



THE THUNDER FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

November 2023 - January 2024

The Thunder Foundation was founded in 2012 by Raad Swais to raise awareness of the daily struggles that children in Kenya face to achieve an education and survive. Most of our work is focused in Kawangware, Nairobi, one of Africa's largest slums, where 65% of the population are children. The Foundation currently supports 41 children attending both mainstream and special needs schools. 17 of them are in high school, 2 in professional training, 6 in primary school and 16 attending 4 different specialist schools for children with disabilities.

JANUARY 2024: A MONTH TO CELEBRATE

We made it again! Overcoming various complicated challenges and navigating the complex Kenyan bureaucracy education system, we were able to enroll **7 new children in the first year of high school**: Aisha, Shadrack, Romy, Anita, Alice, Chrisance and Blessing. Adding to this important step, we had 10 out of our 11 children returning to the second year of high school. One of our older students, sadly decided to abandon secondary education and attend instead a vocational training. High school boarding has proved to be quite an intense experience for most of our students, due to scarcity of food, very demanding schedule, and, above all, the hostile and bullying environment in which the children live. For these reasons, this year, 3 of our older students decided to leave their boarding facility, and opted to attend a day-school, living at home.

With last years' experience in mind, this year we decided that only strongly academic students would be enrolled into a secondary boarding (Romy, Shadrack, Aisha) and that the other four (Blessing, Alice, Chrissance and Anita) would join a day-school.

Ramadan, our Project Manager, did exceptional research and travelled all over the Nairobi County to find the perfect match between our children and the right high school. Ramadan's experience and knowledge allowed us to place our seven new high school students in the best schools we could provide, and to place the secondary students that did not want to board anymore, in the nearest best day-school. For the second year, the challenge was not only finding the right school but the purchase of a long list of items required by each school for every child. From this January, we are dealing with **6 different boarding schools and 7 day-schools**, each of them with long lists of different requirements for items such as mattresses, trunks, books, uniforms, stationary, toiletries and snacks. We have spent a considerable proportion of The Thunder Foundation's annual budget to pay for the children's high school term fees and for all the necessary extras for the boarding schools. But we did it, once again, we are grateful for your support and for sharing with us the same vision of a better future through education for our Thunder children.



MANY REASONS TO CELEBRATE

Our 7 children who graduated last December from Primary School, and are now enrolled in High School, went through a very challenging final exams' experience last November. In three days, they were tested in all the seven subjects which they have been studying. They all did well, but we are particularly proud to say that 3 out of 7 of our students scored over 300 points, an excellent result that only 24% of Kenyan students nationally manage to achieve. Three of our students scored between 250 and 299 points, a score achieved only by less than 35% of students nationally. Well done to all of them.

END OF THE YEAR IN THE NAME OF GENEROSITY

As a Foundation, we know we can count on friends and sponsors, but last December we were really moved by the commitment and generosity of our long-term friends in Nairobi: **Braeburn School and Indomie Company** who contributed to make our families' Christmas special again. We received very generous clothes and food donations which, together with Thunder Christmas shopping's voucher, were able to gift our families a special festive time. Thank you, Agus and Diane, Loraine, Antonia, and Maribel.

School holidays started last November, which meant the children were at home for 2 months. To keep them occupied, we prepared a rich calendar of activities to make sure our boys and girls are kept safe, healthy and stimulated.

Sport Camp: realizing that the fitness level of our children is low (no sports activities are included in the Kenyan curriculum), we engaged them in a sport camp during December. All the children took part in the various sessions and many siblings came along. A huge attendance was motivated, in part, by the delicious food we offered – in the best Thunder's tradition, prepared by our wonderful Diane.



Health seminar: Thanks to our Trustee Julia and Doctor Nina we were able to organize a seminar where our doctor friend shared with our teenagers the importance of being active and proactive in maintaining good hygiene levels and of protecting their health. Living in an environment where clear water is a rarity and where diseases such as HIV, typhus, cholera, malaria are endemic, makes this contribution essential in the education and growth of our children. Thank you again Doctor Nina.



DECEMBER 2023, BEST MONTH OF THE YEAR

Braeburn School & German Church Christmas Bazars. Attending Christmas Bazars in Nairobi was

an opportunity to showcase the beautiful Christmas' decorations made by one of our moms and to make new friends. Thank you, Laura, Oliveira, Mercy, Maribel, Kelly, Bahati Shop and all the friends that came to support us.



Best students treat day: to continue to motivate our students, we celebrated the four children that performed at a high level, the one who has the most positive attitude, the one who put the most effort and who has shown more significant improvement, with an exciting day trip and a special lunch. **Rufus, Elisabeth, Winnie and Mary** were the lucky participants who enjoyed a nice hiking trip on Ngong Hills and a delicious lunch.



One of our Trustees was able to visit, for the second year, the schools in Northern Italy that support The Thunder Foundation. Italian principals, teachers and students were eager to learn about the progress of our children, their challenges and achievements. The focus of the discussion was on the bullying in Kenya, a country where 97% of students in secondary boarding facilities are victims to various degrees. Italian students were able to compare their situation and tools. It was a very successful trip that reinforced one of our Founder's goals, to build and maintain a bridge between our children and the rest of the world. A special thanks goes to all the children and teachers in Domodossola, Villadossola, Santa Maria and the entire Valle Vigizzo. And a special thank you goes to the Villadossola Youth Church Group that committed for the fourth year in a row to support our experienced and committed runners Elena Bonalumi and Davide Moglia in the London Virtual Marathon next April 2024.

Thank you to all our sponsors, new and old friends. As a small charity, run only by volunteers, we are proud to bring forward our founder's legacy. We are grateful for all the past year's achievements:

- **41 children safe in 18 different schools in Nairobi and Nairobi County.**
- **Special attention to our most fragile children with disabilities, including physiotherapy sessions and private and dedicated transport to and from school.**
- **Seminars, workshops, mentoring and coaching sessions to address with our children the challenges of adolescence.**
- **Micro finance project to support our families.**
- **And much more!**

The Thunder Foundation would not exist without your support. 2023 was an amazing year, and we are hoping for an even better 2024.

Please keep on following us:



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Making a noise for the Children that can't be heard.

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