

Trip report Bang'a en Kasemeni - February 2024

Introduction

Below we report on our visit to Bang'a and Kasemeni in February 2024.

First the ongoing and now completed projects, then the projects under preparation.

New Primary School in Mzuri

The highlight was the visit to the new Primary School in Mzuri. We were able to have this school built last year, thanks to the support of many sponsors.



How special it is to see the school in use. About 240 children now attend school. Children, the vast majority of whom had no idea what a school was until the end of last year. The joy among children and their parents is enormous.

Of course, the school had to be officially opened. A big party was organised with perhaps 1,000 people in attendance. Besides Honorable Mrs Fatuma Achani (Governor), Honorable Mr Salim Mvurya (Minister of Mining and Maritime affairs) was also present from Nairobi, as well as several other dignitaries. The photos below give a small impression. The entire event was broadcast live on Facebook.



Waterdam and gardening project in Bang'a

In late November, we commissioned the construction of a shed near the water basin in Bang'a. The shed can store tools and seeds, needed for the nearby gardening project, as well as temporarily store the harvest. For a long time, however, construction could not begin because the soil was too wet. During our visit, the truck to bring materials could finally get there again. It is now expected that the shed will be ready within a single week.

Micro-credit Kasemeni

One of the great successes of our foundation in the past year has been the strong growth in the number of local, small-scale projects around microcredit.

What is microcredit? Microcredit in Kasemeni takes a somewhat different form than usual.

It centres on groups (of mainly) women who meet once a week or two weeks to exchange knowledge and experience and help each other. They themselves also make a small contribution to a pot at each meeting. And from that common pot, loans are then granted to start up new (business) initiatives. Locally, this is called 'table banking'. We replenish that pot a bit.

Last year, we helped a number of women's groups in Kasemeni with a small financial contribution to strengthen their micro-credit projects. Now it was time to see what the groups had achieved with our contribution. The interviews revealed that almost all the groups had started about a year and a half ago, following our exploratory talks re over two years ago. The fact that around 20 groups are now enthusiastically involved is something we could not have dared hope for. We visited a number of groups in February 2024:

Upendo Bandawacho Group:

A group of nine women who see each other every fortnight. As a group, they now have five goats. They are very enthusiastic about 'tablebanking'. The mutual exchange of experiences helps them. A huge togetherness has developed in the group.



Upendo Nassarian Group:

This is a very close-knit group of 20 masai women. Real businesswomen. As a group, they have their own bank account into which they deposit an amount every month. When providing help/loans among themselves, they have agreed as a priority that a member who needs help for her children always has priority in getting a loan. They also have as a joint business activity making necklaces for sale, a small-scale petrol business and a pea project. They have a desire to make a kind of business building to centrally do their activities and store their stuff there properly. They are also thinking of a sewing workshop.



Upendo Maringoni Group:

A group of 10 women who see each other every fortnight. From the contribution, they bought two goats. They had already 'saved' three goats together. With the five goats they now have, they have even more than their husbands, putting them in a more equal position vis-à-vis them.



Amani Bondeni Group

This group consists of eight women, four of whom were present during our visit. Their husbands had little faith in the concept at first, but are now convinced of the benefits. There were initially 12 members, but four pulled out when it became clear that our contribution was really for the group and not the individual members. They have five goats as a group and would like to buy a few more.



Modern Family Group:

One of the few groups whose members include men. In fact, all 13 members are 'Community Healthcare Volunteers'. See photo below left.



Shallom Group:

A group of nine women and two men united by their local church. The pastor is also a member of the group. They now have four goats. See photo above right.

In summary:

These are impressive results on a small scale, very innovative for the participants, strengthening the sense of community and self-reliance. During our next trip, we will also visit the other groups and see how we can further help the groups. We are obviously looking for financial help from sponsors in this regard.

Three small chicken projects in Bang'a.

Ever since the start of our foundation, we have been supporting three small chicken projects run by poor families in Bang'a.

The Neema Women Group and the Mangongoni Women Group stopped raising chickens after selling their chickens because they felt they did not have enough skills for these activities. After an intensive discussion, we decided in November to support the two times five families in a way that suits them better and buy goats for them. In one of the groups, a goat died due to illness. In both groups, some small goats have been born and of course they are very happy about that. Goats, much better than chickens, can withstand prolonged periods of drought and little food. Also, the care required is less intensive.

The Riziki Women Group has switched from broilers to laying hens. We helped them expand the coop with an outdoor run (roofed to protect against birds of prey) and feed. In the picture, the newly built run is ready for use. The chicks have been ordered. The required feed will be bought from Annette's Women Group's chicken project.



Annette Women Group Chicken project – Bang'a

The group, after various setbacks in the past year, has finally caught on. We helped them during this trip with some improvements to the slaughter site and some improvements to the automatic drinking system. In the short term, the group will have enough buffer to start repaying both the loan they have with our foundation and also to pay income to all members. Everyone is looking forward to this moment. Things are going so well now that they will soon scale up from 300 chicks per week to 600 chicks per week. Marketing does not seem to be a problem at all. The expert hired temporarily during the previous trip has done an excellent job.

Update dispensary Kasemeni

It took a while, but during our visit, the second nurse was offered an employment contract from the Ministry of Health. The ministry also appointed an employee for administrative support and cleaning

duties. Good news, then. A current challenge for all dispensaries in the province is limited availability of medicines.

Kasemeni Primary School

The Kasemeni Primary School, located centrally in the community, is in a poor state. This has been known for a long time. For very good reasons, higher priority was previously given to realising a dispensary and the new school in Mzuri. The ambition for 2024 is to really tackle the biggest problems now anyway. It concerns:

- Realising eight toilets for both boys and girls (there are now no boys' toilets at all) and three toilets for teachers;
- Building a new Administration Block for the management and teachers, which will also immediately provide an extra classroom;
- Complete renovation of all existing buildings, including repairing holes in floors and walls, replacing roof panels, painting everything, etc.
- Building a new entrance gate and guard house.

We have had several meetings with contractors, project management, the minister, parents' council, etc., to prepare this project and jointly draw up the plans, schedule and division of roles.

As most important (=short term) new projects we see:

Waterproject Kasemeni

After the major 'renovation project' at Kasemeni Primary School, at the request of the community, the priority will be a water project. At the moment, the details have not yet crystallised. To arrive at a good plan, we have spoken to a specialised consultant and the minister of water, among others.

Senior Secondary School Bang'a.

In our multi-year plan, we have included helping the Senior Secondary School in Bang'a. This is because there is no physics and chemistry room at this secondary school. There are also no toilets for the teachers. Meanwhile, the problems have grown a bit worse. The photo below speaks for itself: 108 16-year-olds in a classroom!

Help here is urgently needed.



We remain active to advance and provide perspective to the Bang'a and Kasemeni communities. Projects are embedded in the community, priorities are set by the community. The bigger goal: to help people help themselves, self-reliance.

However, we cannot achieve this without your support. Larger or small donations, for specific projects or whatever is needed, are greatly appreciated.

Foundation Saidia Kwale
ING: NL61INGB0006412077
SWIFT/BIC: INGBNL2A

Also on behalf of the people of Kasemeni and Bang'a: thank you very, very much in advance!