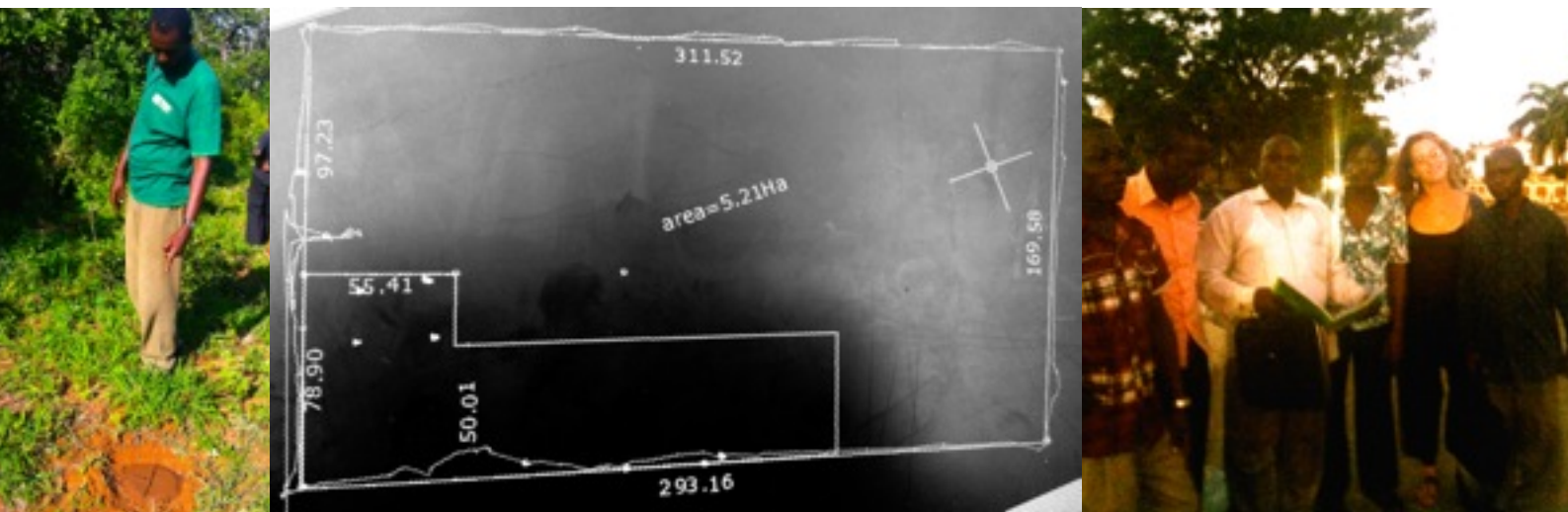
Our friend Patrick (far left), Annet, the family selling the plot and the **village chief** getting all friendly and cozy :)



Patrick and land surveyor discussing subdivision of mother title and placement of beacons.



- Ocean view - fertile soil - palm, cashew and mango trees. Poor area, perfect for a green school and a farm.



Left: Patrick pointing at newly made beacon, Middle: Subdivision from the mother title into two separate titles. Right: The family selling the plot (after final meeting with all parties involved).

Total amount for the 10 acre plot excluding legal fees and surveyor:

2500000 KES:/175400 NOK/ 28500 USD

After this purchase we are a bit broke, but very happy! I will get back to our plans for this plot in the next newsletter.

Meet the parents

Before I left Mombasa, we had a meeting with the parents (the mothers) about plans for our future school in Kilifi (the new plot is an hour away from your current school). January 2016 is the earliest we will be able to open up facilities suitable for students and by that time our ten oldest kids will be in class 3 and 4, the youngest will be ending kindergarden. In other words, the kids are still quite young and even though the parents are happy their children are coming with us as borders, we had to discuss the practicalities around this.



Many of our kids are siblings so the mothers are not many. A few came after these pics were taken and our beloved grandpa (the oldest student) gave his advice on the situation.



Any parent would want their kids to attend school and be safe. The mothers suggested they could take turns working as the matron in the student dorm, for the kids to have someone familiar who looks after them.

Not all of them have the time or the possibility to do this, but we have more than a year and a half to settle the matter. I'm sure we will find a solution satisfactory to the kids, the parents and to us.

Assisting Monica (Mama Mike and Nikki)



This is Monica. She is 23 years old (I have seen her ID) and is the mother of four boys. The oldest attends a sponsored secondary school, the youngest (on her lap) is only 2 and her twins (Mike and Nikki) are 7.

Roughly a year ago, Ingvild's mother decided to sponsor Mike and take care of his fees so he can go to a school for children with special needs. (He has cerebral palsy). Monica moved to a close by village with Nikki and the youngest son, but could not afford transport for Nikki to keep attending ABA. Since then, her personal situation has changed drastically and become quite desperate.

Ingvild's mother agreed to cover basic start-up expenses for Monica to start selling deep fried potatoes and try to get some income. She has also provided cash for hospital visits concerning Mike who is suffering from a chronic ear infection in addition to many other physical problems.

If the potato business progresses, hopefully with time, we can find a more predictable business for her to get involved in.

Status on Anton and the hearing impaired siblings

In our previous newsletter you read about the disabled boy Anton, an orphan raised and cared for by his sister alone. Anton is 8 years old, but struggles to walk by himself and is carried on the sister's back when he needs to get around.

Ingvild found sponsorship for him to board and learn at the near by school for children with special needs.

She also met with a deaf brother and sister who's mother was seeking assistance for them. They apparently manage the subjects at the school they currently attend, but need some classes with deaf teachers in addition. Ingvild is still in the process of organising that.



