

2020



Registered Charity 1152932
Providing sustainable secondary
education for Maasai students in
Southern Kenya



HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The seeds of MaaChild were planted over 13 years ago during regular research fieldtrips to Southern Kenya, when I worked closely with the Maasai people and their children. In the following years I witnessed the rapid development of Kenya and how the subsequent changes have become a fact of life, providing daily challenges for this Maasai community.

In 2003, the state of Kenya introduced free primary school education for every child and this is having a positive impact on the local Maasai communities. The Maasai children like ours have dreams and aspirations that education will help them to develop their society by educating people and helping to fight poverty.

Unfortunately, schools in this area are overcrowded and underequipped and children often have to walk many miles each day, across potentially dangerous bush land, in order to attend school. Despite these challenges they are anxious to learn, and standards of achievement are high. Recently the Kenyan Government have begun to provide financial support to secondary schools, however this support does not pay the fees in full nor does it cover the for the add on costs of those essentials needed to be in school full time. So, there is limited access to secondary education and the majority of Maasai children will have no choice or opportunity to continue their studies and It is vital that these children are not

disadvantaged further through lack of access to secondary education.

Back in 2010, a spark of an idea led to sharing of ideas with Maasai friends and my UK colleagues and, we set out to fill this educational gap and MaaChild was born (Maa being the language of the Maasai). We are a small charity based in rural Lancashire providing support to children from Maasai communities. Run entirely by volunteers our projects support education, health and community initiatives benefiting children and enriching lives.

“Small gestures, which seem like tiny droplets when originating here in the green hills of Lancashire, create ripples which become mighty waves of opportunity when they reach the plains of Southern Kenya”

It is important to us, the children and the Maasai communities that this support is sustainable and prepares young people to cope with and assist their community with the inevitable changes they are experiencing in their culture. The boys and girls we support are enjoying their time at local secondary schools in Kenya, but there are many more, bright, high achieving children who could accomplish great things with our support.

**Therese Green,
MaaChild Founder**





UNDERSTANDING THE MAASAI COMMUNITY

Culture and Values



**"Meishoo iyiook enkai
inkishu o-nkera"**

**"May Creator give us
cattle and children"**

The Maasai are a semi-nomadic people occupying Southern Kenya and Northern Tanzania. Traditionally a pastoralist community, they depend mainly on animal husbandry in arid and semi-arid lands, necessitating them to find adequate grazing and water whilst also living a symbiotic relationship with the wildlife. The Maasai people have evolved into following a communal land management system which strives to be sustainable and at times is based upon seasonal land rotation. The population stands at approximately 500,000 people occupying 160,000 square kilometres of land, expanses which have now been imposed and limited by the government. The Maasai are community minded people with great pride and passion regarding their customs and heritage, a heritage founded upon the importance of cattle and community:

Not only were cattle the Maasai's main form of sustenance but they were also the main currency of the tribe and used as offerings at cultural rituals and ceremonies. This is partly true today, yet monetary systems are quickly becoming the adopted way of exchange with the Maasai economy being increasingly dependent on the market economy.

The lands of the Maasai are largely semi-arid expanses of savannah along the Rift Valley. It is in this area that we find the traditional homesteads of the Maasai (Boma or Enkang) which are usually inhabited by extended

