



Impact Report 2020

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**Busijo secondary students in class with face masks provided by NEF.
Photo courtesy of Anne Truphosa.**

Letter From the Project Director

2020 has been a year unlike any other I have known in my lifetime. Around the world, the livelihoods, safety, shelter, and connection to loved ones and community have been upended, regardless of race, geography, religion, class, or religion. The coronavirus knows no boundaries, and it impacts certain segments of our local, national, and global populations in very, very different ways. Inequalities in access to quality health care, education, housing, and financial assistance have been exacerbated beyond the breaking point, resulting in the exponentially increased marginalization of already vulnerable populations who have been the hardest hit by the pandemic.

At the onset of the pandemic, many of us — myself included — felt helpless as we watched schools begin to close in every country. According to UNESCO, approximately 132 million girls are out of school around the world, and that number has risen during the global coronavirus pandemic. Amid these closings, stark inequalities within education and the ease with which students can fall through the cracks have been revealed. Because schools provide stimulation, socialization, and safety for students, school closures sharply increase the prevalence of violence and exploitation of girls and women, early marriage, pregnancy, and mental health issues. Many girls are at risk of not returning, which hampers all progress made in past years towards the elimination of gender disparities in education and prevents these key members of society from achieving their full potential. This disparity significantly impacts each young woman, their families, and ultimately their countries.

NEF envisions a world that values education for all, where educating youth is a shared responsibility so that each and every one of them may live to their fullest potential. As a woman and a mother with two advanced degrees, I understand the power of an education - how it has shaped me and where I am today. Because I deeply value my education and the opportunities I have been given, my own son's education is very important to me. As a result of the opportunities available to him, it is highly likely that he will grow to have strong work ethics and value his education just as I did.

I strongly believe that access to quality education is a universal human right, and I want the same for youth around the world.

Thanks to dependable donors like you and our local connections, NEF has maintained a meaningful presence in the community during the pandemic. I am grateful for the impact NEF has made this year. In addition to our current program at Busijo Secondary School, NEF was able to expand its support into the local community. In 2020, we provided:

- 4 student scholarships during Term 1;
- 7 hand washing stations that will serve over 1,500 students in three schools;
- 30 textbooks and 1 laptop to keep our female students connected and learning remotely during school closure; and
- 1,700 face masks.

There is still a lot of work to do as administrators and teachers begin forming plans to reopen schools after the new year. Now more than ever, NEF is needed to help girls and women who

consistently battle restrictive gendered norms get safely back to school so they have a chance to achieve their full potential — just like I did. Unfortunately, the longer our students remain cutoff from access to education, the probability of returning wanes dramatically day by day. That is why it is so important that NEF stays engaged. While we may only provide a handful of scholarships for young women within a given year, the education they receive has a ripple effect that benefits their family and their communities.

I am hopeful we will successfully rise to the occasion of helping each of our students return to school. I am committed to carrying out this role that community elders in Kenya bestowed upon me in 2012. The pandemic may have physically kept me away in 2020, but the students and NEF's mission live in my heart. I look forward to returning to Kenya when it is safe to travel, hopefully by Spring 2021.

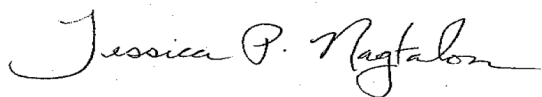
Thank you for your continued support of NEF. By advocating for girl-child education, we will ensure a bright future of economic prosperity for each student, which will ultimately benefit us all for years to come.

I encourage you to continue reading this report to learn about the impact your donation has made.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

Warm wishes,

Jessica Peyla Nagtalon



Project Update

In Kenya, schools closed March 16, 2020. At the time of writing this report, only candidate students who will sit for their national exams in the new year have been attending classes in-person since October 26, 2020. Schools across Kenya are expected to re-open for all students in January 2021, depending on the state of the pandemic.