More fundraisers to help ABA

The month of July has been insane in terms of people initiating fundraisers to help our school and the rest of the project grow. As we are finalising the purchase of our plot, we need all the assistance we can get!

Karine Falck-Pedersen

Karine is a dear friend since many years and has wanted to help us for a while. But being a skier, an adventurer and a business woman, here spare time is little, so it was a very nice surprise to get a random phone call with the news that she has sold ski clothes and equipment and raised 10.000 NOK/1.600 USD for supporting ABA . Love, love , love!!!



Martin Whatson

Martin has earlier donated 4 pictures to ABA school, collecting a very impressive amount. This month he had an exhibition at the Bottleneck Gallery and UTBNYC in New York. These guys do a lot of charity work and together with Martin they put up an auction for the picture «En Pointe» on eBay. This piece went for 22000 NOK/ 3.500 USD! Hopefully we can do more project collaboration together in the future :)

Read more about the New York Bottleneck gallery here:
www.bottleneckgallery.com/pages/campaign



Tom Dyer

Tom organises an event called «Old School Rules» in UK, London on a regular basis. He collects donations for ABA during these nights and has been a steady contributor for a while now. This month he got in 1000 NOK/ 170 USD! Loooove....



Increasing salaries

When the money came in from the different fund raisers, we decided to boost our staff with a little pay raise. They now make 1000 KES more per month (70 NOK/ 11 USD) and are very happy and grateful for this.

Even though they make more than many others with same jobs in our area, their salary is still just at par with the legal minimum wage. I hope we can improve their pay even more towards the end of this year.



ABA Facebook page



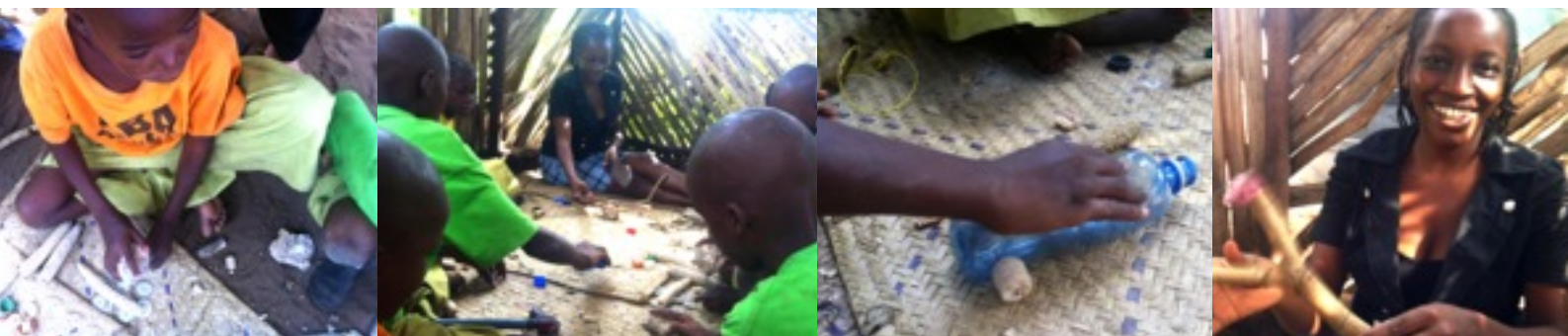
Just recently, we opened an «ABA School Kenya» group on Facebook. Here we will update news about the kids, the staff and the progression of our project.

The pictures on our main website (www.abaschoolkenya.com) under «Photos» in the menu, are connected to the albums with the same name on our Facebook page.

Otherwise at ABA in July.....



Montessori materials are becoming many as teachers training progresses. Laminator is our new best friend!



In Trizah's art classes they recycle materials to make toy cars and instruments. And they learn how to sew.



Above: Asumptor showing off the kitchen garden. Pictures in order from left to right; Tomato, Mchicha, Mcunde and Coriander, Sweet potato, Moringa Oleifera.



The staff room is now partitioned and we got a bed for Ezra (our watchman) as he sleeps at school every night. We have no electricity in the school building so he uses solar lights that can charge phones as well.



Poll days; Still no instructor, but the visits to Tulia are always fun. Ulrike drops by with snacks and goodies!



When we have staff meetings we some times bring a film for the kids. «Dumb and Dumber» was a failure and «Lion King» mediocre (!) Oddly, the favourite is an action film from the 60´s based on a bible story (!)



Trying to make a solar cooker.....not successful.....and.....here are two intellectuals discussing why...



Random pics ...



At last, the big THANK YOU!

It's sad, I know, but also this newsletter must come to an end....

Thanks to all of you who read this, to those supporting us by spreading the message or donating, to monthly sponsors - you make our everyday life so predictable and safe.

As the school is closed for August holidays, expenses this month are salaries and rent only. The remaining balance from monthly sponsors will go to the purchase of the plot in Kilifi.

Also, some have asked me how much of the donations «disappear» in currency exchange rate, etc. The answer is 1.75 %, then another 60 NOK/ 10 USD/ 840 KES every time cash is extracted from an ATM in Kenya from our norwegian ABA Account. We will have a Kenyan account once I return in November to avoid this expense.

For my norwegian friends; I am doing research for our new project and would love to get in touch with schools, programs, people or organisations who have information about; aquaponics and fish farming, permaculture, vertical farming, agroforestry and sustainable energy. I think a lot can be found at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences/NMBU: (Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet som tidligere het Ås Landbrukshøyskole). If anyone has a contact, hook a sister up!

Also, and this is still far away, but I want to mention it as early as possible, I am traveling back to Mombasa in mid- November and would love to bring some laptops for my staff there. If anyone has a laptop that still works, but is not being used, please let me know...

Humble and happy thanks from Lindsay and ABA School!

