

Arusha Visit, August 2011

Having witnessed the great work that ACE Africa conduct in both Bungoma and Siaya, Kenya, I was very excited to see the impacts being felt in Arusha, Tanzania.

ACE Africa Tanzania is working in the Arusha region in two areas, Mateves and Kimyaki. The difference in landscape between these two project sites is astounding considering the less than half an hour drive between them. Mateves is in the midst of a crop failure. No rains over the past year have resulted in a barren, arid landscape. It was heartbreaking to see, the dried up maize failing to grow in the fields.



In Mateves I visited a CtC school, and took part in one of their life-skills sessions, and it was great to see the children openly discussing issues associated with HIV and AIDS. The session was over-flowing with children, and some were even listening in through the window!

Later that afternoon I visited a household with three partial orphans. The father had died, and the mother was trying to support four children. ACE provides nutritious flour to the family, and provides counselling services to the mother who is HIV positive.



The following day I visited Kimyaki, at the foot of Mount Meru, a stark contrast to Mateves. To begin with I visited the community demonstration garden, and was impressed to see a variety of nutritious vegetables. Following this I made a stop at the community resource centre and met members of the child rights committee. We discussed the role they played in identifying child rights cases, and the support they provided to such cases.

Later in the afternoon we travelled into rural Kimyaki to meet a lady who had been indentified by an ACE community activator as in need of support. She currently lives in a run-down shelter with her two grand-children and needs a new house for her and her family. I watched as ACE staff carried out the assessment process, to establish the requirements of the family.

My four weeks at the three ACE Africa project sites opened my eyes to the huge need that exists in rural East Africa, and the great efforts ACE Africa is doing in supporting and educating the whole community. My experience illustrated the unique way ACE Africa works with the community, providing a truly holistic approach, improving the well-being of OVC, PLWA and the community at large.

