



Happy Home Newsletter



Aunty Liesbet has come back for the 3rd time !!!

Happy Home Orphanage is a non-profit organization created in June 2006 by citizens of Kenya, Canada and Belgium. Happy Home is located in South-Western Kenya about 400 kilometers from Nairobi, in the district of Rongo, near the town of Migori.

The first 12 children arrived in November 2006 . Today, Happy Home accommodates **30 children** with room for more. The project is funded by individuals and organizations in **Kenya, Belgium, USA and Canada.**

Our aim is to help **orphans and vulnerable children** by providing them a nurturing family atmosphere in which to grow. Each child receives access to safe shelter, good nutrition, basic health services and education. We believe it is important for the children to grow up in their **own culture** within their **own community** and to keep contact with their extended families. To that end, we recruit staff from the area, send the children to a local school and encourage them to go on family visits for 1-2 weeks twice yearly during school holidays.

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Volunteers come back

Now that the post-election crisis in Kenya is over, volunteers are returning to Happy Home. Liesbet, our most loyal volunteer, came back for the 3rd time in September 2008. Thanks to Swahili classes taken in Belgium, she was able to communicate fluently with the children. She wrote many nice stories which you can expect to read in the December newsletter. Thank you so much Liesbet !!!

We are expecting a new volunteer, Marie-Pierre, arriving next week for 4 months

... Latest news ...

Renovations DONE = 30 kids

It took a long time, but finally, the renovations of the large building are finished !!! (see page 3-7). This has freed up space for more children, and, as the number of sponsors has increased we have added 6 cases (see page 8). There are now 30 Happy Home kids !!!

New school

Because many of the children were not progressing in school, Happy Home recently decided to change the kids to a better school. The aim is to better prepare them for the future as they become independent (page 15)

New manager

Our previous manager, Hassan, found moved on recently looking for new opportunities to improve his future.

We understood that we needed to get a more senior manager, one who was known and respected by the community, trusted by the Board of Trustee members and was more skilled in management.

Ababu, Isabelle's former field assistant, was the perfect person. Happily, he accepted our offer!!! (page 7)





BEFORE

AFTER

!!!! Large building FINISHED !

Finally...

It was more work than expected and took a much longer time than planned... We had to break the roof, increase its slope, rebuild the roofing structure, install new iron sheets, add windows and doors, paint, add ceilings, ... But finally, the building is ready to be inhabited !!!!

