

# Community Care School in Kenya Empowers Students

*Submitted by Wes Eby, Global Representative*



What happens to impoverished children and youth when educational opportunities are unavailable or financially inaccessible? Where is the hope for their future? For educators, the answers are all too obvious.

The Mathare Church of the Nazarene, located in a lower socio-economic area in Kenya, resolved to change the situation for many of the residents and its congregation by starting a school. The vision of the pastor, Rev. Paul Akoyi, was to offer boys and girls an affordable education that empowered them to rise above their seemingly hopeless environment. And, above all, Rev. Akoyi wanted to win people to Jesus Christ.

In an email interview with Peris Akoyi, who assists with administration of the school, she provided the following information. I am most grateful for her kind cooperation and willingness to talk about the school.

Community Care School, which opened in 2006, serves 60 students ranging in age from 3 to 18. Following the normal Kenyan syllabus as a basis for the curriculum, students attend classes five days a week, Monday through Friday. Special school activities on Saturday include the sports day and Vocational Bible Studies (VBS). The school breaks for three months; however, the three months are April, August, and December. The staff of ten includes six teachers, two chefs, and two security night guards.



The fee is \$80 for an academic year, which is a challenge for the parents. Yet the alternative is other schools that charge up to \$150 a year. While those schools offer the same basic curricular syllabus, they do not offer the spiritual training that Community Care School provides.



To help with expenses, three of the teachers, including Ms. Akoyi, are volunteers along with one of the chefs. The church board provides support for the other teachers to help them with a sustainable livelihood. The students' parents pay for the required "stationery" (paper products), while the church board contributes to and helps with purchasing supplies for the teachers.

What does a school day look like? A normal day starts at 7:00 a.m. with devotions. The children and youth go to class until 10:00 a.m. when everyone takes a break for an hour to engage in games of various types. Then the students go back to class for two hours before lunchtime. Prior to eating, they have devotions for a second time. At 2:00 p.m. the upper primary classes go back to class while the pre-primary children lie on mats for a two-hour nap under the teachers' supervision. The teachers can work on plans for the next day's instruction during this time. The younger children are dismissed to go home at 4:00 pm; however, the upper primary students continue their classes until their dismissal at 5:00 pm.



A major teaching strategy is contextualized discussions and debates, according to Ms. Akoyi. This creates room for a wider and deeper understanding of the topics being considered. On assignments, the students who do well are rewarded with much needed stationery, which motivates others to work even harder for the same or even better award.

What are some of the positive results of this educational ministry of the Mathare Church of the Nazarene? According to Peris Akoyi, the accomplishments include:

1. Improved health of the students because of the nutritious meals provided by the school. There have been no cases of malnutrition among the students, which would normally be expected for children and youth living in this low socio-economic community.
2. Improved grades due to more concentration on studies and emphasis on academics.
3. Development of skills through the many co-curricular activities.
4. Increased support from churches. The visits from people in other churches have provided hope for the students and motivates them to continue their studies.
5. Most important of all, many students have made decisions to make Christ their Lord and Savior. The community environment is conducive to sinful living and provides many temptations for young people.



“The greatest lesson in all this is that God’s grace sustains us in this endeavor. It is not easy, but with God all things are possible.”  
(Peris Akoyi)

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