At Busijo Secondary School in Western Kenya near Lake Victoria where NEF operates, teachers are using WhatsApp to communicate with students and post assignments, but this method depends on students having access to technology. About half of the 69 Form 4 (senior) students participated in the distance learning. Even in the best of times, conditions at Busijo



*A female entrepreneur in Funyula, Kenya makes masks for NEF.
Photo courtesy of Anne Truphosa.*

Secondary School and many other rural schools are less than ideal. They are often short on teachers and books, electricity is spotty or non-existent, and no running water or indoor bathroom facilities are available. The Director of Studies at Busijo reported that some teachers had not been paid for several months. NEF field officer Anne Truphosa recently shared that “Busia County is leading Kenya in COVID-19 cases, being on the border with Uganda and experiencing such heavy truck traffic. Being one of the counties with the highest poverty levels, community members cannot afford

masks and handwashing facilities, including many of our students who come from poor families.”

Thanks to donors like you, NEF was able to continue operations and respond to changing needs amid the economic repercussions of the global pandemic.

At the onset of school closures, NEF set aside scholarship funds for current students and then mobilized resources to provide face masks, handwashing stations, and revision books based on feedback from our school advisory council and local partners. In addition to funding the local production and distribution of nearly 2,000 facemasks for students, staff, and community members, NEF donated seven handwashing stations to Busijo Secondary School and two other local schools that serve as many as 1,500 high school students. We also provided a laptop, modem and Internet access to our college student, Harriet, so she can continue her university education remotely. Anne Truphosa, NEF’s local field officer states, “Thanks to NEF, our

students have been provided with a mask and access to hand washing facilities at school, which has created a safe learning environment at such a critical moment during the pandemic.”



Community members wear masks distributed by NEF. Photo courtesy of Anne Truphosa.



Local secondary students and NEF Field Officer Anne Truphosa standing near jerricans and soap provided by NEF. Photo courtesy of Anne Truphosa.

NEF At-A-Glance

Here is an overview of what NEF and our students have accomplished with generous support from our donors since NEF was launched in 2012.

- ❖ 8 years in operation
- ❖ 18 female students supported (Form 1 through Form 4) with scholarships, uniforms, shoes, solar lanterns and books.
 - 3 current high school beneficiaries
 - 1 current university beneficiary
- ❖ 12 high school graduates (80% success rate)
- ❖ 5 college graduates
- ❖ 4 health/wellness workshops
- ❖ 1 (first) college prep seminar; reached 300 students
- ❖ 114 students and 4 teachers received HIV/Aids Test (testing was voluntary and available for the entire school)
- ❖ 7 students received computer training at Bumbé Technical Training Institute
- ❖ 1 audio/visual projector donated to the school
- ❖ 1 laptop and modem
- ❖ 7 handwashing facilities provided
- ❖ 30 textbooks
- ❖ 1,700 face masks for school staff, students and community members
- ❖ 100 feminine hygiene kits distributed

Recognizing NEF Champions

NEF wishes to recognize and celebrate two champions of NEF: Benjamin Odima, retired as Deputy Principal at Busijo Secondary School in July 2019, and Edmond Ogombe, NEF's inaugural project coordinator, who moved to South Sudan the same month to take a job with an international NGO. Mr. Ogombe is helping local communities enhance their agricultural productivity and livelihoods in this fledgling and beleaguered country. Both gentlemen were instrumental in the establishment of NEF during its early days and in guiding our students. They are champions of girls' education and youth advocacy in general. Even while working and living abroad, Mr. Ogombe continues to be an important advisor to the NEF team. His institutional knowledge of the NEF program at Busijo and his trust and rapport with our students and their families are an invaluable asset to NEF. We are grateful for Mr. Odima and Mr. Ogombe's years of service.



Photo Right: Mr. Edmond Ogombe with Jessica.
Photo courtesy of NEF staff.

Introducing Anne Truphosa, NEF Field Officer



Ms. Anne Truphosa. Photo courtesy of NEF staff.



Anne Truphosa, NEF Field Officer with current students and graduate, Velma. Photo courtesy of NEF staff.

NEF welcomed Ms. Anne Truphosa as its new part-time Field Officer in mid-2019. Ms. Truphosa stepped in for Mr. Ogombe. Anne is a resident of nearby Funyula, Kenya where she works for the Ministry of Health. A college classmate of Mr. Ogombe, Ms. Truphosa was a research assistant to Jessica Peyla Nagtalon in 2011. Since joining NEF, Ms. Truphosa has provided a seamless transition to ensure that NEF communicates and works with the Advisory Committee at Busijo Secondary School to monitor and mentor the students we support. This year alone, she successfully organized a face mask campaign (see photos above) by engaging local female business owners to make the masks according to Kenya Ministry of Health guidelines.

