June 2017 Newsletter

In Kenya, Education Is Power has two locations where we support students, one whose headquarters is in Kimende, a village near Nairobi, and another in the Laikipia region, which is located 250km north of Nairobi. There are over 25 students who are are being supported while pursuing their secondary school education in Laikipia. After speaking to many of the students we support, it seems that all of them would have dropped out after grade 8 had it not been for EIP's support. Here are some of their stories.

Student Stories



Name: James Kiano
School: Chumvi Polytechnic
Dream Job: Working as a caterer, owning a catering company

While most EIP students are enrolled in secondary school to receive their education in an academically focused school, there are also some who are being trained in the trades at polytechnic schools. Trades such as plumbing, carpentry, and in James' case, catering, are highly sought after skills in Kenya's job market. Without EIP's support, James would be unable to attend school. EIP is currently working on ensuring students are not forced to have an academic education if this is not suitable for them. We recognize that everyone is intelligent in different ways, and hopefully by redirecting students to polytechnic schools if they enjoy and excel at hands on skills, we will be able to make sure all of our students capitalize on their potential.

Name: Elizabeth Sururu
School: Lockusero Secondary, Form 2 (Grade 10)
Dream Job: Doctor

Elizabeth had a tough time getting started with her education. She had to stay home for an entire term because she could not pay her school fees, and because she missed a lot of classes, she was not able to perform well in Form 1 (grade 9). Now, with EIP's support, she is repeating some of her classes to get a better grade. Elizabeth has been working extremely hard to better her performance, waking up at 4:00am to study before school starts. If she weren't receiving financial support, Elizabeth said she would be looking to get married now so that she didn't have to be a burden on her family. She looks forward to being a doctor to help the sick and vulnerable in her community.



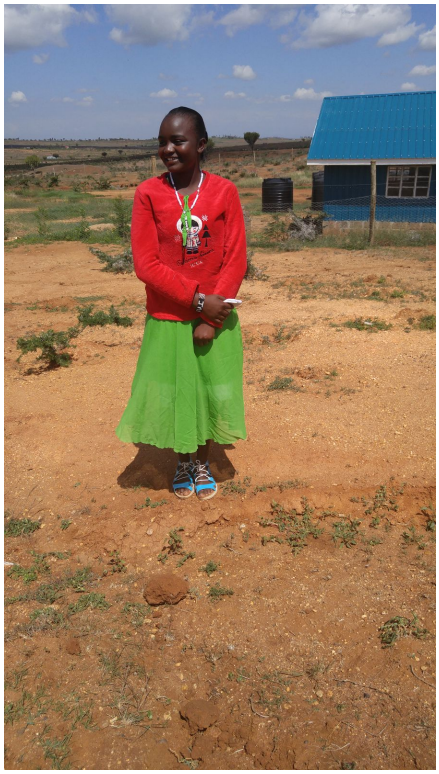
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Name: Jacklyn Kitronyo
School: Kisima Secondary, Form 4 (grade 12)
Dream Job: Doctor

Jacklyn comes from a family of 10 children where she is the last born. Her father passed away of sickness in 2012, leaving a single mother to support her family of 10. Jacklyn will be the only child of 10 who will finish secondary school up to Form 4. All of her other siblings dropped out due to lack of school fees. Jacklyn's story is all too common amongst families in Laikipia, where parents pass away due to medical reasons and none of their children are able to pay the school fees required for secondary school. However, this feeds into the same cycle of poverty that has existed for generations. Girls who are not sent to school are pushed to get married early on and leave any academic dreams they had behind. Jacklyn mentioned that she would have had to get married if it was not for EIP's support.