Below a small picture-history of the whole process



May 2007
November 2007



July 2007
May 2008



August 2007
August 2008



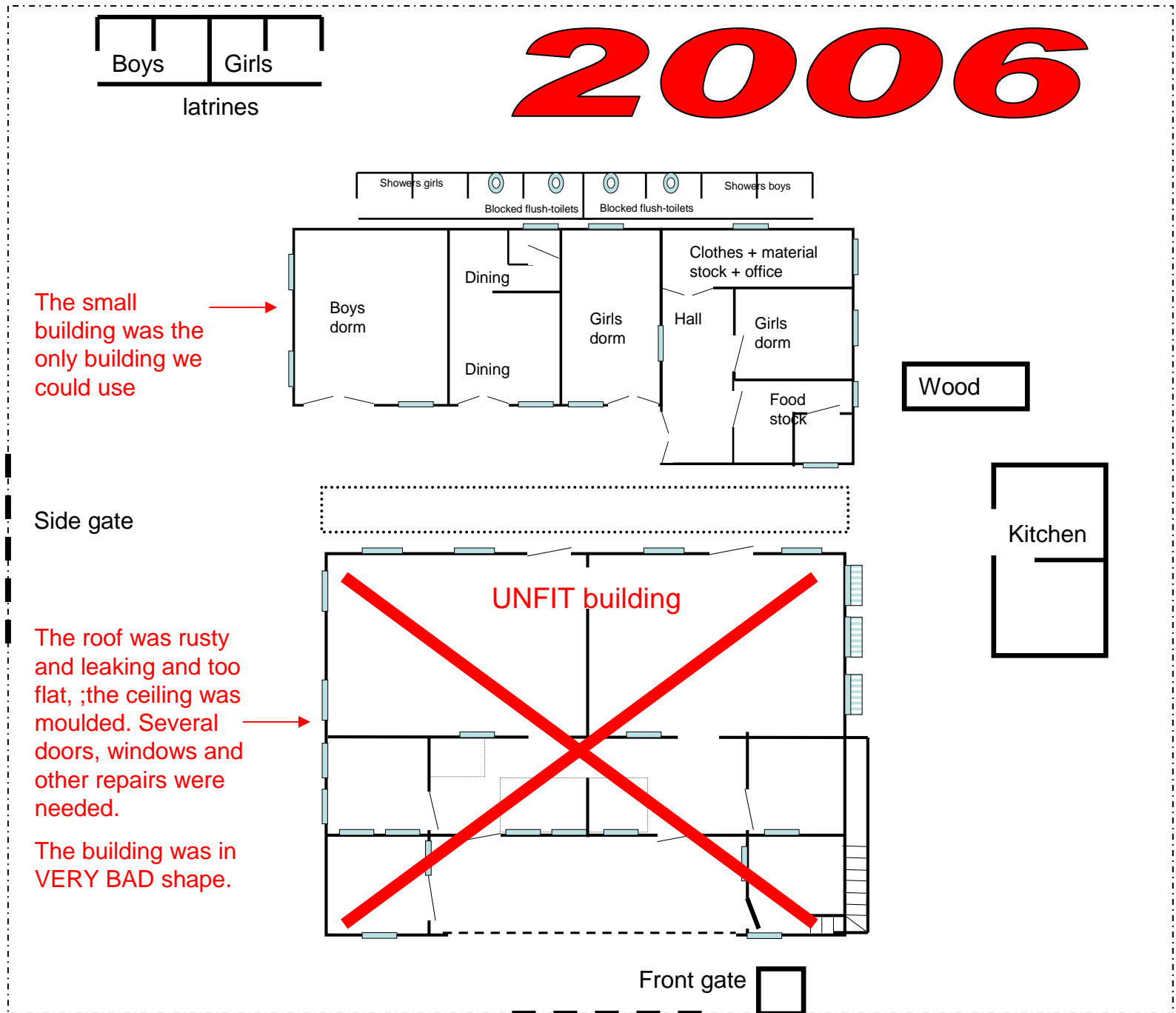
September 2007
October 2008



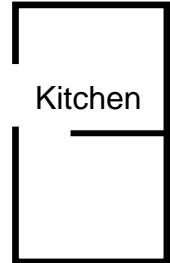
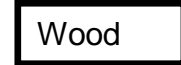
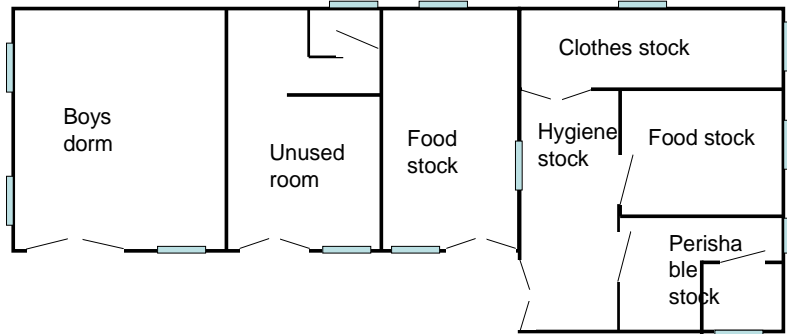
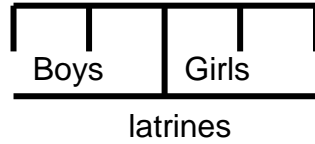
How is was

When we received the building in 2006, only the small building was useable. We therefore spent g 2 years living in tight quarters. The office of the manager was hidden in the stock room and space was limited to no more than 25 kids.