Annual Workshop

Due to COVID-19, NEF was not able to organize a student workshop at Busijo Secondary School in 2020. Instead, the money that is generally set aside for this purpose was channeled toward providing other types of support to students and the community.



**Busijo Secondary School students attending the first college advising workshop, sponsored by NEF.
Photo courtesy of Anne Truphosa.**



**Former Deputy Principal, Benjamin Odima, with Jessica, NEF students and
Director of Studies (R, behind students). Photo courtesy of NEF staff.**

NEF Students 2019-2020

The heart of NEF's girls education program is providing scholarships and opportunities for personal growth to empower young women so they can achieve their educational goals despite economic hardship. Your donations are making a real impact on each student you support.

Currently, NEF sponsors four girls at Busijo Secondary School – Damaris, Cynthia, Wilimina, and Harriett, a young woman who joined Rongo University in August 2019 after completing high school in 2018 with support from NEF. You can read their stories below. No new scholarship awards were granted in 2020 because schools closed during the first semester as the result of the pandemic.

NEF's students face numerous challenges both at school and at home that affect academic performance. Busijo Secondary School is a public, co-ed day school with limited resources and inadequate instruction and materials, including textbooks. With these limitations, administration staff and teachers do the absolute best they can to help the students succeed. Many students travel long distances by foot, which can be tiring and dangerous, especially for girls. At home, students help their families with chores, such as fetching water and firewood, preparing dinner, caring for younger siblings, and working in the shamba (vegetable plot). This leaves limited time for children to study after dinner by lanterns provided by NEF. Under these circumstances, even the top students at Busijo Secondary School and within NEF's program struggle academically. This is why the supplemental materials that NEF provide and its work with the community are so important.



**NEF students with their head teacher, and Chair of NEF's Advisory Committee, Mr. Allen Wanjala (left), and NEF's local field officer, Ms. Anne Truphosa (middle).
Photo courtesy of NEF staff.**

Cynthia Kadogo Form 2

One of our newest and youngest beneficiaries, Cynthia, joined Form 1 at Busijo Secondary School at age 16 in March 2019 and awarded a scholarship from NEF in May 2019. Based on her current grades and her thoughtful answers to the essay question, Cynthia showed great promise and great financial need. The oldest of five children, Cynthia and her siblings live with their grandmother since Cynthia's mother passed away and her father is a smallholder/peasant farmer.

A solid C student with the potential to do better, Cynthia she hovered around position 4 and 5 in her class throughout 2019, but maintained in the #1 position in her stream of Form 1 students. She excels in CRE, physics, and chemistry, but languages, history, and mathematics require more work. Cynthia's teachers are certain that with more effort she can improve. Currently, Cynthia is at home helping to care for her siblings.

Wilimina Juma Form 2

Wilimina was one of the highest performing students in the applicant pool in 2019, having been awarded a scholarship from NEF in May 2019 at the age of 17. The youngest of nine children, Wilimina lives with her older brother, and while some of her siblings went to secondary school, Wilimina dreams of going even further in her education by attending college to study business management.

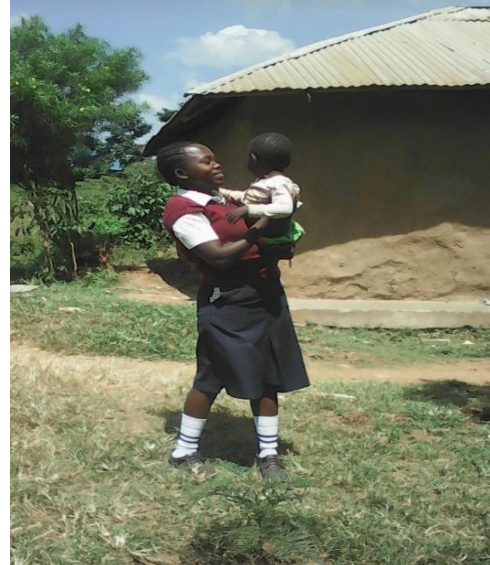
Wiliminia is a consistent B student. Throughout 2019, she held position #1 in her class and her stream of Form 1 students. She excels at mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, and geography. Similar to Cynthia, she struggles in languages and history.