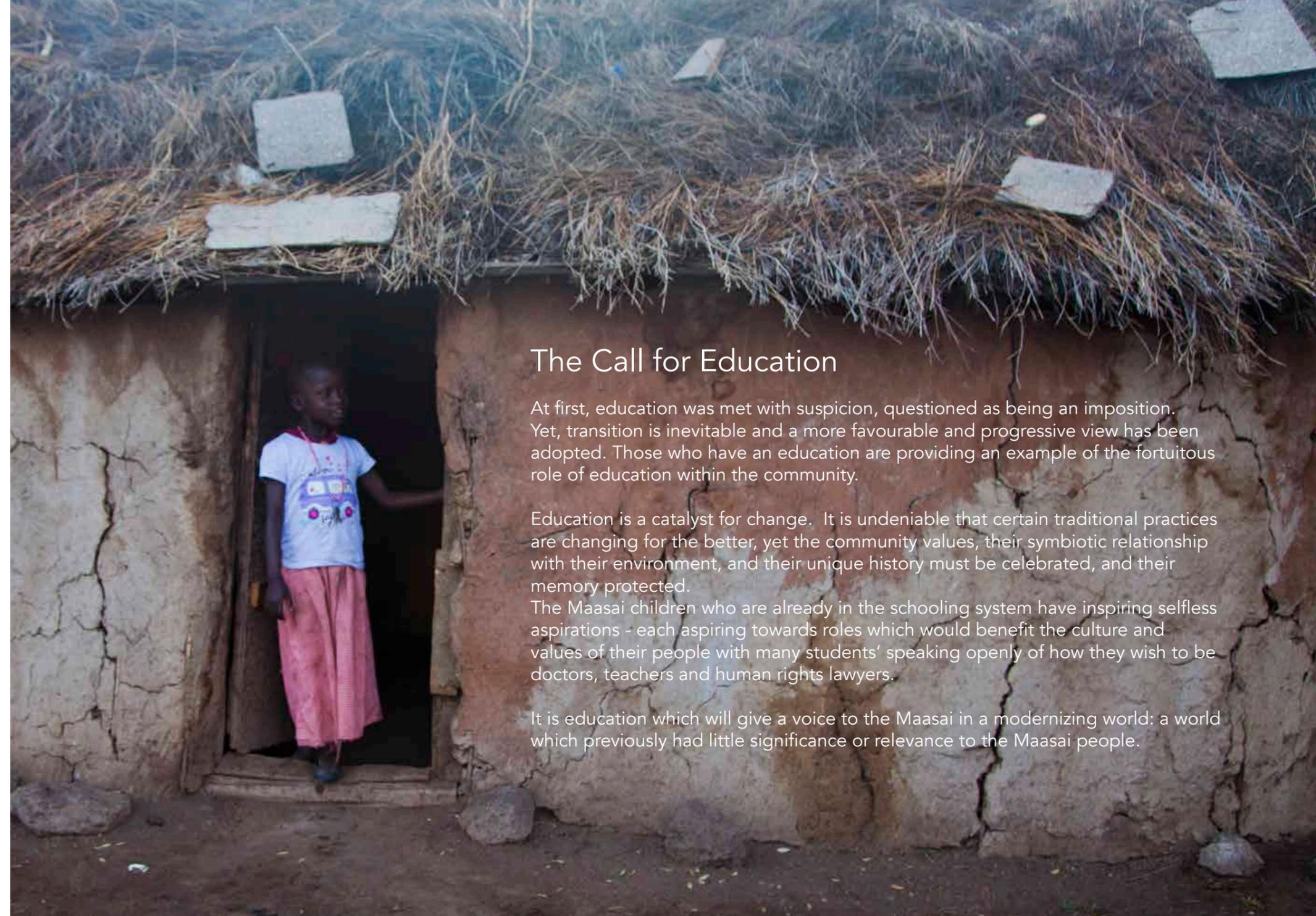
families and house pens (Kraals) for both cows and goats. There are hierarchical roles within such societies with the older men, first sons and the like retaining the more advanced huts (or Inkajjik) and additional village 'benefits'. Maasai culture is strongly patriarchal, yet the people are collaborative in their daily lifestyles, routines and community practice. The typical Maasai home is crafted from mud, sticks, cow dung and cow's urine and construction are tasked to the women of the tribe. The women are also responsible for duties including but not limited to: cooking, collection of fire-wood, milking and water gathering. The male role is predominantly that of shepherding and protection of the tribe or community. The Maasai warrior is a well-known symbolic figure of Maasai culture.

