



Christian Brothers  
East Africa District

# East Africa District Newsletter

**DRAWN BY MYSTERY, DESTINED FOR LIFE.**

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## ———— IT IS I WHO MUST BEGIN ————



It is I who must begin.  
Once I begin, once I try --  
    here and now,  
    right where I am,  
    not excusing myself  
    by saying things  
    would be easier elsewhere,  
without grand speeches and  
ostentatious gestures,  
but all the more persistently  
    -- to live in harmony  
with the "voice of Being," as I  
understand it within myself  
    -- as soon as I begin that,  
    I suddenly discover,  
    to my surprise, that

I am neither the only one,  
    nor the first,  
nor the most important one  
    to have set out  
    upon that road.

Whether all is really lost  
or not depends entirely on  
whether or not I am lost.

~ Vaclav Havel ~

(*Teaching With Fire*, ed. by S.M. Intrator  
and M. Scribner)





## ANNUALLY PROFESSED BROTHERS WORKSHOP

The workshop started on a high note with Brothers arriving on time, and welcoming each other with smiles and warm hugs. We newly professed Brothers were also there, energetic and eager to know what takes place in AP (annually professed) workshops. We thank our brothers for their reception and helping us feel part of this family of Blessed Edmund Rice.

After dinner we were all officially welcomed, then we watched a movie (Of Gods and Men) which was a curtain raiser for the workshop, mostly on community living. The movie reminded us about various dynamics in community living, and how to engage with one another as we are “Drawn by Mystery” in the day to day events of our lives.



Back row Brs Martin Khaemba, Edwin Wekulo, Kelvin Otieno, Amos Kutwa and Elly Sakwa. Front row Isaac Odongo, Melchizedek Musamia, Daniel Kyalo, Silverio Wafula and Allan Mwashii

On Saturday morning we started with a very moving prayer, which connected us more with the topics of the day. The prayer also made us examine ourselves more on how we relate with each other and how ready are we to own our mistakes without pointing fingers to others for our personal growth in the community.





We had sessions on community living by Br. George Massay; active listening by Br. Tony Shanahan; and effective communication by Sr. Jane Gikonyo (PhD) of the Loreto Sisters. It was an informative and inspiring workshop for we were equipped with necessary skills for effective communication, listening and healthy community living.

The workshop gave or improved our competency to form joyful communities characterized by intimacy, gentleness, compassion and love, as our Congregation Chapter documents call us.

**Br Allan Mwash**

### ———— WE ARE COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY ————

There is a famous African proverb that says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” At times fast is fun but for a while. It is great to cover a lot of ground, but then you get weary and worn out. Going far simply can’t be done without people to support you.



**Br Julias Oluoch, Nicholas Minandi and John Paul**

Having grown in awareness of the value of companionship in our search for deeper meaning in life, we had our first support group meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, last Saturday. The Arusha group comprises three brothers at the moment. The meeting was very significant not only for reconnection but also being present with one another, listening and openly sharing our hopes, successes and obstacles in an atmosphere of great trust. There was positive energy in the group.

The feelings of being encouraged, supported, connected and being listened to were prominently expressed during our meeting. We became aware of the need to support one another in the journey we share. The experience during our time together was a great reinforcement of our consciousness that it is only with each other that any of us can go far.

**Oluoch John Paul**





## EDMUND RICE CAMPS NAIROBI - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our recent community engagement experience took place in various villages within Kibera: Silanga village (St John's primary school), Kisumu Ndogo village (Niam Education Centre), 42 village near show ground (Damside preparatory school), Gatwikira village (Gifted Hands Academy), Kianda village (Brainstorm junior school), Lindi village (Bright Star primary school) and lastly Kambi Muru village (New Hope academy). This engagement was very helpful as we were able to get first-hand information from the community. It was also a moment in which we were able to mingle with members of the community that we work with. This also ensured that we also get to learn of the problems that different schools undergo in the provision of the seven basic needs of children.



