

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



many hands
many hearts

a letter from the president

Dear Friends,

2020 is behind us. It was a long and challenging year, yet I feel a deep sense of gratitude. One of the central lessons I have learned in the past 15 years is that when bad things happen in our world, they usually hit the global poor hardest. Though we faced a pandemic and many endured hardship, we are grateful that most of the students in our program, their families, our Kenyan staff, the U.S. team, and all our volunteers avoided extreme illness from the coronavirus. No one lost their life to the pandemic.

In Nairobi, where most people work in the informal economy, the pandemic shut down our students' families' economic livelihoods. When the country closed schools, it meant that families faced the extra burden of feeding children - normally, students receive at least two meals daily at school. When the economic shutdown curtailed their ability to earn, food insecurity intensified. In the worst cases, families faced eviction due to rent arrears.

Although our mission is to provide education and support, we felt compelled to pivot and extend a lifeline to the approximately 300 families with children in the program. With your help, Friends of Ngong Road launched Food from Friends and provided subsistence food from April through December. Kenyan staff adjusted their focus and connected with each family to distribute food and track their status and needs. It was important to maintain contact as many families fled the city to places where medical and other support was lacking. Staff facilitated distance learning and distributed library books to help students focus on reading despite the distractions of overcrowded home environments.

In this Annual Report, we share Elizabeth's story. It is exciting that, amidst a pandemic, she graduated with a law degree. Elizabeth exemplifies "Wepowerment" as she hopes to give back to the community by practicing family law. She has become an inspiration to many younger students, helping them believe they too can achieve their dreams with help from many others. Elizabeth is thankful for the years of support via the hands and hearts offered by her sponsors Deb and Steve, her aunt and uncle who raised her, and the staff and programs of Ngong Road Children's Foundation. Join us as we celebrate her!

Students were back in school for three months and then sent home due to a third wave of coronavirus. We don't know what challenges we'll face in the year ahead, but the power of "We" is reassuring and inspiring to us and our partners in Kenya. As we faced an unusual crisis in 2020, we were able to keep hope alive for 300 families and their children through your support.

In gratitude,



Paula Meyer

Founder & President



board of directors

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looking ahead

Building on our past success, we have committed to a bold, strategic plan which we call Journey to 2025. We plan to double the number of students served to more than 1,000 by 2025. To support the additional students, we will dramatically grow our endowment fund and increase annual support and sponsorships. Even as we deal with the ongoing pandemic, we will continue to improve and streamline program delivery to ensure that more children than ever can transform their lives with our help.



financials

With generous support from donors and reduced costs due to the pandemic, 2020 financial results were strong.

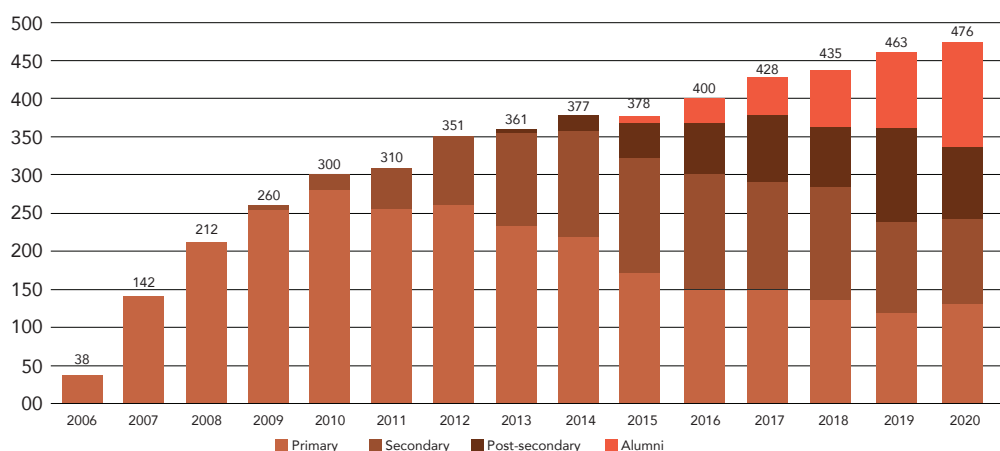
income¹

Sponsorships	246,741	33%
Grants	77,179	10%
Sustaining ²	431,797	57%
Karibu Loo Support	—	0%
Total Contributions	755,717	100%

expenses³

Core Program Support	430,545	68%
Karibu Loo Support	—	0%
Total Support for Kenya Programs	430,545	68%
US Expenses	201,112	32%
Total Expenses	631,657	100%
Net	124,060	

number of students in program



1. Excludes net gains/losses from endowment investments.

2. Sustaining funds includes annual appeal donations, revenue from handicraft sales, and other donations.

3. Expenses exclude uncollectible pledges written off.

elizabeth paves her path

with many helping hands and hearts along the way

Confidently and professionally, 25-year old Elizabeth sits in an office conference room on a one-on-one Zoom video conversation about her journey, or what she refers to as her “path”. Soft-spoken and unassuming, she remains serious, focused, and passionate about learning. Elizabeth has reached milestones on her path that today includes earning a Bachelor’s degree in law from Nairobi University and working as a legal intern with the law firm R.W. Mbanya & Co Advocates. She’s alone but quickly acknowledges that she’s been able to travel this path thanks to many others.

With her father already gone, Elizabeth was orphaned at age four when her mother died from HIV/AIDS. Her childhood memories are faint. But she recalled, “It was still a little bit dark outside,” on the day her aunt brought her out from her home to the common area of the neighborhood. Her mother remained inside. Without siblings, she felt very alone and moved into a small home in the Dagoretti slum with her aunt, uncle, and three cousins.

Soon, Elizabeth realized that she was not so alone. Her aunt became instrumental in her life in many ways. Elizabeth soon registered with Ngong Road Children’s Foundation (NRCF). After having an interim sponsor, Deb and Steve from Minneapolis became her long-term sponsors in 2010.

Elizabeth attributes her passion for learning to her aunt, a school teacher, who inspired all of her children to do and be more. Education has driven Elizabeth’s life path. While focused, she’s also flexible and open to change. Early on, Elizabeth expressed a keen interest in criminology, mostly because she witnessed an unjust system where victims were treated unfairly. When pursuing her post-secondary studies, she remained open to insights from her case manager, who encouraged her to broaden her interests to include law. Elizabeth values case managers, “They just don’t send you off. They help you find your way. They keep following up.”

Elizabeth’s progress comes from a fire within. Like so many other students in the program, that fire is fueled by the numerous small acts of kindness, connection, and encouragement from those around her. Her sponsors admit that there were times when they wondered if their touchpoints with Elizabeth were all that meaningful. But today, Elizabeth can recite all those small acts, treasuring how they provided enduring connection and support. Likewise, Elizabeth holds dear memories from NRCF Summer Camp. Elizabeth does not seek out social connections, but she appreciates staying in contact with several fellow Ngong Road alumni.

Elizabeth’s life path has stretched beyond those around her, many of whom work in the informal economy or as domestic or service workers. Her work in a professional office is opening up future possibilities. She currently focuses on family law, where she enjoys solving problems and helping others in need. Elizabeth is an embodiment of “Wepowerment”, acknowledging the many helping hands and hearts who have helped her get where she is today. She welcomes the responsibility to help bring up those who follow.

She advises the students who come behind her. “Listen to your case managers, as they are a valuable source of guidance and support. Study hard, but know what you want because without focus you may not keep progressing on your chosen life path.”



our mission

is to provide education and support for Nairobi children living in poverty whose families are affected by HIV/AIDS so they can transform their lives.

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