Wilimina Juma (left) and Cynthia Kadogo (right), who joined as Form 1 (Freshman) students in May 2019. Photo courtesy of NEF staff.

Damaris Akello *Form 3*

Damaris became a NEF beneficiary in 2018 when She joined Busijo Secondary at age 18. Damaris did her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in 2014, but she was unable to join Form 1 right away because her parents had separated and she could not afford the school fees. She decided to go to visit her mother in Mombasa. Once there she sought employment as house help, which helped her save money to pay her admission in Form 1 at Busijo Secondary School. Damaris now lives with her maternal grandmother and young son. She is now excelling in high school with support from NEF.



Over the past two years, Damaris has maintained position 1 in her class, completing Term 3 at the end of 2019 with a B+. She is a strong student in most subjects, especially the sciences and history, but like her other classmates she struggles in languages and mathematics. Damaris actively serves her community by assisting an elderly neighbor fetch water and firewood, and she is active in her church choir. Currently, Damaris is at home caring for her son.

Akinyi Harriett *NEF high school graduate; now a university student*

Harriett is 21 years old. Her father is a watchman and she has four siblings. Before sponsorship, Harriet was living with her elder sister who had married right after high school in order to help support her family. Her sister took Harriet with her to help in her new home with the hope that the husband would support Harriet's education. This did not work as planned. She was often sent home for school fees although she was working in other people's farms to raise money for her tuition.

Harriet was awarded a spot in NEF's program at Busijo Secondary School in 2015. She maintained 1st or 2nd position throughout high school and graduated in 2018 as one of the top performing students in her senior (Form 4) class. Harriett scored a B on her national secondary school (KCSE) exam, and in June 2019 she was awarded a spot at Rongo University in Kenya. With support from NEF and her father, Harriet joined in August 2019 to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Horticulture. Leaving her home and family for the first time was a "bit difficult", but Harriett has continued to be a determined and hard-working student.



Like other girls, Harriet has moved through unique adolescent challenges and intractable patriarchal systems with strong determination to achieve her dreams. She gives thanks to the reproductive health workshops organized by NEF for having stayed on the right path. "I have seen five of my classmates drop out of school because of pregnancy, but I am glad I resisted the temptation of negative peer attraction" says Harriet. Her older sister, Selline, was inspired by

Harriet and her interactions with NEF to go back to school after being married for five years. She has since enrolled in a nursing course at Busia Medical Training College, Kenya.

In the Spring of 2020, Harriett was devastated when classes were halted due to COVID-19. In October 2020, Harriett reached out to NEF to inform us that she would be able to return to campus to take exams, but then learning would continue remotely. She petitioned NEF for a laptop so she could keep up with her studies. NEF was able to meet her request with donations carried over from last year and purchased her an HP laptop with software and a modem through a local vendor in Nairobi. A special note of thanks goes out to Dr. Hannington Odame of CABE for his assistance in handling the logistics for NEF and making sure the laptop got to Harriett safely. Back in 2018, she told us she wants to be a “world-wide changer”, and we think she is well on her way to achieving that goal.

Student Achievements

Because we can all use some good news this year, allow us to share a few student achievements since NEF was launched in 2012.

- ❖ Judith Ndeta graduated as an Early Childhood Development teacher and is currently a practicing teacher in Bungoma;
- ❖ Sharon Ouma graduated with a diploma in Business Administration from Maasai Mara University in 2018;
- ❖ Akinyi Harriet graduated from high school in late 2018 and was accepted at Rongo University in Kenya in June 2019 (*read more about Akinyi above*);
- ❖ Velma Odhiambo graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Kibabii University in November 2019. In 2020, she passed her teaching exam. Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit Kenya she was teaching at local schools; and
- ❖ Victorine Juma, a former NEF beneficiary, landed a job as head nurse at a hospital near Mombasa, Kenya, and she welcomed a new baby in December 2019. Victorine reflects: "Receiving my education has empowered me to take control of my life and my family, and I can clearly visualize my future. Girls with dreams become women with vision, and NEF has strived to empower young women to create a world where this vision runs wild. My achievements through NEF’s support has demonstrated the existence of great potential young women have and their stabilization of their families is overwhelming."

