

Kageno Roots



Planting the seeds to create opportunities

Seeking Interns and Volunteers

We love having volunteers and interns to help with a variety of projects - from social media to event planning. If you or someone you know is interested in sharing your time and skills with Kageno, please contact Martha Langmuir, Assistant Director at martha@kageno.org.

Visiting Banda

In Late May, a group of six Kageno Board members and supporters visited Kageno Rwanda in Banda village. They saw our programs and met with staff and community members. The Board interviewed candidates for the new upcoming Country Director. A position that has been held since our Rwanda program began by Levi Ngilimana, who will be retiring later this year. Advisory Board member, Eunice Casey and long-time Kageno supporter Joy DeFabrizio share their impressions of the visit in this newsletter.

If you are interested in visiting Banda, please let us know at martha@kageno.org



Banda, Rwanda from above

Verdant: Agriculture Support in Banda - Eunice Casey

The word “verdant” was created to describe Rwanda - and Banda Village is a perfect example with its envious position in the foothills of the famous Nyungwe Forest National Park. The panorama of colors of green that you encounter on the drive to Banda is the result of un-checked nature combined with the innumerable cultivated farms. An estimated 80% of Rwanda’s workforce is involved in agriculture - mostly small subsistence farms. As a result of this, the amount of land you have can determine the level of food security for your family. Kageno has been working in Banda to change this equation and to help the village implement agricultural practices that are ecologically minded enabling families to grow sufficient healthy foods with limited land.

When you enter the Kageno campus, you are first struck by the joyous sounds of children. On early mornings you often hear a chorus of “A, B, C...” coming from the classrooms. Walking further, you begin to see the garden that is full of parents with infants and toddlers who participate in the feeding program for the severely malnourished. The daily portions of food provided ensure that the children can develop without lack of nutrition stunting their growth and future developmental opportunities. These daily meetings are also a gateway for the parents to learn how to improve their ability to grow healthy foods. The parents all participate in practical training by working in the Kageno gardens.

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Kageno Kenya - Drought Update

Since early 2016, Kenya has been experiencing a severe drought that has left 2.6 million people facing a critical food shortage (UN), as well as a drastic increase in food prices. Kageno Kenya is based on Rusinga Island in Lake Victoria, the largest fresh water lake in Africa. Despite being located in the middle of a vast lake, the island is semi-arid. Residents there have been dealing with nine straight months of no rain at all.

The economy on Rusinga Island relies on fishing and its related industries. When it rains, the fish draw closer to the shores of the island to feed, and when it doesn't, the fish travel elsewhere. During a time of drought, migrant fishermen move to follow the fish. When they leave, many other businesses that rely on the fishing industry support close down, unemployment rises, and the community sinks into a recession.

Rusinga is quite densely populated with limited land available for farming. Community members practice subsistence farming on small plots. They grow maize, sorghum and cowpeas during the rainy season, and tomatoes, kale and spinach during the dry months. Even in a good year, this may not be enough to carry a family through to the next harvest. However, it does provide some basic contribution to a family's healthy diet.

This year the long rains that occur from April through June, were better than the minimal rain last year. Unfortunately, the crops suffered damage from pests so the yield will still be below average, and food prices will be higher.

Although we cannot control the rain, Kageno Kenya is there to help. We feed nearly 2000 students regular meals that they otherwise would not receive. We have taught families to start sack gardens and continue to provide support with ongoing maintenance of these small plots that have proven to be relatively drought and pest resistant. The challenges are not over, but Kageno is committed to working with community members throughout the seasons.

Donate Today

Your tax-deductible contributions help support the work we do to help people in need through sustainable interventions in Kenya and Rwanda. Please help us make lasting positive change by donating online now at www.kageno.org/donate or send a check to us at the address below.