In red you can see the work that needed to be done



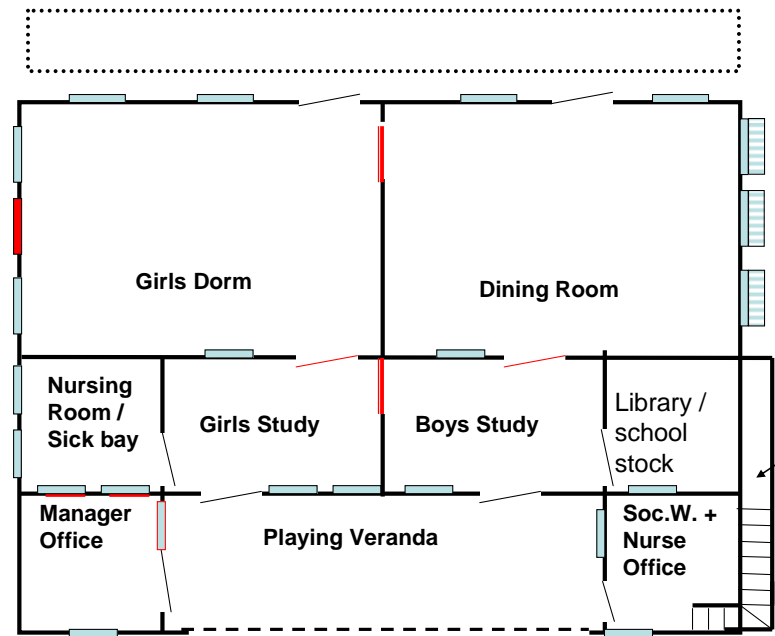
2008



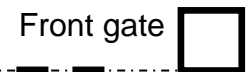
Side gate

The girls dorm and the dining room have been moved to the big building, making space for more children

The roof and ceiling of the big building were rebuilt. Windows, doors and other items were repaired.



Stairs to volunteer room



How it is

The works took a long time, partly because of the political crisis in 2007-08, 4 months during which work effectively came to a halt throughout much of Kenya.

Now that the large building is finished, the girls' dormitory and the dining room were transferred to make space for storage rooms in the small building. We now have offices and study rooms.

And most importantly, we have space for more children !!!

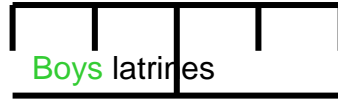
How it will be

Thanks to the Wembly Fund and the African Childrens Haven in the USA, we are currently renovating the underground watertank.

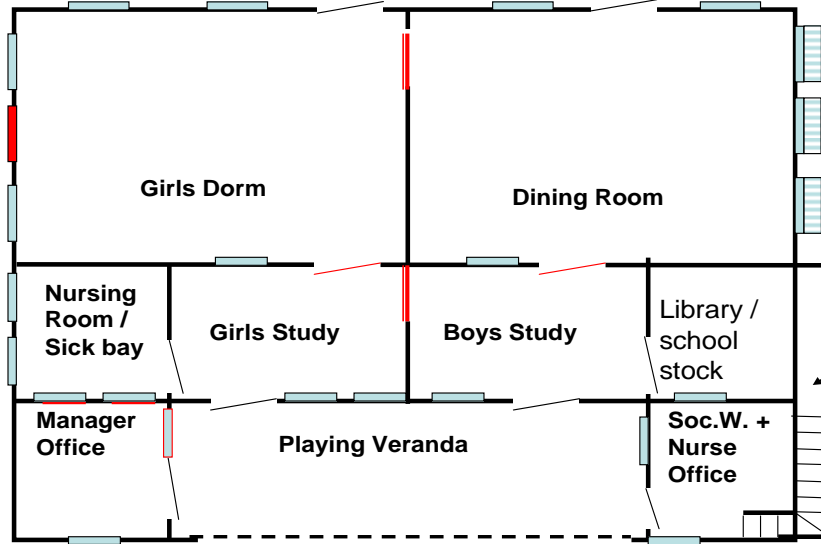
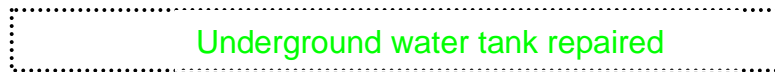
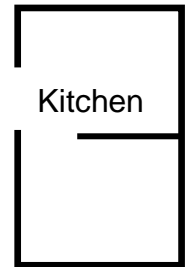
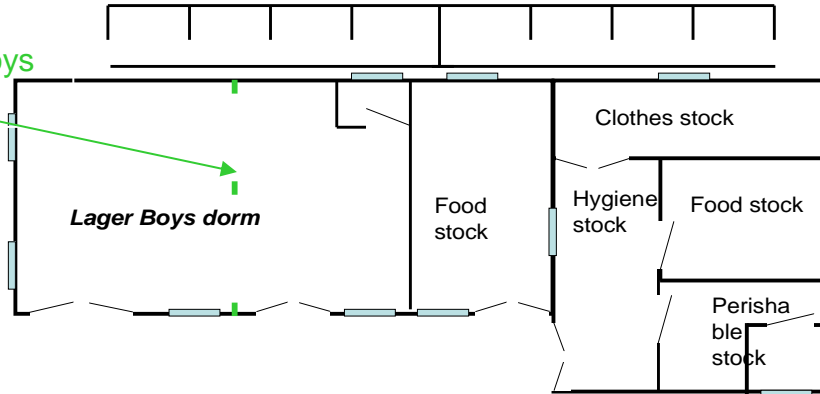
The only renovation remaining is to remove one wall in the small building to expand the boys' dorm. At the moment, most boys share beds as only 8 beds can fit in the room for 14 boys.

