

March 2006

AAFnews



Newsletter of Akamba Aid Fund

Dear Friends

Welcome to the latest news from our operations in Kenya. As usual there is good news and bad news, but thankfully more of the former.

As this newsletter is written, the situation in Kenya is grave. As you will no doubt have heard recently on the media reports, Kenya, in common with Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti is experiencing the worst drought for



decades. There has been no rain for two years in Ukambani, and the last five years have had short or insufficient rainfall. Crops have repeatedly failed, and the available water sources are rapidly drying up. Consequently famine is again a neighbour, with some Aid Agencies reporting up to 11 million in the Horn of Africa facing hunger, nearly 4 million of those are in North-east Kenya. 75% of the hospital beds are filled mainly by children suffering from Malnutrition and related diseases. Many deaths have already occurred, and as you know it is the poor, elderly and children who suffer most. These people

have nothing to fall back on, no food in the fields or their store, and any animals they may have had have succumbed to the drought and barren pasture. Wild animals also are dying, and the UN states that there could be a major catastrophe unfolding.

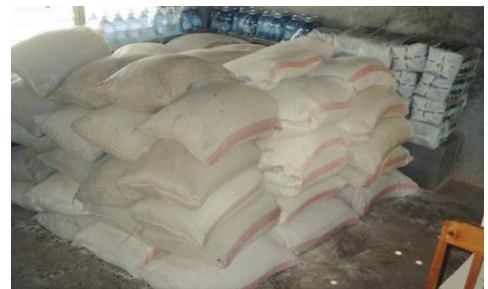
AAF and some aid agencies have been warning of the worsening situation for some time, but it is only in the last few weeks that the national media have decided to make it prime time reporting. Western governments have responded with fine words, and pledged a little money to help those in need, but words need to be converted into food to eat and water to drink, and for government departments this all takes time. Dying however does not wait, and if the world does not wake up to the situation then this will be happening by the thousands.



AAF does not wait, it saw a real need back in January and has responded by making a special appeal for funds, and as always you our supporters have rallied magnificently. Although only a very small organisation, AAF and our partners in Kenya have arranged the purchase and transport of much needed maize, beans, oil, flour, dried whole milk and bottled water from the south up the 240 miles to the Mwingi District where trusted volunteers working under our representative Stephen Munyoki have distributed to five schools (each with 400-500 pupils), two clinics, and around 40 individual poor families we have been monitoring for some time. In all around 2,500 people will be assured of a meal every day.



The first consignment which was delivered to our store at Gai Clinic on 15th. February, will last these people about 4/5 weeks. We repeated this with a second slightly bigger delivery on 25th March. If this



marvellous response to our Famine Relief Appeal continues, we

hope to make these monthly deliveries for the duration of the famine, thus ensuring that at least 2,500 souls will be saved from starvation. We received an email from a worker at Gai Clinic recently who said that the milk and flour they had received had saved many malnourished children.

Kenya University Students. We have been receiving reports of good grades being achieved (lowest B+) by the three students we are supporting. **Titus** at Scott College, **Timothy** at Daystar Uni. and **Kavata** at Kenyatta Uni. have now been joined by **Rebecca Mutua** (pictured right) at Kenyatta, seeking a teaching diploma, and **Benjamin Makaa** at Nairobi College studying engineering. We wish them well in their studies and are sure they will all achieve their goals.



Harambee Scheme. This has now been extended to Katakani, a clinic some 12 miles from Gai, which has two nurses and a laboratory officer. The clinic is supported by the African Inland Church (AIC), who have just financed major building works which will make this a valuable asset to the community and surrounding area. AAF is supporting the clinic with medical supplies and our Harambee subsidised health card scheme is now bringing many more children for immunisation.

Kasyoka Tabitha is a single mother, her husband having left home leaving her to bear sole responsibility of bringing up her two sons and three daughters, the youngest 6 months old. She has no regular income, only occasional casual employment paying perhaps 60-70p a day. With no animals at all she tries to grow food for her children on her tiny plot of land. In 2004, when her first born daughter sustained a bad leg wound which took 3 weeks to heal, it left her with a bill of 950 Ksh. (£7.50), beyond her means. The clinic recommended her to AAF as in real need, and was registered with a Harambee card, which halved her debt immediately. Since then all her children have been immunised, and when her youngest daughter was ill, Tabitha immediately walked the 2km. to Gai clinic to have her treated of Gastroenteritis and Malaria. She is now very happy that although still poor, she can afford to give her children good treatment when they become ill.



There are 40-50 families who are monitored by our field agent Stephen, and during the last six months many have been supplied with food and other necessities by him. Because of the worsening food situation he has had to spend 180,000 Kshs. (£1,500) in purchasing maize, beans, flour, dried milk, rice and millet which he keeps in store to feed these and other families who he finds are in desperate need.

Flora London Marathon ~ **Andrew Orchard** (known to his friends as AJ) is busy training for the London Marathon on April 23rd which he will run in aid of our Famine Relief Appeal. So if you see him running through the Somerset country lanes with his loaded back pack, give him a cheer and a wave to encourage him. You can support him by making a donation at Norton Post Office, Greenhams, or the Village Salon, or by post to AAF. If you can make it to London to watch the race live, no doubt AJ will be glad to see you



Stephen Munyoki has E-mailed to say that the cows and bulls which belong to AAF are keeping well in spite of the drought, in fact two of the cows have recently had calves. Being one of the best farmers in the area he has been able to provide water and food for them to keep them in a reasonably healthy state. These animals are reared by AAF to provide power for the ploughs in cultivating the land of needy families, and when the drought ends, they will prove invaluable to the local community.

We hope that in the next issue of Ukambani News we will have only good things to talk about. Hopefully by then the drought will have past, and communities will once again be able to look forward to a future. Thank you for your continuing support for AAF and for the people of Kenya.

AAF trustees.

STOP PRESS ~ *We have just been informed by our partners in Nairobi that this month, the owners of a large Kenyan engineering group have donated funds for a second lorry loaded with food which will be distributed to another 5 schools and a clinic in Ukambani. This is fantastic news and means that in total around 5,000 people will receive food this month.*