* Kageno Worldwide, Inc. * 261 Broadway, 10D *
* New York, NY 10007 *



Staff Spotlight: Yvonne Nyiransengimana

There is a slightly unsettling feeling that is common when you are significantly outnumbered by children - any parent who has thrown a four year old's birthday party may be familiar with this sensation. But, Yvonne Nyiransengimana is at home with the disarray and anarchic joy that comes from such a group of happy children.

Yvonne has been teaching at Kageno's Banda Nursery School for seven years. When the Kageno team visited recently, she was in full control of the 20 smiling, uniform-clad students who were enjoying photo day. All of the children are part of our Sponsorship Program. Yvonne knows each one and can tell you every child's favorite game, who is mischievous, and which ones are shy. "John Marie is very talkative. He likes to construct things out of mud and trees - he builds little airplanes."

Yvonne moved to Banda to teach. There she met, fell in love with, and married the head teacher at the Banda primary school. Together they have three beautiful children - Honore (8), Eparphroditus (5) and Juhes (1 ½). Yvonne and her husband also care for two girls who lost their parents - Solange (8) and Jeanette (5). The family of seven live in a lovely home where, on the day we visited, children from all over the village were playing with them just outside the door.

Yvonne is clearly adored by her students and she is leading the way in teaching the children English and other key subjects needed to prepare them for primary school. Walking by the classrooms, you will hear the students working through their lessons. The happy sounds of children learning, playing, and enjoying the class meals are the heart of daily activity at Kageno, and it is due to the work of Yvonne and other devoted teachers like her.

Kageno Rwanda - Comprehensive Support for Family Health



Marie Rose Nyirahabyarimana with her newborn

Marie Rose Nyirahabyarimana's story is a typical example of the ways in which Kageno serves the community.

Rose and her five children have participated in many of the Kageno programs. Two children have graduated from the malnourished feeding program, three of her children have attended the Nursery School, and two of them are currently at a local primary school where they still benefit from the extended feeding program sponsored by our partner Table For Two (TFT).

She and the children visit the Kageno Health Clinic for vaccines and when they are sick. She says it is much easier to access healthcare now that they don't have to travel so far. Rose has attended the Kageno training sessions on health, nutrition, family planning, STDs, appropriate medicine use, and agriculture.

On Wednesday, June 14th, Rose gave birth to a new baby boy at the Kageno Health Clinic, which lately expanded its maternity facility. Before last year, she would have had to walk hours to the nearest hospital to give birth and be away from home for months. She was grateful to give birth so close to her family.

First Impressions, Banda, Rwanda - Joy DeFabrizio

We descended into the village at twilight. Considering the condition of the road, it was probably best I couldn't see where we were going. The nine-passenger van stopped and in total darkness we found our way up a steep sketchy path to the Kageno Guest House. We had arrived.

In the morning, I heard the first bird signaling that daylight had broken. It was followed by a cacophony of village sounds one could never imagine. I walked out the front door with my coffee in hand and saw another world -- a paradise whose imperfections only made it all the more amazing.

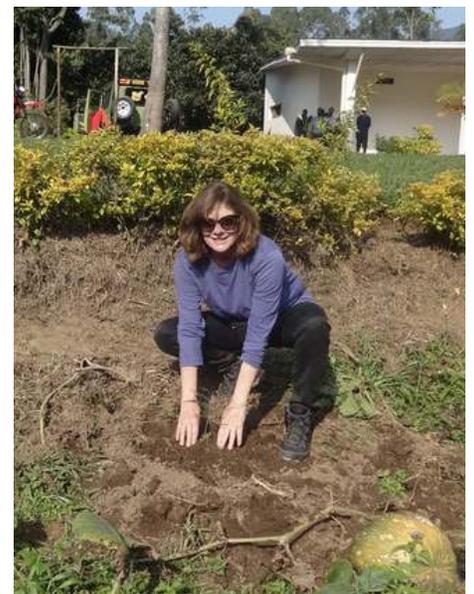
It was Sunday so the village was eerily empty although singing that permeated the walls of the church filled the morning air. We toured the village and saw the progressive techniques in use at the farm as well as the kitchen where they manage to cook for the 2500 kids in the feeding program. By noon, the dirt roads and pathways were filled with local women in their colorful skirts and the joyful sounds of their children running and playing around them.

