Haagbeuk 21
5453 LH Langenboom

administratie@amarafoundation.org
www.amarafoundation.org

IBAN: NL52 RABO 0148319394
BICcode: RABONL2U

KvK: 02093018
ANBI: 8156 41 813

Newsletter October 2025

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Sitting Volleyball Club Kisumu Shakers

As part of our sports project, we have been sponsoring the Urusi football club for several years. Since 2023, we have also sponsored a sitting volleyball club with a fixed amount each year. With this amount, they purchase equipment, pay for tournaments (and all related expenses), and support their club members in expanding their businesses (through training or purchasing equipment). Throughout the year, they keep us informed about the expenditures of the Amara Foundation's funds, but they also keep us informed about everything happening in and around their club and its members.
Head coach John is a passionate volleyball player. Besides coaching this sitting volleyball club, he also coaches regular volleyball teams and has ambitious goals. That's why, in April, he took a self-funded FIVB (Federation Internationale de Volleyball) training course to become a national-level coach. He successfully completed it. This course is actually separate from "the Shakers." However, this exciting step means John will bring even more inspiration, knowledge, and techniques back to Kisumu when he's there on weekends to coach the Shakers. Besides John, Bernard has also started coaching at "the Shakers." John is giving him valuable tips to better coach "the Shakers," even when he's absent.
In our April newsletter, we already wrote that the Shakers would be participating in the selections for the 2025 Regional African Championships. They trained very hard and travelled to Nairobi well prepared. The matches played during the selection were intended to select and assemble the most talented athletes to represent Kenya at the upcoming championships. The " Kenya Paravolley Federation" is committed to promoting sitting volleyball in the country, with a focus on the "Road to Paravolley Africa" and the World Championship. All the Shakers showed their worth during the selections on April 25th. As a team, they finished third, and the Shakers have also performed exceptionally well at the national level. The selection process was overseen by the federation president.

Player Esther Asega (Maimuna) was clearly one of the best. However, Esther was not selected because she raised concerns about corruption within the federation last year, and the president was unhappy about it. So speaking out doesn't seem to pay off in Kenya. However, "The Shakers" aren't going to let this stop them. Esther and coach John will jointly write a letter to the Kenya Para Volleyball Federation about this matter. After this national tournament, "The Shakers" participated in another championship in early June: Madaraka Day in the Homabay district. There, "The Shakers" became champions. Esther accepted the trophy with pride and joy. On June 21st, we received news that "The Shakers" are still fighting for Esther's rights. Witness statements have been collected, and an official letter has been drafted and sent. It also included the following message: "Fighting for the rights of Esther Asega still. It's now a court case. Hoping justice will be served." We at the Amara Foundation are incredibly proud that a relatively small association from a slum in Kisumu is standing up against corruption and defending its club members!



Photo 2 Kisumu Shakers champion Madaraka Day in Homa Bay



Photo 1 Group picture during visit in September

Project Care

In September, several children moved on to further education, some even with the support of regular sponsors, and we are, of course, thrilled about that. Reintegration costs will only increase in the coming years, as the cost of further education is much higher than for primary or secondary school. Social worker Celestine is in contact with all the children, including those who attend primary or secondary school and live with a family member during the holidays. One of these children is Cynthia (photo at the top of the newsletter). Cynthia has faced many setbacks in her life and is still struggling. Celestine and Nynke visited her again last month and discussed the options together.

St. Clare's Children's Home also falls under Project Care. St. Clare's celebrated a big anniversary at the end of September. As part of that celebration, Nynke received a beautiful book: a book that honours everyone involved and provides information about all the children who were able to receive help thanks to the help of the children's home and the sponsors. Unfortunately, Sr. Lucy is not feeling well again, and we wish her all the best and hope she recovers quickly. Her dedication and that of the other nurses and staff are indispensable. Finally, the education of the children of the former Klaartje Derks Foundation also falls under Project Care. During the last working visit, Nynke and Richard visited Brighton and Ruth. Both children are doing well and enjoy going to school. Ruth has been attending a boarding school since January, which has significantly improved her situation. Richard is in regular contact with these and the other children, and each individual is assessed to determine what works and what is needed for the orphanage.



Photo 3 Eating porridge with Celestine and the children of St. Clare's



Photo 4 Sr. Dorothy and Sr. Lucy hand the book



Photo 5 Together with Richard and Ruth

Project Support for Individuals

This year, we've noticed that some people are finding it very difficult to make repayments on their microloans. The mothers of our therapy children, in particular, are struggling to combine caring for their children with running their businesses. A group meeting was held to discuss the current situation, what's needed to improve everyone's businesses, and to share experiences. There's also good news: Molly's canteen is running reasonably well again.



Photo 6 Nynke with Samoo, Bridget and four of the mamas

Project Sport

Football Club Urusi has a senior team again this year, made up of young adults. They are trained by head coach Wycliff and compete in the league. They win almost every week. They're doing really well! We receive a weekly update on the results, along with fun photos of the bus journey to the match, the match itself, and the communal meal. After all, playing a match also includes a meal. Of course, you can't perform without nutrients, and this meal also creates a sense of appreciation and camaraderie. We're thrilled that Urusi has managed to assemble a senior team again.



Photo 7 A visit to Urusi

Project Therapy
Over the past few months, Amara has held various fundraising events to build a new walkway for the school in Sondu. We are now pleased to announce that a fantastic €2,288.81 was raised during the Langenboom four-day walking event, in the Mariakapel, and through individual donations. We are thrilled with so much support and hope to share photos of the new walkway soon.

