



Happy Home Newsletter

Happy Home Orphanage is a non-profit organization created in June 2006 by citizens of Kenya, Canada and Belgium. Happy Home is located in Southwestern 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 **31 children** with room for more. The project is funded by people and organizations from **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 maintain 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.



Marie-Pierre, our new volunteer

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...Latest news...

Volunteers

Marie-Pierre, from Belgium, volunteered at Happy Home from November through March. Recently, a young lady from Venezuela arrived for another 3 months. Marie-Pierre gave English classes to the youngest kids and started teaching French to the older children. She also made videos.

A Lot of News

In early January, two new kids joined Happy Home. We are now 31 (see page 5-6). Many new projects are planned for 2009. Thanks to the support of many partners in Belgium and the USA we now collect rainwater from the roofs. We also plan to install a water pump on the village well, raise chickens, soon cook on bio-gas generated from our two cows, and procure new toilets (see pages 7-11).

Farewell

Isabelle and Edouard, who arrived in Kenya in 2006 and founded the Happy Home together with Alfred, Tom and Rose from Kenya, left as planned in December 2008. They now live in Montréal, Canada, where they follow all Happy Home activities through email and telephone. Both continue to serve on the Board. The farewell party was beautiful but sad (see page 12-13)

Partners

From now on we also have a local partner involved in Happy Home. **The Lion's Club of Kisii** takes care of the regular control of our accounts and our activities. Elke, a new PhD student who will arrive in Kenya this summer, will continue the contact with the children. The future newsletters will contain her pictures.

Marie-Pierre teaches the nursery kids



Edouard and Isabelle enjoy their farewell party



The Lion's Club visits Happy Home.



But first... some stories about the children narated by Liesbet

Adventures of the smallest ones

The nursery kids usually return from school earlier in the day than our older kids. One day, they noticed that the maize that they had stored in their self-made-iron-sheet-play-home was missing. The thief turned out to be a mouse! They started hunting for the mouse through the garden, but failed to catch it. Ombwayo then decided to call Kihungu at school with his self-made mud mobile phone.

Liesbet heard their conversation:

“Kihungu?” ... “Huko wapi? (where are you? ...)” ... “Utakuja? (Are you coming? ...)” ... “Panya amemaliza mahindi kwa ile nyumba, umesikia? (a mouse ate our maize in the small house. Do you hear me?)” ... “Haya, asante. (ok, thanks)” After the phone call, Liesbet asked his what Kihungu had said. “Atakuja na atakufa panya. Sasa ninaenda ku-charge simu yangu kwa stima ya nyumba. (He comes to kill the mouse. Ok, now I’m going to charge my mobile phone in the play-house). They mix English and Swahili...

Babu, Zimbwani and Abibo
in the playhouse



David Ombwayo,
their mud mobile
phone and the play
house in which the
maize disappeared

Osango and Ombwayo built a
long street with self-made mud
cars



Stories narrated by Liesbet

Animals in Happy Home

Miaauw the cat

Happy Home has a new “watchman”: a small cat named “Miaauw”. She chose her name when the children asked aunty Liesbet what the cat was called. During the night, the cat sleeps in the food store to watch over the maize. In the morning, she often enjoys her well deserved breakfast... The result is that she sleeps all day, tired of her nocturnal hunting.

Miaauw the cat is in charge of watching over the food stocks. She’s the champion in catching mice. The nest built by Edwin for his doves



Edwin’s pigeons

Class 5 of Mukuyu Primary School had a “pigeon” project. Edwin Veve asked the teachers if he could keep some at home and brought a couple to Happy Home. After some time of good caretaking, Edwin was proud to see three little baby doves.

The pigeons stayed at Happy Home until July. Because they were not very clean, the social worker agreed with Edwin to exchange his doves for chickens.

First chicken

Edwin accepted because chickens produce eggs.

As we now receive assistance from the Wembly Fund and African Children's Haven we will soon have about 50 chickens.

The few first chicken are already with us.



The boys and the doves



New kids in Happy Home

Two new kids

We have two new kids at Happy Home. After the Christmas holidays, Mbone and Moses came back with their elder brother and sister, Rose and Duncan.



Our little Mbone (front left) and her brother Moses (front right) are happy because their brother Duncan (back left) and sister (back right) are now with them at Happy Home.

Jane-Myriam finds her grandmother

Jane-Myriam, one of our 6 new kids found her grandmother over the holidays.

Her grandmother, who lives far away, (no one knew where) came to pick her up during the holidays. When she heard that her grandchild lived in an orphanage, she decided to take her at home. We are very happy as we believe that the family is the best place for the children and that they should not be at Happy Home if someone is able to care for them.



Jane-Myriam lived with us for two months when she needed support.