Name: Elizabeth Malkia
School: Kisima Secondary, Form 3
Dream Job: Engineer



Elizabeth also comes from a big family of 11 children, where she is the fourth born. Amongst her older siblings, two were able to finish secondary school but are unable to find work and another got married. Both her parents are farmers and pastoralists who have an unstable source of income due to the uncertainty in the amount of rain their land will receive, damage from wild animals, etc. Elizabeth said that education is very important to her and felt that all of the children in her community should be able to complete their schooling. She says that with an education, people are empowered with the skills and tools required to follow their dreams. She also notes that once she completes her education, she wishes to empower others in her community by supporting them in their pursuit of education.

These are just the stories of four amazing Kenyan children, however, there are many, many others. Below is a picture of some of them together while home for midterm break.

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Meeting with the Mothers



Supporting all of these students are their mothers, some of whom shared about their experiences with EIP and their children's education. Here are the stories of the mothers who represent the many families in rural areas like Laikipia, and who toil in farms and as hawkers to clothe and feed their children.

The mothers sat together in a group and built their answers together. Just as all parents, their biggest wish is for their children to have a better and more comfortable future than them. Their general consensus is that it is education and only education that can ensure that their children have the life they dream them to have. More importantly, they know that their children, when educated, can help to initiate positive change in the community by being leaders and role models to future generations. They cite their lack of education for the struggles they face, all of the mothers I spoke to did not finish secondary school, while some did not even finish primary. Rather, they were married quite young and bore children immediately.

When speaking about their daughters, they were all insistent that they wanted their daughters to continue through with their education and leave marriage for afterwards. These progressive women were able to see that although culturally women have done housework and there is stigma around women

who decide to get married later, their daughters deserve the same rights as their sons to be educated and hold a job they enjoy. Women and girls are very suppressed in their rights and what is expected of them, but these mothers are confident that with an education, their daughters can be uplifted to soon be at the levels of their sons. One example they gave is that their daughters, with education, can speak up against traditions such as female genital mutilation that are seeped in misogyny and thus stop such traditions from continuing.

Their final words in the meeting were (in Masai translated to English): “It is only because we are farmers and because we live in poverty that it is difficult for us to give our children an education. Otherwise, we wish with all of our hearts that all of them could finish their schooling.”



Supporting Students Outside of the Classroom

EIP runs empowerment weeks during the school children’s holidays. These are run to supplement the student’s education, aiming to empower them with leadership skills, while also providing some academic support for students struggling in certain subjects. We are looking at expanding our programs. Here are some additional programs that we are designing for the upcoming August empowerment weeks.



1) Reproductive health, family planning and menstrual health: These topics are part of the primary curriculum, however they are not in the standardized testing so these topics are glazed over. There is also a stigma around subjects like sex which are considered taboo. This leads to many student having unprotected sex, which results in teenage pregnancy and the spreading of sexually transmitted infections. In

teaching students about these topics, we are working to reduce the stigma around them and the number of girls that have to drop out of school due to pregnancy. In the Laikipia region, we have formed ties with a few women who run workshops on these topics and with the organization Days for Girls.



2) Politics: A major issue in Kenyan politics is the idea of tribalism. Everyone of Kenyan heritage is associated with a tribe, and due to a lack of education in rural communities, people vote only for the party with a representative from the tribe they are associated with. Even when speaking to grown adults in villages, people say they will vote for a certain leader "because they are Kikuyu" with no acknowledgement of a party's policies. To break this cycle, EIP is building a workshop that speaks to the importance of understanding a political party's policies so that the next generation of voters and Kenyan citizens can be better informed when casting their ballot.

EIP has many exciting developments, as we continue to reach more students by raising funds to give more children in rural Kenya access to a secondary education and by providing additional extracurricular support to our current students so they can be leaders of their community. Providing children in rural areas with an education poses innumerable benefits, most importantly because it gives children the tools they require to follow their dreams and the support which encourages them to believe they *can* do it. This cannot be done without your generous support - thank you for believing in these children's potential and investing in a better future for Kenya. Children are the future and as we continue to support and empower them, we are actively bettering the community and country for the future.

We hope to continue with our mission and reach many more children, but we can't do it without your help.
Please donate and learn more at www.educationispower.org

Thank you for your support!