Culture and tradition are important to the Maasai people. Their values and customs are respected, guiding their everyday lives and roles within both their communities and their environment. These values are often communicated via the elders. However, with the introduction of modern-day values and Christian influence, outside factors are becoming ever more dominant within Maasai society. Compromises and concessions are now common themes within the communities with new understandings of the importance of education and the roles of the Maasai women in particular.

Rites of Passage, Changing Values

Rites of Passage are an important part of Maasai culture. When coming of age, circumcision was tradition for both men and women, as were clan markings/brandings and other cosmetic effects such as beading and headdress. Circumcision would warrant a meeting of surrounding tribes. The young men would bathe in cold water overnight so as to discourage blood circulation and thus loss. The young man would lie in the lap of a trusted elder, whilst the act was administered without anaesthetic; to flinch would be regarded as unfavourable and weak resulting in an abrupt end to the ceremony and cause friction between tribes.

Arranged marriage was commonplace and still is in some communities. However, this is changing due to modern-day influences. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also on the demise due to new government legislation, although there are those who still believe it symbolises a denial to their culture. Women bear children early and bear many children with Maasai prosperity and status traditionally weighted upon the number of children and the number of cattle of a community or Boma. A focus on education is bringing change and giving Maasai children, and especially girls, more choices.



The Call for Education

At first, education was met with suspicion, questioned as being an imposition. Yet, transition is inevitable and a more favourable and progressive view has been adopted. Those who have an education are providing an example of the fortuitous role of education within the community.

Education is a catalyst for change. It is undeniable that certain traditional practices are changing for the better, yet the community values, their symbiotic relationship with their environment, and their unique history must be celebrated, and their memory protected.

The Maasai children who are already in the schooling system have inspiring selfless aspirations - each aspiring towards roles which would benefit the culture and values of their people with many students' speaking openly of how they wish to be doctors, teachers and human rights lawyers.

It is education which will give a voice to the Maasai in a modernizing world: a world which previously had little significance or relevance to the Maasai people.

Education: The Voice of a Community

According to Maasai traditional land agreement, no one should be denied access to natural resources such as water and land. Though it is stated it is not quite as explicit. Pipelines transfer water through the arid savannah to the cities and heavily populated areas such as Nairobi. Many communities are forced to tap water 'illegally' from such lines due to scarcity of clean drinking water.

Natural Springs are heavily relied upon, springs which are dependent upon Mount Kilimanjaro, 'The White Mountain'. Once again, this highlights the Maasai dependency upon their relationship with the natural world. There is no security and surety of basic resources. The majority are forced to collect unclean fresh water, the source of which is shared with the cattle. Non- governmental organisations are supporting the construction of irrigation systems, utilising the spring water and harnessing fresh water for multiple communities.

The Maasai community in Kenya benefit from children who have the ability - but no means to pay for their education. By providing secondary education for the MaaChild students will be able to make a useful contribution to the wider understanding of the issues that their community may face in the coming years in response to development and external global influences. For the Maasai to secure the lasting support they need now and, in the future, assimilation with and understanding of governmental approach and action is paramount and only with education may this be achieved. Not only will they be capable to offer an informed critical political voice the MaaChild students will also be competent to represent their community both locally or nationally and to contribute financially towards community or social benefits such as teachers, nurses, etc.





Maasai Schooling and the Need for Support

Primary education has thankfully been free since 2003 and in 2016 the Kenyan Government began to contribute toward the cost of secondary education, but this does not cover anywhere near the full cost. Many schools are boarding schools and even those schools allowing day pupils still remain out of reach of many of the poorest Maasai children from rural communities because of the cost of the 'extras' needed to ensure a school place and sustain attendance over four years.

Secondary education is available for both schools and boys and girls are often educated in separate schools and in education equal opportunities are available for both sexes.



A previously male dominated society the Maasai are experiencing a shift in attitude and the voice of the woman and the girl is being heard and there is a strong growth of female independence.