After lunch we hiked up the mountain to see the site for Kageno's proposed Eco Lodge. The hike was strenuous and exhilarating, and the view breathtaking. Seeing baboons was the highlight.

On Monday, four of us visited the local school. We delivered letters from a school in Queens, NY. The children enjoyed hearing from faraway students and look forward to replying to their new pen pals.

The children are truly, truly beautiful. Their smiles stole my heart. I know that thanks to Kageno, the children are healthier and hence village life is happier.

The next morning, just before we left, Pierre, Kageno's Agronomist, presented us with six saplings to plant in the garden as a memento of our trip. I may have left behind a twig, but took away a mountain.



Verdant - Cont. from page 1

The gardens are a place of education and community collaboration lead by Pierre Nkurunziza, the Kageno Agronomist. The community learns techniques to maximize yield with limited land. One of the methods is mound gardening that is formed around a core of rocks and bamboo pipes. Water is poured through th bamboo shoots and the rocks ensure that the soil is thoroughly irrigated. Growing in mounds, as opposed to rows, enables the farmers to increase the amount of food grown on a small plot of land.

The space-saving ingenuity of Pierre and his team doesn't stop with there. Kageno has a well established training program on sack gardens. Using burlap sacks leftover from the sosoma purchased for the feeding program, our agricultural team has created a system that will let anyone with even a small amount of space grow enough food to support their family. Two stakes filled with soil and cow dung for fertilizer support the sacks. Holes are slit in the side to allow plants to grow. A row of sack gardens runs alongside the wall of the community center inspiring community members to increase their ability to feed their families.

Every day you can see members of the Kageno Banda family working together and learning as they make improvements in the lives of all community members. A walk through the village shows the overwhelming success embodied in beans drying alongside a house, clean water available for drinking, accessible irrigation, and the lush green fields with mounds of leeks, onions, peppers, cabbage, cassava, amaranth, and potatoes.

Murakoze, Theresa!

Theresa Gerber has served in the Peace Corps in Banda for the past two years. We are grateful to her and for our continued long partnership with Peace Corps Rwanda.

During my time in the Peace Corps I have worked with Kageno to improve chronic malnutrition in children, also known as stunting. I will be leaving Rwanda in July 2017 and going to Trinity College in



Theresa with Levi Ngilimana, Kageno Rwanda Country Director

Dublin, Ireland for a Masters in International Development. Living in Banda has been an amazing experience and I could not ask to have lived in a more beautiful and welcoming place.

I worked with the First 1000 Days of Life initiative, which focuses on preventing stunting by promoting good health and nutrition from conception to two years of age. Hygiene-related illnesses are one of the leading causes of chronic malnutrition in Banda, especially for children under five. To improve nutrition, it is important to combat intestinal illnesses while improving access to balanced and healthy meals. In the last year, I have worked with Kageno staff and community members to build latrines for 25 families. After completing construction, we taught these families how to manage hygiene and sanitation in their homes in order to reduce diarrhea and other hygiene-related illnesses.

In addition to the above, I worked with Japhet Harerimana, the Community Programs Coordinator to teach the women's handicrafts cooperative 30 sessions on finance.. This program was facilitated through Global Communities and Peace Corps to improve understanding of the importance of savings and saving to achieve a larger goal. We covered many topics, including how to create and manage a budget within a family and how to create and follow a business plan.

It is clear that Kageno has had a great impact on the community of Banda and is always looking for new ways to improve the lives of people here through better health and broader community development. I am very thankful to have been a part of this work and I am excited and hopeful about what the future will bring for Banda.

SAVE THE DATE
KAGENO'S 14TH ANNUAL
HARAMBEE



30 OCTOBER 2017
CITY WINERY, NYC