

STICHTING KACEMAMUSUMA

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Newsletter September 2022

Dear valued reader(s),

We are pleased to send you the Newsletter September 2022. A lot has happened in and around the children's home. Another lightning strike, several Dutch visits, a major renovation, two new sisters, more children studying, but also slow learning children, etc. Let's start at the beginning!

Late August 2021, Sr Mary's mother passed away. It was touching to read in our shared whatsapp group, the kind messages written by the Kacema children, who live outside the children's home, studying and working young adults, for Sr. Mary's loss. Many children knew of Sr. Mary's mother and loved her dearly.

Lightning struck again in December 2021, the previous one was in November 2020! This time again damage to the television, a computer and the modem. We are investigating whether we can prevent this in the future with a better surge protector.



Great donation!



Last autumn, the Kacema Musuma Foundation was made aware of a Dutch foundation, that supports good causes. They wanted to make a donation for a functional project. After careful consultation with this foundation, it was decided to undertake a thorough renovation of the roof, bathrooms, floor tiles, etc. A long-cherished wish! Sr. Maria hired a local contractor, Michael Mumba, and worked with him to make an inventory of all the things that could use a makeover. In early October, Mr. Mumba drew up a budget (€ 28,000) and this was presented to the foundation in a presentation. To our great joy, we received this entire amount at the end of 2021. Isn't that fantastic!?!

New "Mommies"

There are always three sisters in Kacema Musuma. Sr. Maria is the head of Kacema aka "Mommy Number One". Sr. Mathilda, who has been replaced by Sr. Charity, is the sister in charge of the nursery and primary school. The third sister is almost always a younger sister, this was Sr. Gorret. She has resumed her medical studies and has been replaced by the young "football" Sr. Sarah. She assists on many fronts and loves to take care of the babies.



Visit to Kacema Musuma

In February, Esther van den Hoeven went to Zambia for 3 weeks to visit the children's home. At the very beginning, during actual construction of Kacema Musuma (15 years ago!), Esther lived in Kawambwa for an entire year. She helped supervise the construction and worked very intensively with the children who were present at the time. She knows all the older children very well and it is so wonderful that she has visited these children. Some are at a boarding school outside Kawambwa, some are pursuing higher education or studying, and many are now independent. At the board meeting in March, Esther has provided us with a lot of useful information. Her (shortened) report has been added to this Newsletter.

In April, the board members Conny, Maaïke, and Joost Snoep finally visited the children's home again. It was more than 2 years ago. It was once again fantastic and quite an experience to be there and to see the day-to-day business. The cheerfulness that the children radiate, the attention and love that the children receive, was great to experience. The children are curious, eager to learn, active and very social. As a visitor you feel the close bond that exists between all Kacema Musuma "family members", children, sisters and all other employees.



For the children, we brought (second hand) toys (lego, play-mobile, cars, dolls, games, ...) from the Netherlands. That went down well and played with them all day!

Just like 2 years earlier, the children have been busy taking pictures with 4 camera-only iPhones under the guidance of Maaïke. Among the untold

number of photos are also a lot of nice photos. Sr. Maria wants to create a photo album for the children so that they can browse through it again later.



The children are healthy, play a lot with each other and enjoy the trampoline that Esther has introduced. If you lose that much energy, you have to eat a lot again.

A meal consist of corn porridge as the main nutrition, with fresh vegetables from our own garden and chicken, egg, fish or a piece of meat as a protein source.



Our visit was also highly productive. We, together with Sr. Maria, had a great conversation with the contractor who would carry out the renovation. Mr. Mumba was open and honest and stated that he was forced to make a new budget because of the huge increase in prices of materials, transport, fuel etc., in the period between October and April, due to Covid and world-wide inflation. The budget increased by 24%! He thought together with us on how to limit the costs and there was a tiny budget in the "unforeseen costs". We agreed that we should not compromise on quality. Mr. Mumba also pointed out to us the possibility to reclaim VAT. We, in this case the sisters, will try to recover the 16.5% VAT on the whole renovation project because the children's home is a charity. It will probably be a difficult and lengthy battle with the Zambian government!



We also consulted in detail with Sr Maria, about Kacema finances. Everything is becoming more expensive due to covid and the world's inflation. The statutory salary of the staff (11 people) has been increased, transport of boarding school children, etc. The monthly budget that the children's home receives from the Kacema Foundation, as well as Kacema Study Fund, have been adapted.

Renovation.

Before we left Zambia, the contractor was already organizing the orders and delivery of materials. Almost everything has to come from Lusaka and therefore has to be transported over about 1000 kilometers to Kawambwa! In order to save on transport costs, it was therefore important that all the material (roof sheets, wood, tiles, paint, etc.) could be transported simultaneously in one large transport. The photo shows the truck arriving in Kawambwa. At the end of May, after the rainy season was over, the renovation started. A far-reaching project that should be completed step by step in about 3 months.

