

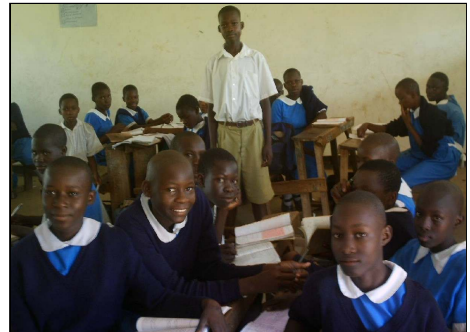
# The Isaiah Trust

Newsletter: Spring 2008

[www.isaiahtrust.org](http://www.isaiahtrust.org)

## Education Program

In the Summer of 2007 the Isaiah Trust began a new education program for street children in the city of Kisumu, in Western Kenya. The program has now been running for 8 months and now has 27 children being supported.



### Background

Children in the poorest areas of the city are frequently unable to go to school. The reasons are numerous, but the biggest issue which holds them back is the need for school fees (for secondary school children), or uniforms, shoes and books for Primary School age children.

The Isaiah Trust runs a number of drop in programs, called Hope Centres, in and around these poorer areas and found that a number of children were coming to the programs for food and shelter, even during school times. The Trust's social workers visited the children's homes, to understand the problems. Two of the children now in the program were spotted by the social workers carrying metals and pulling handcarts for a small amount of money. One of the children was 10, his brother, 13. The boys father had been ill and was unable to work. Their mother had died. The children were the main breadwinners in the household and their father could not afford school uniforms or books.

A number of different options were reviewed and proposal was made, in conjunction with our key social workers on the ground in these areas, to begin a back to school program for the poorest of these children.



In Kenya, the best way to lift a child out of poverty, is to give them an education and the boys and girls themselves have a huge desire for school (an alien concept to many in England!).

The Trust contacted local schools close to the slums, in order to find out whether they would be prepared to take street children into their classes (street children are stigmatized in Kenyan society as trouble makers and undisciplined).

The schools were willing to make places available to the Trust, to place children who had been coming to the daily programs at the Hope Centres. Funds were used to buy clothes, uniforms, shoes and books for the primary school children and, in addition, school fees were paid for the secondary school children.

### Children Successfully completed the year!

15 children successfully completed their school year in December, taking exams that would enable them to progress to the next grade (Kenyan school children are tested at the end of each year. Candidates who do not achieve the minimum marks are held back to repeat the year again). This year, another 12 children have come into the program, making 27 who have left the streets behind them for a new start.



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A charity registered in England and Wales no. 1095251

## Education Program – Haggard Odhiambo

Haggard is now 17 years old. We first met up with him when he began attending the Hope Centre program at Kachok (an area of Kisumu where the municipal rubbish tip is located). The tip is home to many street children, who scavenge amongst the incoming rubbish for scraps of food, as well as for plastic bags, tin cans and bottles, which they can recycle and earn a few shillings from.

Haggard became a street child after his parents died. His elder brother had no job and no means of looking after or supporting them. His only known relative, a cousin, lived in the slum of Manyatta and also could not support him. So Haggard went each day to the rubbish dump to eke out a living.

Begging and borrowing he managed to get together the books that he needed to support his studies and he scraped together the fee to take his KCPE (Certificate of Primary Education). Quite remarkably, he passed with a good mark and was invited to join a top secondary school in Kisumu. This was a problem, however, as Haggard would never be able to afford the £300 school fees, let alone the uniform and books!

The Isaiah Trust was just beginning its new education program, when Haggard got his offer of a place at school. We learned of his background, and of his struggles to get through Primary School. Inspired by his story, we were able to fund his school fees and to buy him a uniform, books and shoes. Most importantly, we were able to pay rent on a small house for him to live and to study, together with an upkeep allowance for food etc, away from the rubbish tip where he had spent cold nights for a number of years.

Haggard joined form one (of four forms) at Kasagem Secondary School in Kisumu and immediately picked up where he left off. He graduated the year with good marks in December, and is now in form 2. His house now has electricity, enabling him to study in the evenings, where previously it was by candlelight. Haggard's life has been transformed.

Haggard is one of many children supported by the Trust. He has been able to swap life on the dump, for life in the classroom and we hope, for this ex-street boy at least, for a successful future!

## Future Plans

This year schools have opened late, as a result of the troubles that followed the recent election. Many children have missed more than half of the first term. The violence and displacement of people across tribal boundaries has meant more children than ever find their way onto the streets.

The Trust is committed to continuing and extending the work with the poorest of these children, and building on the trials of the last year. We have 11 children who have proved that this program can be a real success and we will ensure that they have funds to complete their education.

A visit to Kisumu is planned by the Trust over Easter, in order to discuss extending the work to more children and new schools. Meetings have been arranged with the schools who have taken children, and home visits, to the children's families will also take place.

A proposal for the best way to use available funds will be put together as a result of this trip and shared with the school for discussion and agreement. It is hoped that a lasting legacy will be possible amongst the children of Kisumu.

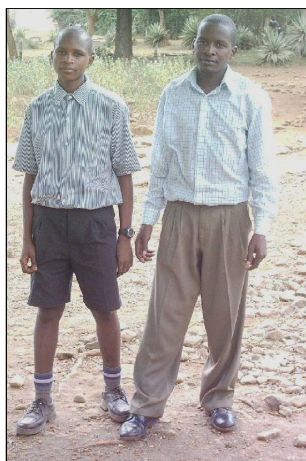


## Children in the Education Program

The following pictures are some of the children who have been able to return to school as a result of the education program run by the Isaiah Trust in Kisumu



Mercy Awuor  
(15) – Class 7



Nelson Mwita (15) –  
Class 6, with his teacher  
at Central Primary  
School



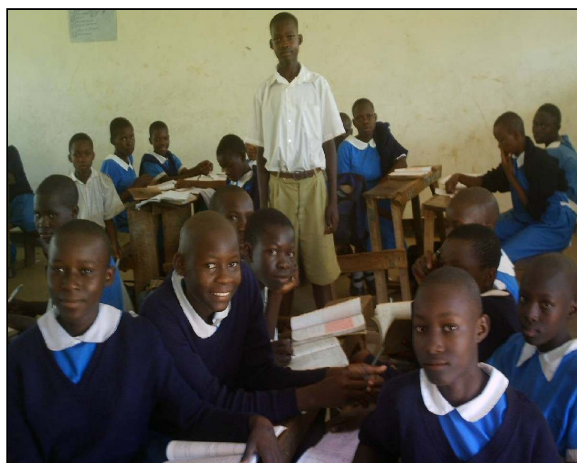
Brian Kamau  
(10) – Class 3



Erick Odhiambo  
(7) – Class 1



Jackson Okoro (15) and the rest of Class  
7 at Migosi Primary School



Kevin Oduor and the rest of Class 7 at  
Magadi Primary School

These are just a small number of the many children helped by the education program. Some, such as Brian, shown above, have lost parents in the recent tribal conflicts. Brian now lives at the Trust's home in Kibos. Mercy Awuor was caught in crossfire on her way home from school and was injured by a bullet in the leg. She is recovering in hospital. For the rest, the school year has begun again, and, in the new forms, they continue their lives with renewed hope and optimism.