We would also like to add an extra block of latrines (drop toilets).

Plan 2009



Walls removed to make a larger dormitory for the boys



Stairs to volunteer room

Building new latrines to separate boys and girls



Our new Happy Home



Our new dining room also serves temporarily as a study (until we can buy additional furniture)



The new girls' dorm is so large that the girls use it to sing and dance in the evening



Onze new manager

Japhet Ababu Asimba

We have known Ababu for more than two years, during which time he worked with Isabelle on a soybean project of the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of CIAT (an international research centre). Before then he had had a long career in financial services in the private sector. Among others, was responsible for a finance department and has been in charge of managing about 100 staff. He is father of three, grew up in Stella and is a respected person within the community. He knows our expectations and we know him and his capacities. Our local partners, Alfred and Bernard, have also known him since years. Our Belgian colleagues (Hilde, Roel en Christian), Canadian (François) and US donor representatives (Ed and Linda) also know him.

We are very happy that Ababu accepted our offer to take care of the children. We are convinced he will put all his energy into Happy Home, in an honest and fatherly manner.

Edouard trains Ababu on using the management system



Ababu and the children



!!!! BIG NEWS 30 kids in Happy Home !!!!

25-1 girl = 24 : Monica left

Monica, the “sister” of Benter, turned out not to be a sister but the cousin. Both of her parents are still alive and they thought to give their girl more chances by sending her to Happy Home with her cousin.

Our social worker discovered the truth during her follow up of the children. In collaboration with the local authorities and community, our manager followed up on the case. He discussed the issue with the parents, who understood their mistake and came to pick-up their child. Together with the local authorities, we continue to follow-up the girl at home to be certain that her family is capable of caring for her.



Monica (left)
and Benter (right)

24 + 6 new kids = 30

Thanks to the support of many new sponsors (and dedicated old ones), we were able to increase the number of children to 30.

During the last year, the number of children remained flat because of lack of space. We could not host more than 25 children till October 2008.

The new kids arrived in October and integrated very fast in Happy Home.

(from left to right)

Joyline, Mbone, Moses, Pieter, Jane-Myriam, Lydia





Joyline (new)

- **Want to become:** doctor
- **Hobbies:** washing dishes, sweeping the house, football
- **Favorite colour:** red
- **Favorite food:** chicken, eggs
- **Best friend:** Elisabeth, Susan, Bentar