It demanded the necessary flexibility from everyone because normal daily life also continues. The roof has been replaced in parts so children, babies, sisters had to move to other rooms. Damaged tiles and sometimes entire tile floors were replaced, showers re-tiled, sanitary facilities repaired, water drainage was repaired and adjusted. In short, everything that needed to be repaired was tackled, including furniture and beds. In addition, the entire home has been repainted inside and out.



The renovation is completed now and the house looks “spic and span” again. Everybody is happy! As mentioned, the original budget has been revised upwards due to increased material and transport prices. The contractor has duly adhered to the adjusted budget. The financial gap between the original budget and the final costs will be filled by one of our great donors! It has also worked to our disadvantage that the Kwacha (local currency) has become stronger against the euro. In June 2021 they still got 27 Kwacha for a 1 €, currently that is only 16-17 Kwacha.



STICHTING **KACEMA STUDY FUND**

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At the moment there are only 4 youngsters who follow a tertiary education, but in the coming years we expect many Kacema children to start studying. Fortunately, we can now build up a buffer to pay for those tuitions later!



In connection with Easter, the 3 Kacema students who are following the "Environmental Health" training in Lusaka came back to Kacema. Both them as well as us found it pleasant and extremely helpful to talk to each other. We gained a better understanding of the problems and daily worries they face when following an education in the metropolis of Lusaka. The information transfer between these students and us (Study Fund) has clearly improved. Moreover, they know (again) that we also expect a lot from them in the field of study results!

As the board of the study fund, we have decided to stop financing the study of Diamond Chanda. He has had several chances and guidance opportunities, but has disappointed us and Sr. Maria again and again. He is intelligent enough but unfortunately makes wrong choices (alcohol). Sr. Maria follows him from the sidelines and the congregation is also involved in Diamond's further guidance.

Jameson Bwalya is registered at the end of January for a 2-year training in Mwense to become a car mechanic.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and that you have the feeling that you are again a little bit aware of the ins and outs of New Kacema Musuma Children's Home and the activities of the Study Fund. If you have any questions, you can always reach us by phone (06-53 33 75 60) or via info@kacema.nl or info@kacemastudy.nl

Esther's return to Kacema Musuma report:



After 5 years, I was capable and allowed to go back to Zambia, finally!

At arrival, I knew for sure, this is also my home-home...

Sr Maria with her loving and exuberant smile, the warmth in the air and from the sisters in the monastery, cuddling and chatting with Claudine and Helen in their student accommodation.



Coming Home

Arriving at Kacema musuma in Kawambwa is always overwhelming. After a long journey I see so many familiar faces but also children that I have never seen before, the (vegetable) garden is beautiful, a lot of animals and 2 new sisters (Sr Sarah and Sr Charity). Babies are introduced by placing them in my arms and tying them in an icitenge (cloth) on my back. Every now and then one also has to cry because they have never seen a musungu (white person). Then the nshima is ready, yum!

Family

Fortunately, I also meet Chibwe and Moses the first evening and morning. Almost 15 years ago, when I lived there for a year, these were the youngest boys. They are almost men now. I first brought them to Preschool back then. Now they leave with their younger 'brothers' for boarding school, 300 km away in Kasama. There they will support Rogers, among others, who has a hard time the first week away from home. It warmed my heart that Rogers phoned "Mommy" (Sr.



Maria) to let her know that he misses home and especially his brother Baby Gift. Mommy was so understanding and loving. She told me that the feeling of home-sick is okay and normal and called Gift to let him babble through the phone.



Difficulties

I was able to talk a lot with Sr. Maria in these 3 weeks that I was visiting. There are concerns about a number of children; children with a mental or physical disabilities and children who are severely traumatized. In Zambia, and especially in the Luapula province, there are no facilities or forms of therapy for this. But Seraphim, the deaf-mute girl, is doing very well in special school.



Concerns about money are always present. Feeding, caring for, dressing and sending more than 40 children to school costs a lot of money, even in Zambia. Just like all over the world, these are difficult times because of Corona and the ever-rising prices.

Nice to see how Sr. Maria comes up with all kinds of creative ways to eventually make ends meet.

Beautiful moments

- * Brian is a band leader and bass guitarist at the church services at the school for the blind and sighted. He also teaches the smallest of grade 1. He is so proud.
- * Bupe (4) is one of conjoined twins. Her sister Mapalo can already talk and walk, but Bupe not yet. All the children are so sweet and good to her that she is the happiest girl in the house and laughs all day long.
- * Sr Maria sometimes, as an incentive for the others, takes the children with the best grades to the hotel le Grande. This is a newly built hotel and there they drink a bottle of Fanta and take their own biscuits with them.
- * Many of the grown children, who now live on their own, still regularly come to



Kawambwa.

To be 'a kid'

And yes, also here, someone cries now and then, there is an argument, a child falls, people have to rush to get to church on time, one of the children has to redo grade 3 and hard work has to get done. Just like all over the world, it is difficult times here because of Corona and the ever-rising prices.

Yet there is also dancing, playing, lots of laughter, taking care of each other and singing. The love and upbringing that the children give each other and that they receive from all the sisters, the aunties and uncles feels pure and ensures that the children here can be and are allowed to be their true inner-child.