Many educated women are raising their voices against acts such as FGM and early marriage and fighting for their rights in a modernising world and shaping their culture for the benefit of all.

By embracing change the Maasai have a chance at sustaining and preserving their vivid and unique culture. Through education informed choices and a balance transition can be possible.

Our aim is not to force change but to provide education which enables considered choices and a chance to influence this and future generations while preserving culture and values.



OUR SECONDARY AGE STUDENTS

Each of our pupils has endured their own personal adversities and ordeals be it poverty, environmental challenges or cultural constraints which could have prevented them from continuing their education beyond primary.

Only the brightest, neediest children are selected and MaaChild will never commit to support a child until enough funds for all four years of secondary education are secure in our UK bank account.

Key to our support for pupils is a 'buddy system' we believe that this is vital for the wellbeing of the child and we never send one pupil to start school alone. Schools are often a long way from home and the children will, for the first time, be away from, their families for weeks at a time. Our buddy system ensures that children who are cautious in making new friends or shy and reserved soon blossom as part of our MaaChild 'family' and form supportive groups, taking care of each other in the school environment.

We have assisted 39 students across four secondary schools and in 2019 we will source and support even more deserving children on their journey of learning and hope.

In January 2018 six of our students: Joyce, Josphine, George, Hamilton, Josphine and Vivian successfully graduated from school taking our total number of graduates to fourteen.

These children have succeeded in an environment where poverty, family pressure to marry young or to give up education to work for the family tending cattle is still strong.

George is an orphan having lost his father in his second year of secondary education. He struggled with his loss and even ran away from school several times.

We refused to give up on George and, with the full support of the Principal and MaaChild, he has successfully completed his final year with one of the best sets of results among our boys.

George even found the courage to stand up in front of the whole school to read a final prayer at the leaving ceremony.

We are extremely proud of each one of our students' academic achievements. But, most of all, as they step out into the world, we take pride in seeing them develop into wonderful, well rounded, young men and women and we wish them success and happiness in the future.



While facilities in school allow for study in the evenings, when the children return home to their villages there is often little access to light during the hours of darkness.

There is no mains electricity in many areas and fuel for lanterns is an expense many families can not bear.

Once daily chores are completed the evening is the only time these children can study and with little or no light it is very difficult for them to keep up with their school work.

During our stay in January 2012 we met Jackline and her family and she told us that although she would like to study at night the family struggled to pay for the paraffin for lamps.

Along with helping them to do homework, the provision of a solar lantern results in lower fuel costs. The family reliance on paraffin will diminish and have a safer alternative and there are improvements to health as there are no fumes.

Now we aim to provide each new student with a lantern, and if we can, we also gift lanterns to families.

Just one example of how our student support can benefit the wider community. All for less than 10GPB per lantern.

We source the lanterns in Kenya to support the local economy. Once charged they can give up to 8 hours of 360-degree space light or focused light for studying, working or cooking. The lamps are user friendly and flexible.



SOLAR LANTERNS



WATER TANKS

We take clean, running water for granted in the UK so visiting Kenya and visiting schools and clinics with water supply problems really brings it home to us the daily challenges that doctors, nurses, teachers and families face in ensuring hygiene and hydration daily. The area around Kimana is regularly affected by prolonged periods of drought.

We have strong partnership with the Kimana Clinic and with the support of friends in 2017 we were able to provide a 10,000 litre tank which provides a consistent clean water supply to the maternity and child health clinics based there.

Rural schools face similar problems. The primary school at Oloile is high performing and is lucky to have a few solar panels providing electricity.

But, the school has no water supply, meaning that children have to carry drinking water from home every day and there is no means of maintaining basic hygiene while in school. 'Top Tanks' would greatly help these schools, but the cost is prohibitive to them. It costs around 700 GBP for a new tank, not a lot by UK standards but 'life changing' for these schools and clinics.





BUNK BED PROJECT

Discussion with Head Teachers at our partner primary schools and observation of the results of final year exams revealed a real problem with pupils, especially girls dropping out of school in years 7 and 8.