Financial Overview

In 2020, NEF operated on a budget of nearly \$4,000. As of the end of November, 40% of that funding is reserved for tuition and support services for our current female students when schools reopen, such as mentoring and supplies. Pandemic-related support will continue to be provided as needed. Ninety-four (94%) percent of the FY 2020 funds went to NEF program expenses, such as those described above. Administrative costs have been kept low because the majority of operations and services are exclusively within Kenya and NEF project director Jessica Peyla Nagtalon volunteers her time and absorbs administrative costs. The goal of the current year-end fundraising campaign is to allow NEF to increase the number of student support and services provided. We will also apply for grant funding in an effort to diversify our resources and expand support.

The Year Ahead

As we move into 2021 and look forward with hope to a better year, we anticipate greater need. NEF's outreach and engagement at the student, school, and community levels will be more important than ever. We will continue to provide our core level of service and support - scholarships, training, and mentorship for students, and we will continue to provide facemasks and hygiene supplies as needed to continue to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Jessica and Georgia also hope to reschedule their trip to Kenya and the student workshop. By taking cues from the school advisory council, local administrators, and government partners, NEF will have a solid understanding of the most pressing needs, how we can complement their efforts, and, in turn, make the biggest impact. When schools reopen in Kenya (potentially in January), NEF is committed to helping young women restart their education and make their learning environment as safe as possible for all students.

Goals for 2021

Over the next year, NEF seeks to:

- ❖ Continue to provide face masks and hand washing stations for local schools (to help keep students and staff safe), as needed;
- ❖ Advocate for the back-to-learning initiative for the school aged children;
- ❖ Advocate for greater focus and awareness on students' reproductive and mental health and emotional well-being as schools return. This includes, but is not limited to, providing feminine hygiene supplies and continuing to sponsor student health workshops and HIV/AIDS testing; and
- ❖ Raise additional funds to increase the number of student scholarships we award to accommodate the increased need. This includes exploring ways to reach young people who are not in the school system and connect them with access to business enterprises, livelihood projects, or vocational training. The goal for our 10 year anniversary in 2022 is to expand to the sister school.

Appreciation

As we conclude 2020, a year that most of us will be happy to forget, I am grateful for the opportunity to be a champion for girl-child education and for everything we and our students have been able to accomplish up to this point. I want to thank our donors who enabled us to have the resources to respond in a real and impactful way. I am also exceptionally grateful for the talented, trustworthy, and nimble team of people in Kenya who help operate NEF and provide oversight and outreach for our program at Busijo Secondary School. These people include Anne Truphosa, Edmond Ogombe, Dr. Hannington Odame, Executive Director of the Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship, and Mr. Wanjala and the Advisory Committee at Busijo Secondary School.



Photo: NEF Advisory Committee with Anne Truphosa at Busijo Secondary School. Photo courtesy of NEF staff.

Get Involved

In the year ahead, these services will not be possible without support from our loyal donors. The continued education of the girls and young women in Western Kenya NEF serves depend upon donors like you to ensure they receive equal access, encouragement, and support towards the completion of their education. Only through the education of these girls and young women will they become active and contributing members of their local economy, strengthening the sustainability and prosperity of their communities. Below, you will find a couple of ways to champion these young women!

Donate

Here are the ways in which your donation will make a difference:

- ❖ **10 locally-made facemask = \$10**
- ❖ **1 box feminine hygiene supplies = \$15**
- ❖ **1 handwashing station (1 large jerrican + soap) = \$31**
- ❖ **1 set of revision books = \$40**
- ❖ **1 year high school tuition for 1 girl = \$150**

- ❖ 1 year of college tuition (varies by institution) = \$400-500

Plases consider a tax-deductible donation in any amount.

Donations Can Be Made in Two Ways

- ❖ **NEF's Secure Donation Page:**
Hosted by our fiscal sponsor, *The Zawadisha Fund*
<https://www.classy.org/checkout/donation?eid=52123>
- ❖ **Mail a Check To:**
The Zawadisha Fund
P.O. Box 1517
Truckee, CA 96160
**Please write 'NEF donation' in the memo line*

Volunteer

Share your skills with NEF!

Current assistance is needed in the following areas:

**Social media
General marketing
Fundraising**

*Please contact Jessica Peyla Nagtalon at nasirumbi.educ.fund@gmail.com
for more information if you are interested.*



Website

www.nasirumbi.org

Facebook

www.facebook.com/NasirumbiEducationFund