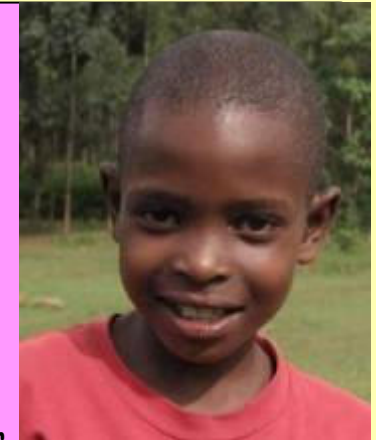
Age : 10

School grade : Class 2

Family re-unification

Faith

- **Want to become:** teacher
- **Hobbies:** fetch water, rope skipping
- **Favorite colour:** white
- **Favorite food:** cake, chapati
- **Best friend:** Elisabeth, Bentar, Lydia



Age : 9

School grade : Class 2



Blessing

- **Want to become:** airplane pilot
- **Hobbies:** cleaning tables, rope skipping
- **Favorite colour:** blue
- **Favorite food:** chapati, mandazi
- **Best friend:** Elisabeth, Bentar

Age : 6

School grade : Nursery





Evance

- **Want to become:** preacher
- **Hobbies:** read story books, hand ball
- **Favorite colour:** green & yellow
- **Favorite food:** local green vegetables, ugali, chapati
- **Best friend:** Alex (school)

Age : 15

School grade : Class 6

Family re-unification

Elisabeth

- **Want to become:** tailor and shopkeeper
- **Hobbies:** repair clothes, reading story books
- **Favorite colour:** red
- **Favorite food:** dengu, chapati, pineapple
- **Best friend:** Bentar, Andisi (school)



Age : 11

School grade : Class 4



Pieter (new)

- **Want to become:** bus driver
- **Hobbies:** football, playing
- **Favorite colour:** white
- **Favorite food:** chapati, mandazi
- **Best friend:** Amriodo, Onyancha

Age : 10

School grade : Class 3



New kids



Lydia

- **Want to become:** airplane pilot
- **Hobbies:** study, rope skipping
- **Favorite colour:** white
- **Favorite food:** chapati, juice
- **Best friend:** Elisabeth, Elivar

Age : 9

School grade : Class 3



New kids



Jane-Myriam

- **Want to become:** tractor driver
- **Hobbies:** football, fetching water
- **Favorite colour:** white
- **Favorite food:** chapati, rice
- **Best friend:** Faith

Age : 8

School grade : Nursery





Moses

- **Want to become:** driver
- **Hobbies:** football, weeding the fields
- **Favorite colour:** yellow
- **Favorite food:** chapati, rice, mandazi
- **Best friend:** Osike

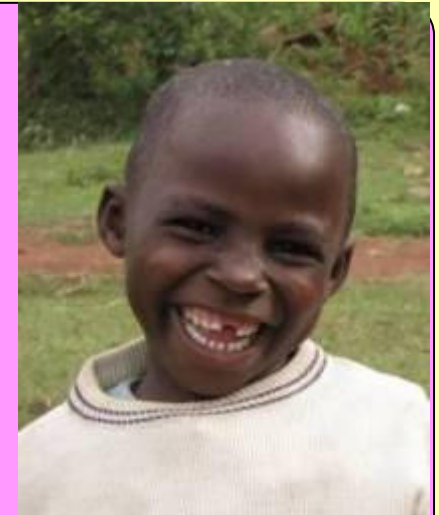
Age : 8

School grade: Class 1

New kids

Sheila Mbone

- **Want to become:** shopkeeper
- **Hobbies:** cooking, playing
- **Favorite colour:** blue
- **Favorite food:** chapati, soda
- **Best friend:** Abibo



Age : 6

School grade: Pre-nursery

Soon 2 more...

Sheila Mbone and Moses have another brother and sister of 9 and 11 years who really need help, and a bigger brother of 13 who feeds the whole family. Indeed, this family of 5 have no adults to care for them. **Thanks to the support of new sponsors, we'll be able to add the two small kids before the end of the month. We are currently collecting all required documents to be able to admit them. The 13-year-old will stay with his uncle and visit his brothers and sisters during the weekends. MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS!!!**



October 2008: 30 Children in Happy Home



From Mukuyu School to Highlight Academy

Problems with Mukuyu School

Our manager was concerned. The children had really progressed during the first year in Mukuyu, but this year they stagnated and even regressed.

The school deteriorated during the past years, the best teachers left, the number of children increased to 100 per class. There is free education” in Kenya but the government doesn’t invest enough...

