

CHOLE CHANGING

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHOLE MJINI TRUST FUND
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www.choletrust.org



GIVING BACK

When travelling from home in Worcester, Massachusetts Jeanice Sherman and Dwight Johnson look for places as unaffected by tourists and close to a natural state as possible.

In Chole they saw “we had made the right decision ... the resort and village are fully

integrated. The crow of the rooster, morning prayers, the faint sound of children singing in school, the wonderful fresh food and gracious people who welcomed us were evidence of the vibrant community just beyond the tree houses”.



After seeing the “great effect” it would have, and how a contribution would “go a long way” they then made a generous donation to the Trust “to give back to the village that has given us so many great memories”.

Thank you to Jeanice, Dwight and to all our donors.

IT SUPPORT

The Learning Centre’s IT network is a huge asset for the Chole community. Inevitably however there are maintenance and training costs, and we also try to provide laptops for university and college students. If you know a company that might be willing to commit sponsorship of £2,500–£3,000pa then do please put us in touch.

THE CHOLE MJINI TRUST FUND

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“AHSANTE SANA NAKUTAKIA KAZI NJEMA POPOTE ULIPO”

“Thank you and I wish you well wherever you are”

Fatuma Ahamadi was one of the first girls to benefit from secondary school funding from Kvinnefronten (a Norwegian NGO). However when she was in Form 3 Kvinnefronten abruptly withdrew funding, jeopardising her education. Fortunately the Harambee Committee was able support her in completing her Form 4 education. Here is her story.



Anne de Villiers writes:-

If Jean and I ever had any doubts about the potential for the Chole Project to transform lives it was dispelled by the letter (see right) we received from Fatuma Ahamadi.

Fatuma was initially supported through secondary school using funds provided by the radical Norwegian feminist NGO Kvinnefronten, which also supported the Kindergarten. However in 2009, when she was in Form 3, that source of funding ceased abruptly, and it looked for a while as if Fatuma would not be able to continue her education. Fortunately the Harambee Committee was able to support her using donor funds provided by the Trust’s predecessor, The Tribes Foundation.

Fatuma’s grades at Form 4 were not sufficient for her to progress in secondary schooling, meaning she did not qualify for further support from the Harambee. However her family, supported by some individual benefactors, made the sacrifices needed for her to attend a one year Computer Studies course. When she completed that course she became one of the first Harambee alumni to return to the island to repay the support she had received, teaching Computer Studies in the Learning Centre as a volunteer for six months.

When the Learning Centre was re-launched, following the crisis caused in the community by the loss of Kvinnefronten’s funding for secondary schooling for girls and for the Kindergarten, she was one of two individuals chosen to become Learning Centre teachers, and was sent on a course to improve her English language skills. She returned to Chole, being employed as a teacher in the Learning Centre in 2011.

By now she was one of the more skilled administrators on the island, and earlier this year



“Natumai upo mzima na unaendelea na kazi nami pia naendea na kazi vizuri mungu anasaidia bado nipo pole pole, samahani sana kwa kutowasiliana na wewe kwa muda mrefu sio kosa langu kwani nilibanwa sana na kazi na nilikuwa bado katika muda wa majaribio kwa muda wa miezi mitatu, napenda kukufahamisha kwamba nimemaliza ule muda wa majaribio na nimepata ajira ya muda mrefu, napenda kukushukuru wewe pamoja na wafadhili wetu walionisaidia kupata kusoma na kuniendeleza kimaisha. Ahsante sana nakutakia kazi njema popote ulipo.”

“I hope you are well and your work is progressing, as for me I continue with a good job, with God’s grace I am still at Pole Pole, apologies for not getting in touch earlier, it was not a purposeful mistake but I have been buried with work during the three month probation period. I would like to let you know that I made it through probation and I have been given full time employment, I would really like to thank you and also our donors that helped me to get an education and to progress my life. Thank you and I wish you well wherever you are.”

was head-hunted by the Marine Park to assist with administrative duties when one of their staff fell ill. This work was only short term, but it encouraged her to apply for a job at Pole Pole resort in Utende. She was selected above six other candidates for the job of Administrator and PA to the manager, and after successfully completing her probationary period is now working full time. The Learning Centre now has a new teacher, a Bachelor of Arts graduate from the University of Dodoma recently appointed to teach both English Language and Computer Studies.

HARAMBEE COMMITTEE 2011 AUDIT

The Harambee Committee 2011 Audit is now available on the Trust’s website – click on About Us / Governance and scroll to the bottom.

Two things stand out - the continuing rise in the costs of educational bursaries as more and more young people progress through the education system, and the recommendations by the auditor for improvements in accounting procedures, which will be followed up this year.

STUDENT LOANS AND LAPTOPS

Just three years after the first ever Chole students won university places, eight are entering university or college this year.

