

Tujisaidie Visitors 2025

Girls & Women's Empowerment



Lucy Irungu



other projects.

Lucy is a founder member and leader of the Tujisaidie Self-Help group and has brought up 7 children in the informal settlement of Soweto, Kayole, while fostering over 20 other children to ensure they accessed Primary Education. She has decades of experience in grass roots community development, as well as women's & girls' empowerment, being the main mover in the Tujisaidie Primary School and many

The Tujisaidie Self-Help Group, the overall grouping of the whole community, was founded in 1992 when it was registered as a Women's Group, as it was the women of the community who were active in contributing to the community, and they were in any case the majority of the inhabitants. The group is meanwhile registered as a Community Based Group, but all the leaders are still women (right).



The Tujisaidie Self-Help Group owns the Tujisaidie Community School, hence there too it is women who take the key decisions. The teachers are 6 women and 5 men. The students are mixed, with a slight majority of girls. The new Competency Based Curriculum makes no difference between girls and boys -- photo of a knitting class (left)

Lucy is also responsible for two sub-groups of Tujisaidie. Gacûcû ("Little Grandmothers") is a group of about 50 elderly women, all of them over 70 years of age. They support each other and make sure that they each have sufficient food and that they take care of their health. Tujinue ("Let us uplift ourselves") is a group of Young Mothers, who have been making crafts (sewing and beadwork) for sale for many years, and who support each other in raising their young children and improving their households. The photo (right) a Tujinue member making facemasks during the early months of the Covid lockdown. They now have a new membership of younger women, who have been trained by Days for Girls (see www.daysforgirls.org) to make washable sanitary pads, and who produce these for sale within the community and beyond. They also welcomed a group of young Tumaini African Foundation members who wished to learn this skill.



For the past two years, Lucy has been working with the organisation called "Wasichana Wote Wasome" ("Let all girls study") who have been supporting the school with regular donations of sanitary pads and books for pleasure (e.g. novels), and who have been visiting on an ongoing basis to check that the girls in the school are advancing well and that they are not bogged down with household chores at home. They recently came to check the outcome after the two years, as the programme is about to be renewed for another two years. The Tujisaidie School has expressed the desire to be included again.

The Tujisaidie School girls also participated in the Climate Justice online discussion facilitated by Tearfund and the Girls' Friendly Society as well as CMS Ireland in 2023, and they continued their environmental activities for another while afterwards, until they all had to leave at age 14 and join various secondary schools as allocated to them.



Dr Kathleen Anangwe

Kathleen is a senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Social Work & African Women Studies at the University of Nairobi, is a member of All Saints Cathedral, Nairobi where she is deputy chair of their Social Outreach Committee. She also serves as the CMSI Kenya Country Leader for Misesan Cara and has recently compiled the end of year evaluation of the School Building project at Tujisaidie. As another founder member of the Tujisaidie Self-Help Group she has been focused on mentoring and academic concerns as the pathway to girls' empowerment.

The Tumaini African Foundation (TAF) activity "More Than Just A Meal" providing meals to children in the community every Saturday has provided a platform for mentorship because the girls are mobilised full of expectation in one space. Activities having been scheduled before the lunch and others after the opportunities so far utilised have been during open discussion before lunch and more interactive sessions with Q & A after lunch.



She is invited yearly to discuss with the young girls – the importance of goal setting and visions, how to utilise their classroom spaces to create hobbies and remain committed, how to find help from existing institutions and youth leaders, safeguarding matters and the need to report and maintain individual records, health and hygiene matters and how to exercise their democratic rights as citizens and in their personal relationships. The younger Tujiinue team who sew the washable sanitary pads have been included in these sessions during their own meetings encouraging a number of those who dropped out of school to consider re-engaging.



When the Tumaini girls football team was more active, they were also included before they went off to practice on Saturday afternoon. The team is currently in abeyance.

At the University of Nairobi, it is one of her concerns to encourage the female graduates in class sessions and post-graduation by providing recommendation letters as they search for jobs and linking them with industry to intern at this difficult time when jobs are scarce and often depend on contacts and even bribes.

For more info contact: Roger Thompson CMSI Partnership Coordinator for Kenya
e: rogerthompson@cmsireland.org t: 028 90775020 web: www.cmsireland.org