

## Hello and greetings to you all

Firstly, a huge thank you to all those who have given and continue to give, to make such a resounding difference to the lives of the Daasanach Tribe in Northern Kenya. Your encouraging words, your time or your monetary support to continue this vitally needed assistance is greatly appreciated.

On behalf of The MCFT (The Michael Cronhelm Foundation Trust) and the Daasanach Tribe I hope this newsletter helps to convey our gratitude for your contributions to making such positive change.

We continue to dedicate resources in a focused way and encourage the Daasanach people by way of empowering them with tools to become more self reliant.

‘A hand up, not a hand out’ is always at the forefront of what we are striving to do.

It is a great pleasure to share this account of the July 2014 visit to The Michael Cronhelm Foundation Trust projects in Ileret. What was achieved and our plans going forward for 2015, particularly in regard to the El Bokoch Primary School on the outskirts of the village.

### VISITING THE NORTHERN FRONTIER – JULY 2014

Liza Cronhelm together with Alfred Mwangi, Korie Haile and Christena Dowsett drove most of the way to Ileret in convoy with the Koobi Fora Field School. ‘The Earl’ – the land cruiser donated by Steve Conlin, performed admirably although it is now in need of a new gearbox which Alfred Mwangi (chief Mechanic) will replace on our next visit. At the same time we’ll decide if we can replace the petrol motor with a diesel one which, long term will significantly save on fuel costs.

After provisioning fresh food supplies in Nanyuki along with Alfred doing necessary maintenance on the vehicle we headed for the first overnight stop in Isiolo. Police road blocks have been encountered more frequently during this past year as security concerns have increased. On a couple of occasions we had a police officer ask Christena and I directly if we were okay. On other occasions whilst being stopped at road blocks the Kenyan members of our team were told “I’d like a cup of tea”, which is a euphuism for someone wanting a monetary gift. Our team know the right way to handle these situations and that we have a zero tolerance for that kind of thing – so the end result is always ‘no tea’!



After waiting the best part of the day in a dusty roadside tea house in Archers Post we joined the Koobi Fora Field School convoy late in the afternoon.

We drove a route new to us which bypassed the rough, tough and in certain conditions notorious Maralal Hill. Travelling via Archers Post, Laisamis and Ngnurunit greatly helps to conserve tyre tread and is a safer route than via the Maralal Hill and Baragoi where banditry can be an issue. The current security situation means that travelling in a convoy is essential.

Driving ahead of the convoy, we turned off at Laisamis, a small village off the main road to Marsabit to quench our thirst with a quick cup of smokey camel milk tea. As soon as the convoy sped by we caught up with them driving through spectacular mountain rock formations and flat riverbed country all the way to South Horr. We pulled off the road at Ngnurunit just on dark to spend the night in a basic bush campsite whilst the field school carried on, determined to overnight in South Horr.

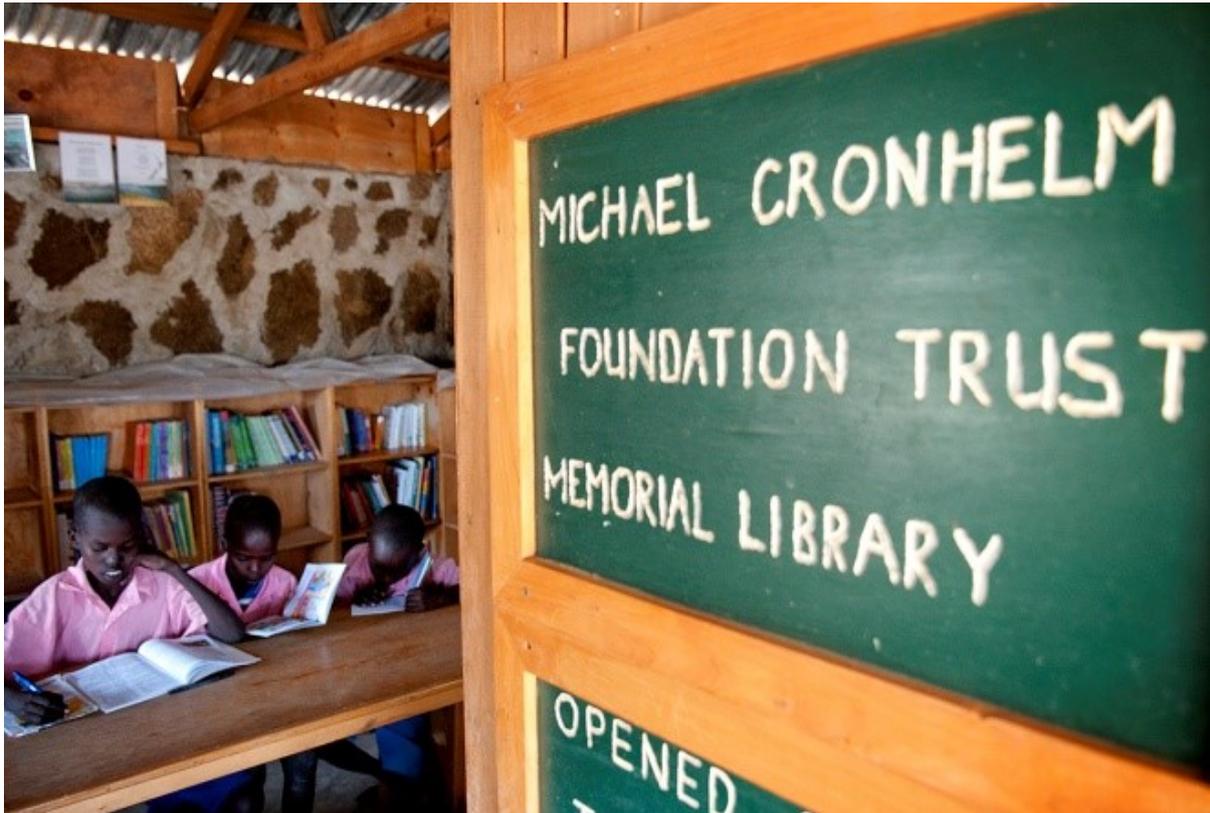
Breaking the trip like this meant we had a few extra and welcome hours in Loyengalani the following day to rest up before the final push through to Ileret. Arriving late at night we were lucky to be able to spend the first night at the AIC Mission house. The next day we got the camp set up down by the river bed close to Watali village. Andrew joined us as cook and we employed a watchman to keep good guard over the camp.