January 2009: 31 Happy Home children



New projects in Happy Home for 2009

Watertank

Skye Dobson of the Wembly Fund in the USA working with African Children's Haven, our US partner, organized an event and collected enough funds to renovate the water tank at Happy Home, install gutters and pipes. The Lion's Club of Kisii in Kenya added another large plastic tank and plastic gutters. The water collection system is now fully functional !!!



Plastic gutters collect water from the roofs.

The rainwater of the front roofs arrives in the large tank of the Lion's club.



The tank from the Wembly Fund collects the rainwater from the smaller building.



The Lion's Club came in December with an additional water tank and plastic gutters.

Thank you soo much !!!



Skye Dobson, the founder of the Wembly Fund and Linda Ercole-Musso, our partner at African Children's Haven in the USA

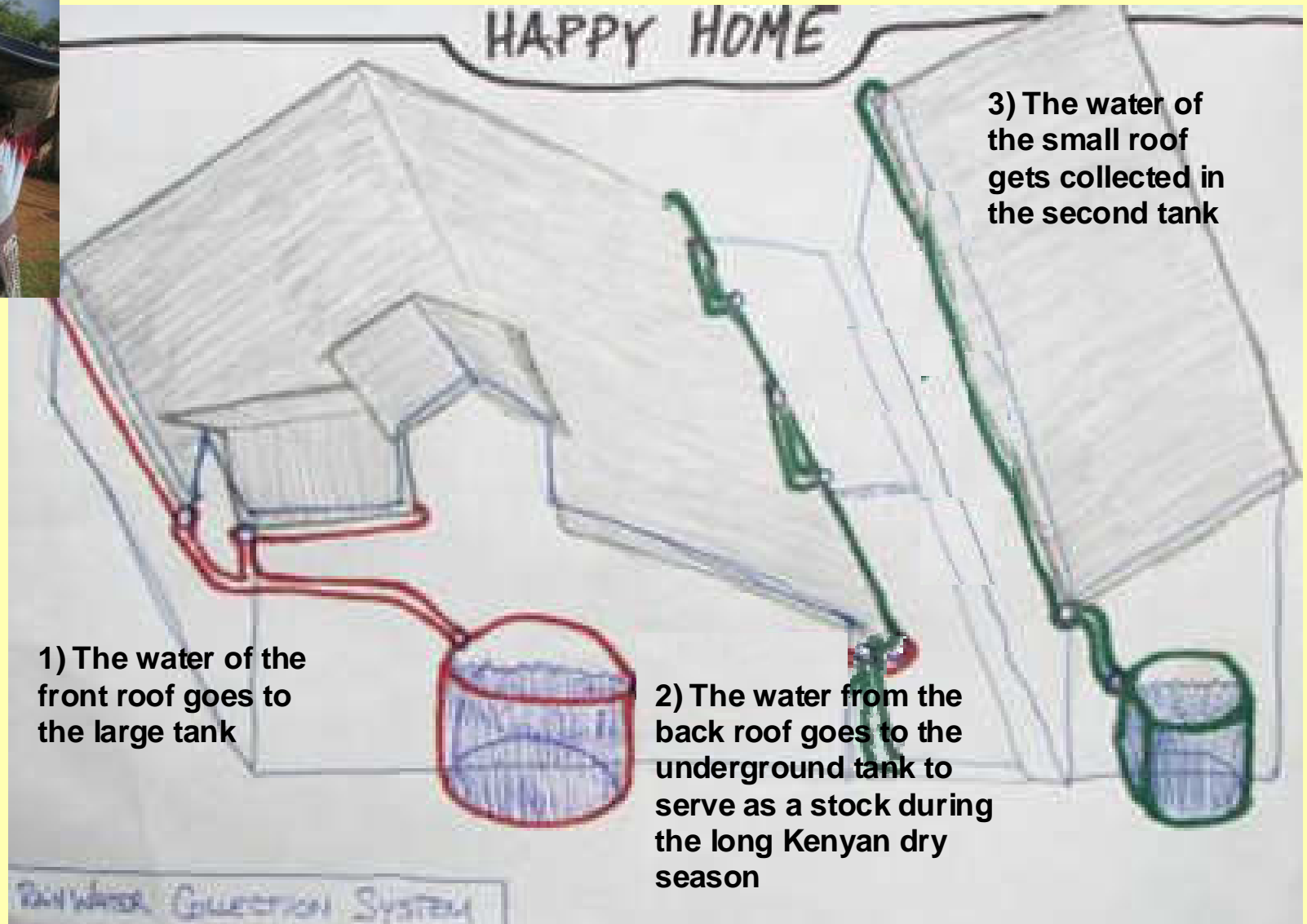


Ababu, Mamdogo and Edouard admire the renovated underground tank





From now on our children don't need to carry large quantities of water every day. They can open a tap...