The distances between home and school in rural areas can mean a very long walk across dangerous bush lands. Add to this a lack of food and water and the value of a young teenager as an extra pair of hands on the homestead and parental support to support a child to fulfill education can be challenging. Teachers were concerned and with the consent of parents wanted to increase attendance rates.

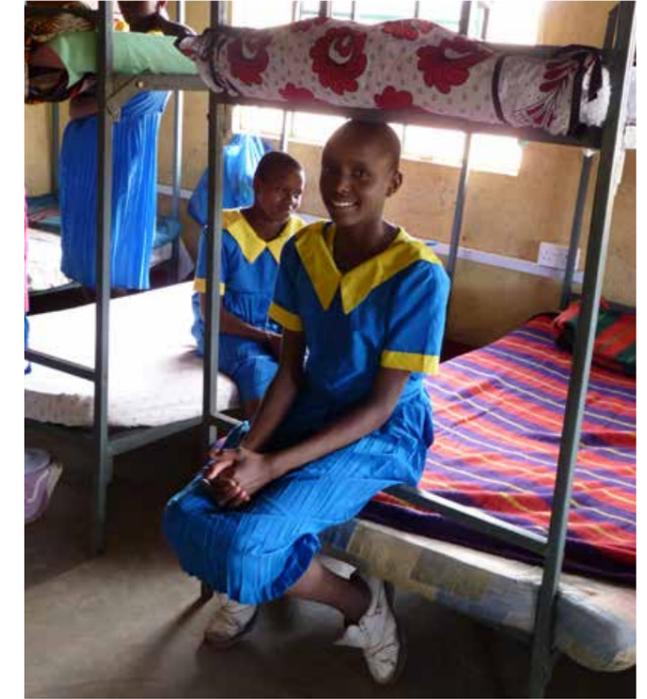
With the kind support of UK donors, we have been able to support one school by providing 21 bunk beds which have been installed into a spare room at the school. The year eight students were the first to benefit allowing them to stay in school during the week and revise for their final exams and maximize study time at what is a crucial point in their education.

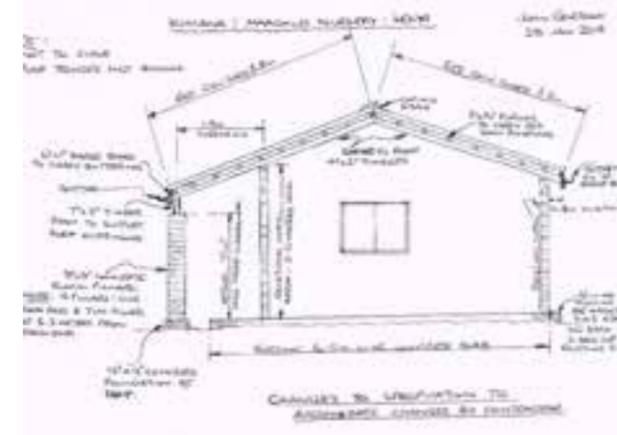
There is one dormitory exclusively for girls and the school provides a 'matron' to supervise and guide the girls

Parental consent for years 7 and 8 is required for weekly boarding and priority is given to children living over one mile away. Parents pay for food and bedding.

The project has been hugely successful.

- Attendance is automatically improved
- Extra tuition is available
- The risk of arranged marriage and FGM is greatly reduced
- 3 'rescue' girls have been given places and are safe from the risk of FGM and arranged marriage.





‘Naserian’ means ‘many blessings’ and we have been truly blessed in our opportunity to expand our project base to include the whole end to end educational journey.

During one of our ladies’ bead making workshops we met Susan, a Maasai lady, with 3 boys, striving for her independence. Prior to marriage Susan completed her primary education and hoped to continue into secondary, however her family had other

plans for her and it was not to be. Instead, she has set up a voluntary run nursery facility in the local church on the border of Kuku and Kimana group ranches and is supported by local parents. Susan also volunteers as a health care worker providing help and guidance on women’s health issues.