## LIBRARY AND PRESCHOOL

With the camp organised we headed into Ileret to visit The MCFT Library and preschool. It was a joy to see the kids unpacking their new books and see how well the facilities are being cared for. Repairs we will need to look at in 2015 are replacing the roofing iron and a couple of window sills, but apart from that everything is in good condition. We enrolled a new class of 28 four and five year olds in the nursery school and built a new cookhouse. The children are being taught by Rebecca, who has been in this teaching role for a couple of years now.



***Preschool Class in the grounds of the Library. A new class of 28 four and five year old children were enrolled at the Nursery School.***



*New books were provided from Nursery School to Upper Primary level. On our next trip to Ileret we need to focus on books for the younger students.*



*School assembly outside the library during which Korie Haile our Kenyan Co-ordinator, gave encouragement to the children to do their best with their studies by using the library often.*

*The solar lamps purchased last year were all accounted for and continue to spread good light in the evenings whilst the high school students are studying.*



*El Bokoch Primary School grounds with the covered shelter where children have their after class meal.*

## WAY FORWARD IN 2015

### With El Bokoch Primary School and beyond:

Throughout this year in depth discussions have taken place with the Elders, village leaders, pupils and parents to ascertain the best way forward to serve the needs of the Daasanach. We have identified the most critical needs of the community and what action needs to be taken in the future, should funds become available.



*Meetings with Elders where land was given for the El Bokoch School.*

## BACKGROUND OF EL BOKOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL:

This school was built by a Nairobi based organisation called BTL and has been run by them for six years. BTL no longer have funding to continue the school as of last year and have been looking for a creditable organisation to gift the school to.

The MCFT took over the running of the school in the last term of this year and with additional classroom construction planned for 2015 we have the full support of the Daasanach in and around Ileret.

El Bokoch School currently provides pre-unit or nursery education and class one of primary level based in two side by side concrete block classrooms. These classrooms were built by a Nairobi construction company assisted by local Ileret stone masons (Fundis). Beside the classroom building there is a cookhouse and two toilet blocks. In the school grounds there is an open sided shelter where pupils have their after class meal.

Our plan to build additional classrooms in 2015 will involve the Daasanach working alongside MCFT volunteers. This will not only provide a much needed opportunity to earn an income, but to also learn valuable building skills. This model of including as many local people in the construction project as possible will assist in keeping the resources within the village and empowering local people i.e. income and up skilling.

When we arrived in July there had been no food in the school for the after class meal since the beginning of the year. This had greatly impacted the student roll with many children following their parents to the remote cattle camps to be assured of at least one meal a day. As a consequence of not having food in the school the roll had dropped to less than 50 pupils for both classes. All remote Kenyan Schools have a once-a-day food programme in place, as this may be the only meal the children have.



El Bokoch has three teachers who have been at the school for six years and although unqualified have been taught to teach by co-ordinators for a Daasanach translation project in the area.

El Bokoch teachers have done a fine job with their pupils, who to date have always performed better at end of year exams in comparison to their fellow students enrolled entirely at Ileret Primary School.



***El Bokoch School teachers Rachel and Lydia with some of their class one students.***

Currently after completing class one at El Bokoch the pupils enrol at Ileret Primary which can mean a walk of several miles to and from school each day for those who are able. For some pupils the distance is simply too far which subsequently means they don't attend school at all.

El Bokoch is a vitally needed educational resource in the area and serves a community of people who are living long distances from the center of Ileret Village, the location of the Ileret Primary School.

## **EL BOKOCH STUDENT ROLL AND SCHOOL MATERIALS:**

Currently there are 63 pupils with a stipulation agreed with the teachers that no further pupils will be added to the school roll until the New Year.

