

HIGH FIVE CLUB

changing lives, £5 at a time

Sekanani Nursery School, Kenya

“In Memory of High Fiver Maura Dahnken-Madsen”

We are delighted this month to announce the High Five Club’s new partnership with the Maasai tribe living on the Narok side of Kenya’s Masai Mara, a community that High Five Club Trustees Manny and Cheryl Mvula have worked with for the past 5 years on livelihood initiatives linked to tourism.



Sekanani Nursery School

A small Maasai owned and run community development organisation called SEMADEP (Sekanani Maasai Development Project) has worked with Cheryl and Manny in delivering the ‘Maasai Villages Tourism Initiative’ in the villages in the Sekanani area to end their exploitation by Kenya’s driver guides when safari tourists visit their villages for cultural tours (see www.tribal-voice.co.uk/propoor.html).



SEMADEP also operate a safari camp in the Masai Mara with all income generated used to implement development projects within the community. They have to date implemented health, education, water and IT access projects, and serve as a role model to other rural communities in the developing world, clearly showing how development can be achieved within a community by the community itself.

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A few years ago SEMADEP set up the first community-owned nursery school in the area, enabling over 50 five to eight year old Maasai children p.a. to access education for the very first time.

Sekanani Nursery School consists of two basic classrooms that were built on a shoe-string and which are



in dire need of renovation, along with two committed volunteer teachers from the community. Over 300 Maasai children have received a solid education there over the last few years, enabling them to progress onto junior school. The current two classrooms are not adequate and are fast becoming unsafe – teaching normally now takes place outside under a tree when there are no rains. The school does not

have any desks or chairs, so the children sit on the floor during lessons. What it lacks in facilities, this small school makes up ten-fold by the tireless support it receives from SEMADEP and the children’s parents themselves in providing small stipends for the volunteer teachers and the provision of one hot nutritious meal a day for all children attending the school – for many their only meal of the day.

High Five Club Support

SEMADEP approached the High Five Club and requested support in uplifting the learning environment and facilities at Sekanani Nursery School, initially through the building of new classrooms.



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We are thrilled to report that our first joint project with SEMADEP has just been completed with the construction of the first stone-built classroom at the school.

It is a very well built sturdy structure which will most certainly stand the test of time. The parents and children were thrilled to see it

officially opened recently by the Area's Senior Maasai Chief who personally thanked supporters of the High Five Club for their generosity in joining hands with his community to make this development happen – hopefully the first of many such joint initiatives at the school he said.

The total cost of materials and construction for the classroom was just £3,389.38, with High Five Club contributing £1,694.69 (50%) and SEMADEP and the villagers themselves (through their now responsible village tourism initiative) contributing the balance (50%) – a truly sustainable and empowering approach to development. These funds also provided for the provision of 20 school desks/seats for the classroom along with a teacher's desk and chair.



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Our contribution was funded through monthly memberships, High Five Club's very generous long-term corporate supporter Roffey Homes (www.roffeyhomes.com) from West Sussex, £45.95 raised during their lunch break by Form 8LVF of William Farr C of E Comprehensive School in Lincolnshire, and donations from friends in memory of the passing away of one of High Five Club's most ardent supporters, Maura Dahnken-Madsen from New York. Maura, aka **'Sheena Queen of the Jungle'** had a deep love for the people and wildlife of Africa, particularly in Kenya and Zambia, and we are proud to dedicate the building of this classroom in Kenya's Masai Mara in honour of her memory. Her spirit will certainly live on in Africa.

For further information contact Dr Cheryl Mvula on Cheryl@highfiveclub.co.uk

Photos Taken during the Opening Ceremony for the New Classroom



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