The church as a venue was not ideal due to the religious activities taking priority and through discussion with Susan we identified a need for a building which would primarily be used as a nursery school but could also provide a facility for ‘drop in sessions’ with local health workers and serve as a base for UK student midwives and nurses to run workshops while in the area on field trips.

In 2017 we were lucky enough to be given a donation to facilitate the build and in January 2018 work commenced on the project. Land for the project was kindly purchased by our Kenyan supporter PP.

Our donor John Gordon, who in his spare time loves to build and renovate homes back in the UK ha shared his passion for construction out in the bush in Kenya and in late 2017 John, together with our local representative and the builder, marked out and cleared the plot and with the help of locals pruned the trees and the scene was set for the build to go ahead. The site is a 2-acre plot situated on the Kimana Group Ranch bordering the Kuku Group Ranch and situated on the main wildlife corridor

between Amboseli and Tsavo National Parks and has clear views over to the magnificent Kilimanjaro.

The nursery building provides an essential educational resource to the local community. Giving children an ‘early start’ into education means they are ready to join mainstream primary education on time, in an area where often they don’t get to school until 7 or 8 years old.

Education is key to the development of the community and to creation of a balance between the traditional Maasai culture and lifestyle and the modern world. Early years education increases their life chances in an area while rich in culture is poor in terms of finance and resources. The ability to read and write and understand their environment gives these children a head starts in their education and helps in the longer term to educate other children and families.

Current work includes the building of a toilet block and installation of a water tank. We are also aiming to support our volunteer nursery workers with Early Years Development Training.

Our next fundraising project will be for the installation of an electric fence to keep out the wildlife and ensure the safety of the children, volunteer workers and the building. Future ‘wishes’ include a second classroom and ‘office’, a borehole to provide a sustainable water supply and a ‘Chumba’ for outside work and play sessions.

HOW WE WORK

With the dedicated support of reliable volunteers, kind fundraisers and loyal donors we can provide these bright and inspirational young people with a 4-year sustainable educational bursary allowing them to complete their secondary education and become a vehicle for change in their community.

Here at MaaChild we guarantee our support for the selected Maasai children who have successfully completed their primary education, but who would otherwise be unable to continue studying at secondary school due to their extremely poor backgrounds.

We never commit to a child until we have the funds in place to cover their entire time at secondary school and 'ring fenced' fees are held in a UK account until annual fees are due.

Our team in the UK comprises of a small group of talented and dedicated trustees who have all spent time out in Kenya with the MaaChild children and the Maasai community we support.

The trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the charity which is taken on voluntarily despite their sometimes-busy work commitments. We also have several specialist volunteers who use their skills for the advancement of the charity. They all give their time freely and receive

no remuneration or other rewards or other financial benefits.

In Kenya we also have 3 dedicated MaaChild representatives who have also been instrumental in setting up the charity and who continue to champion education and the work of MaaChild within their Maasai community. Children are selected for sponsorship by our Maasai representatives who make recommendations and the consideration of certain qualifying criteria by working voluntarily with passion, integrity, accountability and respect on the ground in Kenya. They oversee the relationship with the sponsored pupils, their families, community and the secondary schools.

Mentoring the pupils is a vital part of their work as well as ensuring the criteria/aims and objectives set by MaaChild are adhered to throughout. They also monitor and record the welfare and educational success of the all the pupils in full sponsorship



HOW MUCH IT COSTS

Solar Lanterns

10GBP per lantern sourced locally in Kenya

Student Sponsorship

Includes:

- All tuition fees
- Full time boarding facilities
- Meals for the year
- Mosquito net
- Local Mentor Support

Student Sponsorship costs 30GBP per month

Bunk Beds

A bunk bed 'package' per student includes:

- 1 mattress
- 1 blanket
- 1 mosquito net

A bunk bed package costs 45GBP sourced locally in Kenya

Water Tanks

A water tank fully installed costs 700GBP

Equipment and Supplies (our pledge to source locally when you donate to us)

Revision books for senior pupils costs 50GBP per set

Pens, pencils and other school supplies for a few pounds

Donations welcome for equipment and supplies for the Nursery - all welcome.