On visiting the school for the first time this trip we discovered that there are children who have no uniform and in fact do not have clothing at all. There had been no school materials for the previous six months so the children were using small stones to form their letters and numerals to enable them to continue with their writing and arithmetic lessons. Prior to this, the teachers told us they were using sun-dried goat droppings for the same purpose. Despite these challenges the children were doing well and enormously excited by our visits. The teachers asked the children what they thought we were doing at the school, they replied almost in unison "they are coming to help us"!

During this trip The MCFT provided the students with notebooks, pencils and erasers as well as writing materials for the teachers. We delivered to the school two tonnes of a combination of beans and maize for the after class school meal programme. A portion of the grain supplied for the current last term of the school year is going to The MCFT Nursery School. The grain is being stored in a dry and locked building under the supervision of our co-ordinator.

The Koobi Fora Field School and Malteser International kindly assisted with carting the grain from Nairobi in their trucks. Malteser International who has an Ileret based project is active with water

initiatives in the area. They have provided guttering and rain water tanks at El Bokoch School along with over a 1,000 new text books for all Primary classes.

El Bokoch School is in need of repair of its two existing class rooms with new panes of glass required in several windows, netting to stop bats nesting and roof repairs to the main building and outside shade area. These repairs we will need to make happen early in the New Year.



## OTHER CHALLENGES IN THE AREA AND PROJECTS TO CONSIDER IN THE FUTURE:

**FOOD SECURITY:** This is one of the major issues effecting the Daasanach people especially as the population is rapidly increasing. Daasanach have been moved off some of their traditional lands in the Omo Delta and are relocating over the border into Kenya. This has a serious impact on wildlife in the area as more and more Daasanach pastoralists are now moving their livestock into Sibilo National Park.

Food security along with limited rainfall and serious drought conditions continue to be major challenges in the area. For those who can afford it camels are being purchased and driven south from Ethiopia. Camels can be milked all year round and are much tougher to endure drought conditions.

### FUNDING FOR:

**TWO CAMELS:** It costs \$500USD for a camel and the El Bokoch School has requested two animals to build up a herd to provide milk for the students.



**WATER:** FUNDING FOR A BOREHOLE IN THE SCHOOL GROUNDS is one of the urgent requests so that food crops can be grown.



### **MICRO FINANCE INITIATIVES:**

- Tyre sandals.
- Sewing of school uniforms and clothing.

Most of the children do not have shoes so they often get acacia thorns stuck in their feet which is extremely painful.

Funding for a treadle sewing machine and material for school uniforms as well as providing old tyres and training to make basic tyre sandals are ways micro-funding could be directed.

There is still resistance to educating girls because of the economic value they bring by way of exchange of cattle and other livestock within the marriage dowry system. Although this is slowly changing with the younger generation of parents, the MCFT do their part by encouraging elders and parents to send their girls to school.



## **6. PARTNERING FOR GOOD:**

An inspiring story from South Horr, four hours drive from the southern end of Lake Turkana. We visited this horticultural project as we drove through on our way north. The local Samburu pastoralists have partnered with the Kenya Red Cross to establish vegetable gardens that are producing abundantly to cater for the needs of the entire community. According to a local Samburu man we talked with, it took over a year of sensitization for the Samburu to accept this idea of growing food crops. Now each family has a plot within 140 acres that is producing more than needed within the community and for the first time in many years the people of South Horr are no longer reliant on food aid.



*Photos from South Horr partnership between Samburu and Kenya Red Cross: Crops we saw being grown were Bananas, maize, sorghum, potatoes, onions and beans all in abundance.*



To see how this project has impacted the lives so positively in South Horr is remarkable. With the large land area given to El Bokoch School we plan to establish a similar project within the 70 acres of the school grounds so in time crops grown can contribute to the school after class meal programme.

*We would like to acknowledge and thank Christena Dowsett for her photos featured in this newsletter taken during the July 2014 trip.*

## **7. WAYS YOU CAN HELP BY DONATING:**

**1. FUNDING is NEEDED for **DECEMBER 2014** and **JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015** FOR:**

- TEACHER SALARIES
- AFTERCLASS MEAL PROGRAMME
- BOOKS
- CLASSROOM MAINTENANCE

**2. FUNDING is NEEDED for **March/April/May 2015** FOR:**

- THE CONSTRUCTION OF FOUR NEW CLASSROOMS
- A LIBRARY
- TEACHER'S ACCOMMODATION BLOCK (Basic building)

These building projects will commence in June 2015.

# DONATIONS:

Your input is greatly needed to help MCFT fundraise in **DECEMBER 2014** to provide funding for all MCFT educational projects.

**ALL WE ARE ASKING IS FOR EVERY FRIEND OF THE MCFT TO GIVE AS LITTLE AS \$20.00.**

Please donate by using PayPal on our website:

[www.michaelcronhelmfoundation.org](http://www.michaelcronhelmfoundation.org)

Or send a cheque to:

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**

Michael Cronhelm Foundation Trust  
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