New projects in Happy Home for 2009

The existing water well is a safety hazard (the water is okay to drink, however). This well is used by Happy Home kids, as well as by children from other homes in the neighborhood. The children have to be careful not to fall in when they pull up the water bucket.



A waterpump

The water tanks will serve Happy Home during the rainy season, but during some months a year the stored water will be finished and we'll need to tap the water from the well located close to the roadside. To make this well safer, the Belgian bank **KBC**, provided money for a water pump. Some friends of **Doctors Without Borders** assisted with advise and contacts. We plan to start installation soon.

We'll soon have a pump on the water well as shown in the photo.



Chicken in a hut

After financing our water tank, **Skye Dobson** of the **Wembly Fund** started a "give one dollar for a chicken" project. Working in partnership with our friends at African Children's Haven in the USA, they collected enough money for 50 Happy Home chickens. We started with 5 chickens and are writing a proposal to build a small house and fence for the 50 before purchasing them.



The kids made a temporary chicken hut next to their small house.



New projects in Happy Home for 2009

A larger boys' dorm

The girls moved to their large dormitory recently, but the boys are still in a small room. Thanks to funds received by the Belgian **Accenture** in 2008 we'll soon remove some walls to make the boys dorm larger!!!



New WCs and Showers

With funds from Accenture, we'll also build a new toilet block and shower facility for the girls. We'll need those as the number of kids increases.



Furniture

The kids moved to the new large building in November 2008. The only problem was the lack of furniture. We had to move the tables from the dining room to the study room and the kids had to share beds. The Belgian town of **Sint-Genesius Rode** gave us funds to make new tables, beds and benches which arrived in early 2009. The kids are happy !!!



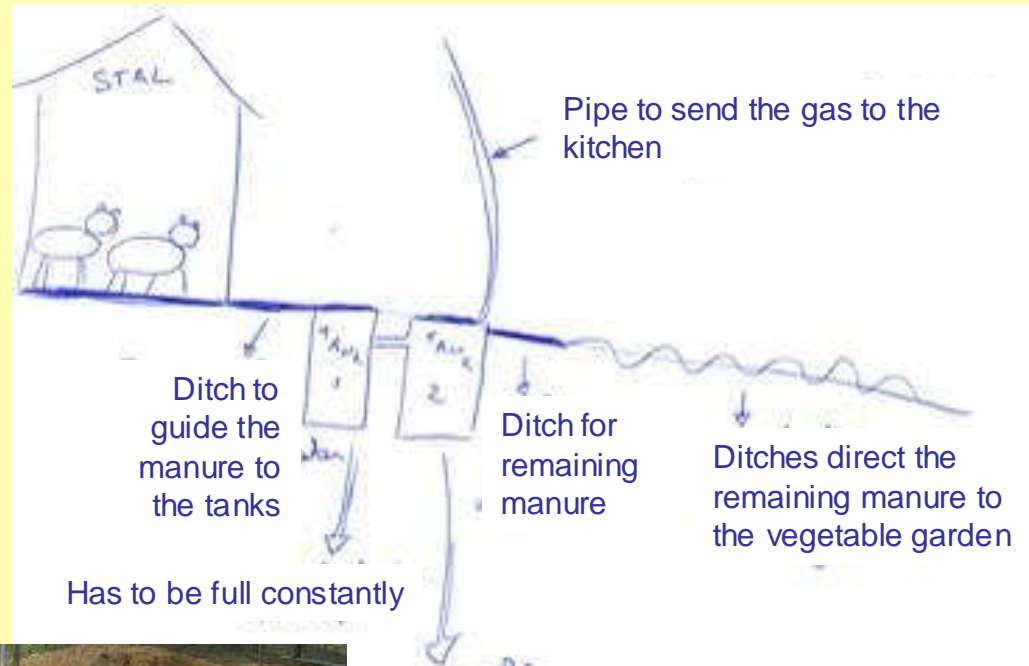
New projects in Happy Home for 2009

Cows and biogas

Yes, you read it correctly !!! Happy Home is preparing to install a biogas system. The project is funded by **Stedula (Sustainable Agriculture)** of the **University of Ghent** in Belgium. Thanks a lot to **Annelies** who presented the project to our friends at the University. Thanks also to the members of the **Lion's Club of Kisii** and to **Lien** from the **BTC (Belgian Technical Cooperation)** for their technical advise.