BECOME A FRIEND OF MAACHILD

Can you help?

Organise a fund-raising event
– from cupcakes and coffee
mornings to climbing Kilimanjaro

Or give in memory of a loved one
or in lieu of a gift for the person
who has 'everything.'

Give a donation, no matter how
small or sponsor a project.

Our success depends on the
generosity and support of
community groups, businesses
and likeminded people who
champion our mission.

Your vision can fulfill their dreams!

Post a Cheque

Made payable to 'MaaChild' and post to:
MaaChild
PO Box 205
Clitheroe
BB7 0UE

Virgin Money Giving

Use the fundraising service Virgin Money
Giving, to donate or create your own
fundraising page on behalf of MaaChild.

Click the donat ebutton on our website to be
directed to the MaaChild Virgin Money Giving
page.
www.maachild.com.

Or visit
<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/finalCharityHomepage.action?charityId=1019477>

You can also donate to and support MaaChild
fundraisers via the link.

As a UK tax payer, you can tick the 'gift aid'
box and increase your donation by 25%
through the Gift Aid scheme.

Stable Donations

Stable Donations are our life blood, regular
donations are the most beneficial way to give
sustainable support.

Simply set up a standing order, a 4 years
sponsorship costs 30GBP per month, but any
donation is welcome.

Contact us info@maachild.com and we will
send you the details or ring our treasurer on
07966 255550.

Gift Aid

An income tax relief designed to benefit
charities. If you are a UK tax payer Gift
Aid can increase the value of your charity
donation by 25% as the charity can reclaim
the basic rate of tax on your gift at no extra
cost to you.

Simply contact us and ask for a gift aid form,
once completed and sent back to us we will
make the claim and you can sit back safe in
the knowledge that your money is being used
to change lives.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOU

- An informative presentation evening for your group or staff. We are happy to come along and talk to you and your group about our work and to also tell your team about the Maasai culture and the region. We can do talks or could set up our display in your canteen or rest area and chat to you on an informal basis, whatever works for you.

- Our BTMyDonate arrangement and charitable status allow flexibility in how donations are made and take advantage of tax breaks. Being a Registered Charity under the authority of the Charity Commission allows us to claim back 25% tax on donations meaning that a gift of £10 becomes £12.50. We are asking all donors and sponsors to consider to Gift Aid all donations to our charity.

- We can provide materials to support your fund-raising efforts

- Or have a real adventure and join us on a field trip!

EcoPlus Adventure Series - "we tell a different story"

MaaChild works in partnership with EcoAdventures, a local Kenyan ecotourism

company, by creating specialist field trips which provide access to a unique environment and culture for learning, personal growth and fun for everyone.

We always engage mindfully with the local communities with the purpose of improving their wellbeing. The trips are provided with full guidance and mentorship from our EcoAdventures field trip specialist together with our team of local professional Safari wildlife guides and our Maasai representatives, who also have all round knowledge of the flora, fauna, communities & cultures, history, geography and world affairs. Our thorough approach to safety and welfare means you are completely at ease during the expedition to focus on the well-planned programme of study. We create your trip to embrace the rich biodiversity, conservation, community interaction and cross-cultural activities for you to get the most out of your time here with us

Nature and Adventure Unplugged - reconnecting with life

Education is at the heart of our cultural exchange programme. Developmental changes are now a fact of life not only for the

Maasai but also for our own children.

Over the last 10 years we have worked with local schools to facilitate and lead trips giving a chance to learn about the environment and culture and witness the magnificent wildlife at close range.