University and college bursaries have been unchanged at Tshs 2,000,000 (about £900) pa since 2009, and now are barely adequate. Nevertheless the growing numbers pose a real affordability issue – in a sense the Chole Project is becoming a victim of its own success.

From 2012 therefore the Harambee Committee has split its tertiary education bursary awards into a bursary and a loan, to be repaid after graduation at a rate of 10% of the salary the graduate receives, starting twelve months after graduation or six months after getting a job, whichever comes first. Regardless of employment status repayments must start 12 months after graduation.

There have been no reports of Chole students rioting against student loans!

The Committee also provides laptops to university students, to help them make the most of their opportunity. The laptops remain the Committee's property, and users accept a Tshs 400,000 penalty for misuse or irreparable damage. The laptops are sourced from a wonderful UK charity, Computers for Africa, which refurbishes and recycles high specification business computers for just £100 each.



University entrants Hassani Nahoda, Hussein Sadiki and Khalid Juma with the laptops loaned by the Harambee Committee to assist their studies.

CHOLE MJINI LODGE

The Trust is about helping others - but there are many other reasons to visit Chole!

A web search quickly brings up virtually unanimous praise for Chole Mjini Lodge as a very special holiday destination. Built and owned by Anne and Jean de Villiers (see www.cholemjini.com for the full story), since January 2011 it has been operated by AfrikaAfrika, who combine it with their other stylish safari lodges in pristine wildernesses.

You can contact AfrikaAfrika at

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Please do not hesitate to contact Anne de Villiers personally about the Chole Project at anne.k.dev@gmail.com

TALK TO YOUR BABY UPDATE

The last Newsletter highlighted the remarkable *Talk to your Baby* project, for which Chole has been a pilot site for about six months. Some amazing anecdotal results are already emerging, including perhaps surprisingly extensive engagement by fathers.

To have more time with his baby one Chole father takes his son to watch football and for evening walks and has taken over bath time. He is not even phased by teasing that he will



be breast feeding next! Another, who is now blind, is convinced he could have built much better relationships with his other children if he had had this experience much earlier.

Toys have proved to be invaluable props in stimulating babies and easing parents through an initial awkwardness in communicating with their babies, and there were some wonderful designs in a toy making competition held on



Chole (above) and the neighbouring island of Juani (left), giving the judges a very difficult task. Potentially dangerous toys, and some beautiful ones only suitable for older children, were rejected. Then the judges looked for toys that were easy to play with and could help with role playing (eg dolls), and easy to make (eg spoons with faces, balls etc). There were many fabulously creative ideas, such as dolls made of plastic water bottles, filled with shells, to act as both a rattle and a doll. The children helped the judges by picking up and playing with toys that held their attention. The ultimate Chole winner was this doll, made by granny, but the high standard meant that as well as a second prize five more runner-up prizes were awarded too!



The academic evaluation must be completed, but already the babies seem more confident and interested in their surroundings. As one grandmother remarked, "if you point out a cow, they get to know it's a cow". Usually the babies are anxious about anything new, or anyone but their mother, and cry to show their discomfort. At the workshop however they were handed around, or left on the floor to crawl. As the chairlady said, "this was never the case ... babies would be terrified if they were not attached to their mother".

2012 has seen two triumphs unthinkable just a few years ago – the first Chole university graduate, and the first woman from Chole accepted on to a degree course.

FIRST CHOLE GRADUATE

Suleiman Mohammed, seen on the left at his graduation ceremony, was awarded a BEd from the University of Dar es Salaam, and is now tutoring in a boys school while seeking a permanent post.



FIRST WOMAN TO UNIVERSITY

As Suleiman graduates, Zubeda Bahari (below, with the laptop provided by the Harambee Committee) has been accepted into the Faculty of Natural and Applied Science at St John University, Dodoma for a Bachelor of Science Education degree course. She is not only the first woman from Chole to go to university, but also the first person accepted for a science course.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Chole Trust's objective is to become redundant as the people of Chole achieve self sufficiency. However the road to self sufficiency is challenging, needing a level of investment, especially in education, healthcare and facilities, beyond the capacity of a poor community, however hard it tries.

You can help in any number of ways:

- By becoming a monthly standing order donor. Regular donations are especially valuable, giving children entering the schooling system confidence that they will be able to complete their education.

Just £25 / month funds an annual Form V+ secondary school bursary for a child.

- The Trustees will be happy to discuss specific projects for larger commitments. For example, two long term donors generously fund the Kindergarten.
- If you - or perhaps a family member or friend - is planning an adventure such as climbing Kilimanjaro, then doing it on behalf of the Trust can be a very effective way of fundraising.
- Practical help; for example, a few months teaching on Chole can be rewarding and can contribute a great deal.

If you would like to help the Chole Project then please contact us at:

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