Education is very important for the Happy Home children as they don’t have a family to rely when they mature. They need a strong education to stand on their own.



Elisabet told us that in the previous school there were 109 in class and that the teacher found it really hard to teach such a large group.

Solution: Highlight Academy

Highlight Academy is just behind Happy Home. It’s a private school, but is relatively inexpensive compared with other private schools, and above all, has good results. In 2007 it was ranked as the first school in Uriri division and the 8th in Migori district. The school gave us a permanent reduction of 10% on the school fees. In total we now pay about 40€ per child per year more than enough to give them a real chance in life. The children started in the last term of 2008, from September to December.



Evance told us that he now has a real chance for a good education. There are now between 8 and 30 in a class, depending on the year and the teachers have time for the individual kids.



Fundraising news: Kenya

The computer, given by Lieve in Belgium finally found a screen in Nairobi (the Belgian screen was too heavy to be carried in our luggage to Kenya). Thank you so much Helga !!! The computer brought a lot of excitement to Happy Home.



Day 1: "A technological revolution at Happy Home" Our manager, Ababu, learns to turn on the computer.



Day 1: "Is this a TV? No a computer" The children discover the computer. All write their name, letter by letter, on the screen.



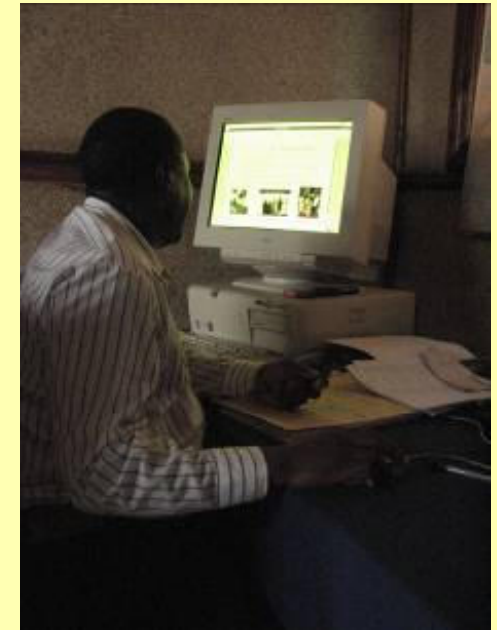
Day 2: Edouard guides Ababu through computer sciences and management documents.



Day 2: Ababu learns to type and make budgets on the computer.

After 1 month: "Literacy"

Ababu is proud to show how he explored the computer during our absence and agrees the computer will really help him in the management of the home. He found the newsletters on the computer and said it taught him all about the history of Happy Home.



Fundraising news: Belgium

During the last few months, we received again quite some support from different organisations and individuals, including the following:

- New **sponsors** (godfathers and godmothers)
- New donations for **happy home baby's**
- The bank **KBC** gave us **1250€** for the installation of a waterpump on the well. This well is being used by different people from the community of Stella, including our children.
- **STRAPEX** becomes a devoted partner of Happy Home. They gave us a new contribution of **1500€**.
- The town of **Sint-Genesius-Rode** gave us in 2007 a large amount of 4500€ to finalise the renovations of the home. They recently contacted us again to see if they can help us in 2007. We submitted a project about furniture for Happy Home and wait for their response.

Translation of Website

Annika from Belgium translated the website for us. Indeed, till September, we only had an updated version of our French website. The Dutch and English version dated from 2006. Annika already translated the website into Dutch. Thanks a lot Annika !!!! The English version is still in draft shape, but we found a native English speaking who will correct and finalise it. Thank you Terry-Lynn

NGO AMIE supports Mukuyu School

Thanks to the Belgian NGO AMIE, Mukuyu school, the old school of our kids, have not been forgotten.

The school is overpopulated and many children can't pay school fees. Therefore, the school loses teachers and goes backwards. The school fees of about 1,5 \$ per month for nursery, about 5 \$ for primary and about 130 \$ for secondary are too high for poor families.

To assist the school and the children, the Belgian organisation AMIE started a school fee project in which a total of 17 nursery kids, 109 primary school kids, and 20 kids from secondary will be assisted.