ACTIVITIES

Heerbeeck Changemakers Day
At Heerbeeck College in Best, third-year students of the International College (TTO) will be working on social awareness ot he entire year. They will conclude this project at the end of the school year with a Changemakers Day. This year, it was on Thursday, June 6th. On that day, they made a difference for others. For example, they might work for a food bank for a day, help out at a nursing home, or raise money for a good cause. This year, three groups chose to raise money ot he Amara Foundation. They did this by collecting packaging. In this way, they raised almost €200 in total ot he Amara Foundation. A wonderful amount that will certainly allow us to make a valuable contribution to our projects. One group specifically indicated that they would like the money to benefit the Urusi football club. The first purchase, a stack of cones, has already been made and will be taken to Kisumu in October.

LaWaCo Four-Day walking event
The Walking Event was once again a major event. It's fantastic to see everyone enthusiastically involved every year! The children raised a lot of money with sponsored cards, the proceeds of which went to Amara, specifically ot he new walkway at our school in Sondu. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed!

Zeeland Cultural Market
The very first edition of the cultural (food) market in Zeeland took place on Sunday, June 29th, at the Zeeland Community Centre. It was a vibrant event focused on connection, encounters, and cultural diversity. It was a successful, multicultural market where cultures came together to celebrate diversity. Amara also had a stall, and we were able to tell many interested people about our projects.

Exhibition: 50 Years of Langenboom:
To celebrate their 50th anniversary, the Felix Walter Local History Society organized an exhibition on August 16th and 17th. Everyone could learn more about the history of Langenboom through films, photos, and a wealth of material. Since our secretary Carmen lives in Langenboom and Amara has many sponsors in the region, Amara was also allowed ot h part of the exhibition.

AGENDA

Expedition Kenya – October 4th to 16th
During Expedition Kenya, 16 students from Heerbeeck College will visit several parts of all our projects. All expedition members are very much looking forward ot he trip and are happy to share their experiences on social media and in our next newsletter.

Autumn Market at MFC It Harspit in Oppenhuizen – November 15th
On Saturday afternoon, November 15th, Nynke will have a sales stall at the autumn market in Oppenhuizen, Friesland. Welcome to Friesland!

Christmas Market "D'n Eigen Herd" in Uden – December 7th
On Saturday, December 7th, we will once again be selling beautiful items at the Christmas market in Uden. Come visit us!

Christmas Market in Langenboom – December 14th
On December 14th, we will be at the Christmas market in Langenboom. In addition to our stone figurines and jewellery, we will also be bringing our beautiful cards. We hope to see you at the Christmas market!

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Web shop (almost) ready for the holidays!
Nynke brought a whole bunch of new cards, which have now been wrapped by Lisanne and Maria, our former board members. New animals, bowls, angels, and other stone figurines will also be added to our web shop in mid-October. We've also purchased new nativity scenes made of banana leaves and soapstone. We're (almost) ready for the holidays. So take a look at our web shop for a lovely gift.

Click on the pictures below for a link to the web shop with more information:



Star garland

5 Euro



Nativity scene made of banana leaves

15 Euro



Different Christmas cards

2,20 Euro per card



Soap stone angel (different sizes and colours available)

15 Euro (large size)

Nynke's work visit

Last month, I returned to Kisumu after ten months, this time with my husband, Berco. This newsletter already includes several examples of projects we visited, and we've also shared videos and photos on Amara's Instagram and Facebook pages. But how did Berco experience his first visit to Kenya and Amara's projects?

Berco was impressed by the wonderful atmosphere and the enthusiasm of the Kisumu Shakers. The training was challenging, but also incredibly enjoyable.
The home visit to Cynthia was very informative: you get a glimpse into the (dis)functioning of a family and the complexity of the issues that many children and families unfortunately face. The visits to Brighton and Ruth provided a good insight into how a boarding school (Ruth) and a day school (Brighton) are organized. With classes of 60 or more children, school classes in Kenya are much fuller than in the Netherlands. The emphasis is therefore much more on discipline and respect for the teachers, but their love for the (teaching) profession is immense, as was evident from conversations with them. Finally, Berco also thoroughly enjoyed the trips to the people: seeing the landscape, the villages, life on the streets with people, animals, motorcycles, bicycles, cars, and vans—all in an organized chaos. Furthermore, the visits to various people's homes made him realize that the contrast between different houses and families is stark, but that the amount of possessions, land, and resources doesn't seem to influence how happy people can be.

Carmen is currently in Kisumu to "dot the I's" for Expedition Kenya and to welcome the students and supervisors of the excursion on Sunday, October 5th. Keep an eye on our social media for impressions of Expedition Kenya, and of course, a detailed report will be in our next newsletter.

Below you will find some more impressions of my visit with Berco. Thank you for your interest, and please contact me or the other board members if you would like to know more about Amara's work.

Nynke



Photo 8 Viewing hippos on Lake Victoria



Photo 9 Dinner with Mark, the designer and maker of our beautiful cards



Photo 10 Making ugali with Juliet

Thank you for your interest! 😊

On BEHALF OF THE BOARD AND ALL THE PEOPLE FROM KISUMU!

Evelien Hommes-Romonesco - Carmen van Bergen - Esther van Rooij - Nynke Bosker-Haagsma - Martine Plantinga