

KASIDI PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kasidi Primary School
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Date: 13th November,2020

Dear Trustees of the Shine COVID-19 Grant Fund

I am writing this letter to support the application for funding from The Mwezi Foundation, so it can provide more solar lights to rural schools in South-East Kenya.

I am a teacher at Kasidi Primary School, located in Rabai Area of Kilifi County in Coastal Kenya. I arrived at the school in 2014. As of 2020, the school has 16 classrooms and 1,476 learners. Classes are large: the current Class 8 with 127 learners and Class 7 with 132 learners, both of which I teach are actually considered 'low enrolment' classes. These classes represent the last two years of primary school, when learners are aged 12-14.

The local area

Kilifi County is a very impoverished area, with scanty rainfall and unproductive soils. It is seriously impacted by climate change. Roads are impassable at certain times of the year due to flooding, yet there are frequent food and water shortages. Many families prioritize buying food to buying fuel for lighting up homes. It is common to find supper done by 6pm, using sunlight, and retiring to bed at sunset. In such circumstances study by learners is limited to classwork only, not homework.

If the vital commodity of light ceases at sunset for 12 long hours daily, as in Kilifi, this profoundly hinders performance in school. This factor is rarely addressed in forums on challenges affecting education. Mwezi Foundation lights resolve this problem, at no cost to families and without pollution. They are also much safer than kerosene lamps, the usual alternative if households do

have any money to spend on lighting.

Kasidi School performance

Kasidi has been partnering The Mwezi Foundation since 2014, when we received our first solar lamps. The lamps were issued at random to a group of Class 8 candidates, who were preparing for the national Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exam. The class KCPE performance increased, and in the years since has continued to rise steadily. In 2019 the school exceeded all previous performances and eclipsed other schools in its zone:

FIVE-YEAR EXAMINATION ANALYSIS

YEAR CANDIDATES MEAN MARK VARIATION

2015	135	193.86	
2016	122	206.39	+12.53
2017	146	217.58	+11.19
2018	113	237.74	+16.84
2019	115	256.22	+18.48

Upon analysis it was discovered that the top 20 learners in 2019 were actually beneficiaries of the Mwezi Foundation lights, and their improvement had peaked after receiving the lights. Girls also dominated the list, unlike the past. Discussion revealed that the lights lengthened study hours and made it easy for homework to be undertaken in a convenient place and at zero cost. Parents also benefited, as the lights served whole families. The lights clearly brought psychological relief to the families and this augured well for peaceful study by learners.

Mwezi Foundation lights are a mechanism for self-emancipation: they instil confidence in learners that they can succeed if they focus on their studies, no matter the circumstances prevailing at home. This most specifically benefits the girl-child. The recent successes of girls at Kasidi and their enrolment in reputable secondary schools has caused much excitement and hope for attitude change - for example preventing early marriages, or girl-children being sent away to work as house helps. Having the lights compels parents to allow their daughters to study hard to avoid losing the lamps.

Conclusion

With no black-outs, no power cuts, no power-rationing, no refuelling, no expenses, Mwezi Foundation lights are **not just any lights**. They are **life-changing treasures** in many homes. Parents repeatedly express gratitude and relief whenever their children get the lights. And the phenomenal academic impact of the lights at Kasidi over the past five years even more clearly spells out their value.

Whenever learners excel, the whole community has hope for the future. There is already a generation of Mwezi beneficiaries ploughing ahead in studies, eager to prove their worth and improve their lot. A generation which will bring transformation and uplift the fortunes of their community. More Mwezi lights will enable this number to grow.

I wholeheartedly urge the Trustees of the Shine COVID-19 Grant Fund to support the Mwezi Foundation's application, so that more students and schools can benefit from these life-changing lights.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juma', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

ELEUTHERIUS M. JUMA (TEACHER)
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