A long project

This project will be a very long one.
 Stage 1 is to plant quality grass to feed cows.
 Stage 2 is to purchase 2 cows and build a shed for them.
 Stage 3 is to dig holes in which the cow dung manure is stored in anaerobic conditions to allow it to create biogas.
 Stage 4 is to install a biogas stove in the kitchen. We'll save about 30\$ per month on firewood and help the environment.
 Stage 5 is to collect the residue of the manure and to use it to fertilize a vegetable garden.



Anaerobic conditions in which methane gas is produced.

It looks as simple as this!!!
 Pictures from Vietnam.
 (SNV)



Every month we purchase a great deal of firewood for cooking. We'll soon save a lot of money.



Edouard and Isabelle move to Canada

Isabelle Recalls How Happy Home started

I arrived in Kenya in February 2006 to work in agricultural research and development for 3 years. Edouard followed me a few months later. The family of Alfred and Rose, two wonderful people, invited me to stay with them during my field work. I soon became part of their family. One evening in March or April 2006, the idea of Happy Home started. Rose “Mamdogo” (little mama) organized everything. Alfred gave us the building, and Roel, Hilde and Christian accepted the difficult task to collect funds in Belgium. After a few months I received a phone call from the USA, where Ed and Linda from Texas proposed to fundraise for us. In November 2006 we had the first 12 kids in Happy Home and thanks to a lot of new godfathers and godmothers the number of children continued to increase.



Tom, Alfred, Rose and I. April 2006 during the initial steps of Happy Home.



November 2006: 12 Happy Home children

Edouard, Tom and I with our first 12 kids

Ready to leave

Today there are 31 joyful faces at Happy Home, boys and girls, 5 to 15 years old. A group of “auntie’s” and “uncle’s” take care of them. Alfred (Kenyan), Bernard (Kenyan), Edouard (Canadian) and myself (Belgian) are the Board of Happy Home and follow the budgets and expenses on a monthly basis. The Lion’s Club in Kisii accepted to visit the home once in a while and to organize a yearly financial audit. A new fundraising team also started in Canada, thanks to François. All the pieces of the puzzle are in place for us to leave Kenya and continue our task from a distance.



The sad departure

The kids organized a party for us

On Friday 13th of December, the day before the departure of the children to their families (uncles, aunts, grandparents) where they spent the Christmas holidays, the kids organized a party. Tasty food, songs, and gifts were waiting for us.

It was a really nice party and it was hard to hide our tears. We've known some of the kids for two years, others a bit less. We know their personalities, their happy moments and their sadness. We'll miss them but we'll stay in tough from a distance. And one day we'll go back !!!

Isabelle

We opened nice presents that the children made for us



Songs and dances: a wonderful presentation created by the kids.



The tricky game of passing on the ring from mouth to mouth using a toothpick



Fundraising news: Belgium

Thanks a lot to Anninka for the translation of the website into Dutch.

The ladies of Markant in Neerpelt. During the lottery they collected a nice sum for Happy Home. Thank you soo much.

A new 'Happy Home baby' Louise, daugther of Sara and brother of Marin. Thanks a lot to Louise and her parents for their support !!!

Thanks to the new godfathers and godmothers and to all people who organize activities to collect funds for us.

Thanks to Sint-Genesius-Rode, Accenture, Stedula (Steunpunt Duurzame Landbouw) and the bank KBC for all projects for 2009. Thanks to Lien of the BTC and the people of Medicins without Borders for their advise.

INVITATION !!!

Happy Home Happening

Same as last year, we want to invite all godfathers, godmothers, friends of Happy Home and all people interested to come together for a joyfull afternoon. On **Sunday afternoon 26 April**, from **14:00**, we organize a gathering in the **landbouwinstituut of the KULeuven, Kasteelpark Arenberg 20, Leuven**

For the kids we'll have games and animation, which were also played by the Happy Home children.

We'll also present the latest information about Happy Home and our kids and well have some nice snacks and drinks for everyone.

We hope to see you there!

Hilde, Christian, Roel, Karlien, Joke, Elke, Liesbet and Isabelle



Fund Raising News: USA

Linda Ercole-Musso and Ed Sulzberger, our partners at African Childrens Haven in the USA want to thank all USA donors who contributed so generously to Happy Home over the Christmas holiday.

“We know that the investment of our donors in Happy Home is well spent and is helping the children to grow up to lead healthy and productive lives, says Sulzberger.

Ercole-Musso adds that many donors live in an area that was hard hit by Hurricane Ike in September. Their contributions, she says, are very special and greatly appreciated.

For more information about African Childrens Haven please visit www.africanchildrenshaven.org.

Fund raising news: Kenya

Thanks a lot to Teryline who translated the website for us from French to English !!!



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I want to help !!!

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

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.

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

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

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:

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

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

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

Canada: bank account registration in process, contact François Dubé

PLEASE POST OR EMAIL TO THE CONTACTS LEFT