The aim of this engagement is to widen our borders by recruiting new schools for our activities and programs, and also to find out if the seven basic needs of children are met in these schools, and ways they can be further helped with mentorship programs during community outreach.

The scope involved both students, pupils and their administration that took on board teachers, head teachers (principals) and directors of the schools.





The method used in engagement involved face to face conversations, questioning where necessary, taking a walk within the schools and finally through encouraging students in different levels.

#### FINDINGS.

- Most of these schools use rented premises to provide the basic need, that's education as learning situations become a major challenge.
- Feeding students is a challenge due to the increasing number of pupils in almost all schools visited.
- Majority of the teachers in these schools are untrained but just offering their skills to help pupils.
- The schools are very congested due to limited space e.g. Damside preparatory sits on a 40 by 60 m<sup>2</sup> piece of land with a population of 280.
- The schools need course books as they don't have well stocked libraries. They need laboratories for those with secondary sections.
- Livelihood still remains a big challenge for parents who cannot afford to pay fee of Ksh 500 per month for their children.



In conclusion, most schools have similar challenges as outlined in the findings. Thus ERKG can act as a bridge to help conquer their respective challenges.

Recommendations:

- Enrolment of the new schools in the ERKG kids' camps and activities.





- Edmund Rice Karibu Group to introduce mentorship programs in their yearly programme so as to mentor and encourage students in these schools.
- More workshops for both teachers and camp leaders on child protection policy and on human rights.

**Sammy Muga**

———— **MARY IMMACULATE REHABILITATION CENTRE** ————

I am a recently professed Christian Brother presently waiting for my assignment to be part of the TST program in India. During this time, I have been asked to work in the Mary Immaculate rehabilitation Centre. The rehabilitation center recruits street children from the Mukuru slums and offers them love and care to help them change for the better and prepare them to be responsible people in the society; the Centre also, and, most importantly, helps the street children to locate their parents or relatives.

The center has two sections, the school and the technical programs. The younger ones are helped to enter the education system. Those who are past the school age are taught carpentry. Once they have completed the program, they are helped to get an attachment or a job with various companies with which Mukuru is involved.



Over the last two weeks I have been involved in helping the children who are ready to join various high schools in which they had secured an admission. I have also been involved in going to the street to





recruit new children. It is an exciting but a challenging experience trying to convince the children to leave the street and take them to the rehab Centre. To enter into the places where they live (base or mtaa) is a serious and risky business that could result in being robbed of ones belongings (phone or money or any valuables) My first visit was scary as they demanded that I surrender my phone and money, but after one of the other staff told them I was also a teacher and not Nairobi county council officer or police, they returned my phone. Now, I am received with cheers and high fives with a nickname "Mode" and I can walk in the "base" sit, relax and talk to them and share stories.

In a way, I am leaning from these youths as much as I m helping them: the youth in the base really inspire me because they don't live as individuals; they live as brothers and share everything they have and protect each other. They are also joyful and happy and welcoming and help each other without any fuss.

Br Kelvin Otieno

## **CALENDAR**

FEBRUARY 19-23	CLT meet African leadership teams (Lusaka)
FEBRUARY 25	Final Profession of Simon Peter Odongo
March 7-8	Province Formation Team Meeting (Nairobi)
March 13-14	Formation Committee Meeting (Nairobi)
March 20-24	PLT Meeting (Nairobi)
March 24	Mary Rice Launch of the Strategic Plan
April 4-8	EREA immersion
April 13-17	District Assembly – Mary Ward
April 18	Community Leaders Meeting
April 20	Departure of OP group to India
May 2-7	Mission Capacity Support Team Meeting
May 15-16	Formation Committee Meeting
May 15-19	PLT Meeting
May 27	Br Pascal Kituku's death anniversary
May 31 – June 6	AP Long Workshop
June 26-30	Accompaniment In-services training

Many blessings

George