We are proud of our strong links with UCLAN and have worked in partnership with the University to provide tailored learning opportunities for Students from Degree studies for Anthropologists, English Language, Forensic Scientists, Geography, photography, Nurses, Child care branch, Midwives and Sexual Health

We also welcome like minded individuals, friends and families to join us on our springtime progress trips or join us on one of our EcoPlus Adventure trips that we have in the pipeline!

Our team confidently offer you Kenya!

- By providing you expertise and passion from our team of local professional Safari wildlife guides and our indigenous representatives, who also have all round knowledge of the flora, fauna, communities & cultures, history, geography and world affairs.

- By offering you a personal service with your very own travel specialist who will be on

hand to advise, inspire and guide you through every step of your journey with us.

- By upholding a thorough approach to safety and welfare means you are completely at ease during the expedition to focus on the well planned programme of learning!

During these trips you will be able to get up close and personal with Baby Elephants, learn to jump like a Maasai Warrior, experience a game drive and spend time with the children in our partner primary schools and nursery and meet our inspiring young secondary school pupils.

You will stay in lodge type accommodation and have the company of specialist safari guides and our Maasai partners throughout the trip.

"I would say to anyone thinking of a trip to Kenya with MaaChild, that they should go and that they will benefit hugely from the experience.

The trip is safe, and the accommodation and food are great and there is a safari day which is fantastic. However, the main benefit is the experience of and the insights into Maasai culture. It is truly a look at the real life of the Maasai and an experience of the real Africa. On this field trip you get off the tourist trail and see things that you would not do on any ordinary trip.

Therese has put a great fieldtrip together, giving insights into the local life, environment, conservation and the schools. If you sponsor a child then it is wonderful to see them in their schools, to spend time to talk and to see the benefits to the children and to see the potential benefits to the community. I was especially interested to see the way the girls are doing so well.

There are lots of good experiences during this trip, making you see why it is so important to sponsor and further the education of these children. You will see that MaaChild is doing a great job DO go!"

Jane Hardman

"I personally experienced great benefits from the trip by seeing first-hand the culture of the Maasai people, and the daily function of the education system in rural Kenya. Inevitably this encourages you to appreciate what you have, but more importantly to question whether you have too much. I was able to reflect on the way we function, both socially and educationally, by witnessing what I felt was a much simpler approach to life. The education provision was vastly different yet at times refreshingly similar – the universal parallels of teaching children! Our school and its pupils benefited hugely from the trip and were able to see the work of MaaChild and how the money they have raised is put to such good use."

**David Peel,
Vice Principal Oakhill College**



UCLAN Trips

Jacqui Gibson, Senior Lecturer and groups of students have been travelling to Kenya for several years now.

The students observe the maternity and early childhood clinics and learn about the enormous pressures the doctors, nurses and midwives are under due to the lack of trained staff and proper resources.

The students are also given the opportunity to work with local women and midwives to see how health services in the community operate and share advice on basic hygiene, best practices and sexual health, especially around HIV treatment and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

“We went to a local clinic to provide teaching sessions with the staff that worked there; just basic things like hand washing, eye care, basic life support and sexual health information. We went to a secondary school and spent time talking to the girls and playing games, singing songs and encouraging them to work hard and believe in themselves. We raised money and awareness to help the MaaChild charity to continue with its work”

**Julie Bancroft,
Student Midwife**

“I was lucky to have met Therese before the trip, but at the time unaware of how strong her connections are, how community based MaaChild is and how well respected the charity is within the Maasai community. To say that the trip was life changing almost sounds trite, because it was an invaluable trip which broadened the perspectives of everyone who took part. Every single person on the trip was so deeply moved by the generosity of the people, the beauty of the terrain and the enduring passion for education amongst all age levels. There are a lot of charities that work in East Africa, though few are hands on like MaaChild. Being able to witness the difference education makes not only to the students themselves and their families but also in the communities was a pleasant surprise. The field trip with MaaChild gave a taste for the massive scale of work they do in Amboseli.”

**Riley Arthur,
University of Central Lancashire**