The children of Mukuyu school are very happy



Fundraising news: USA

On Tuesday September the 2nd, The Wembly Fund hosted an event on Manhattan's lower west side to raise money for Happy Home Orphanage. The event focused on raising the funds needed for a **water tank renovation project**, and was successful in raising the **\$2,500**. The event was hosted by **Skye Dobson**, founder of The Wembly Fund and entertainment was provided by the incredible **Li'nard and his band the Many Moods**. The weather was fabulous and an spectacular sunset over the Hudson River provided a magnificent backdrop to a great evening of dancing and fun for a great cause. Guests were able to win prizes, bid on art work and watch slide shows of the children The Wembly Fund supports.

The works started in **October**. After completion of the renovation, the tank will be waterproof, and full of water for most of the year, and will be pumped to a large container **providing running water** to the kitchen and dining room !!! **THANK YOU SO MUCH !!!!**

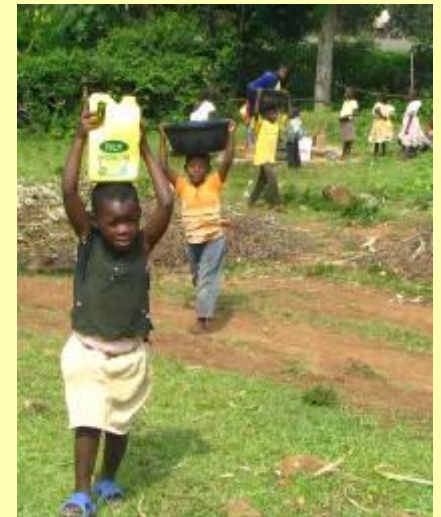


Skye, the Wembly Fund founder, and Linda Ercole-Musso, from African Childrens Haven



The children will not need to carry litres of water any more from the well to the home, except during the very dry months of the year.

That means they will have more time to study !!!



The underground water tank will be repaired, gutters installed and the rain water from all the roofs will be collected « under » the home !!!



The renovation of the watertank started !!!!



The tank is huge !!!

STEP 1: The underground tank has been repaired, re-cemented with waterproof cement and is ready to be filled with water.

STEP 2: The pipes that will bring the water along the ground to the tank have been repaired.

STEP 3: It is now time to fix the gutters. The wooden structure has already been installed.

After this, we will purchase a large tank, in which the water will be pumped to bring running water via gravity to the dining room.

The wooden structure is ready to install gutters.



The inside of the tank is repaired and recemented



Happy Home Contacts



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I want to help !!!

Names:
Email:.....
Contact address:

o I register as a **godfather/mother** of Happy Home and agree to give* *monthly / quarterly / yearly* donations of* *KSh / € / US\$ / Ca\$* to Happy Home Orphanage bank account (in the country indicated below) starting from the date of/ 200..... In case of termination of my sponsoring, I will contact Happy Home by email or post at least two months in advance.

o I give a **casual donations** of* *KSh / € / US\$ / Ca\$* to Happy Home Orphanage bank account (in the country indicated below)

o I would like to **help in the country office** with (specify) or organise a Fund-raising happening..... (specify) in (town)on . / .. / 20....

o I would like to **Volunteer in Happy Home**, can help with and am available round the following period to

The money will integrally be used to provide a safe and comfortable home to total orphans registered in the orphanage and to maintain their home. The contact email will in no case be transferred to anyone.

Done in on Signature,

Please tick the country office you wish to relate with:

o **Kenya:** Happy Home Orphanage 012 464 552 5400, NBK, Awendo Branch (swift: NBKEKENXXXX)

o **Belgium / Europe:** 979-326 10 73-35 (IBAN: BE57 9793 2610 7335 - BIC: ARSPBE22). Please mention your contact details(email). Tax deductible > 30€ /year

o **USA:** Checks payable to the "African Childrens Haven" and mark the memo line as "Happy Home Kenya" . (US income tax deductible)

o **Canada:** bank account registration in process, contact François Dubé

PLEASE POST OR EMAIL TO THE CONTACTS LEFT

