



Zawadi Fund International



2020 Annual Report

cyec.net

2020!

This year brought home to us the value of the remarkable community we have formed, as it required deep dedication, resilience and generosity. Our staff doubled down on their commitment to reaching and serving children and youth on the margins, hit hard by the shutdown of the economy in Kenya. Our supporters, both in Nyeri and globally, stepped up to support this critical work and to provide investment to grow.

Background and Mission

The Children and Youth Empowerment Centre (CYEC), Nyeri, is a dynamic and innovative residential and educational program for street-dwelling children and other highly vulnerable young people in Kenya. Created in 2006 as a public-private initiative to address specific gaps in the care and support of disadvantaged children and youth, the CYEC is partnering with local civic organizations, the private sector and Kenyan and U.S. universities to find *effective, sustainable solutions* for this population.

Zawadi Fund International (ZFI) was established in 2009 as a US-based non-profit organization to support the CYEC and affiliated programs in Kenya. ‘Zawadi’ is the Swahili word for ‘gift’ and was selected to represent our desire to develop the gifts of each child for the betterment of their community.

The Children and Youth Empowerment Centre (CYEC) is focused on the comprehensive development of its target population, including life skills and entrepreneurship training, to enable these young people to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to the well-being of their communities. Zawadi Fund International is partnering with the CYEC to create innovative models for program sustainability, including mobilizing local resources and developing entrepreneurial initiatives for the Centre.

2020 Accomplishments and Activities

As in the rest of the world, life at the CYEC was upended in 2020. We started the year excited about the opportunities offered by our new polytechnic and looking forward to a year of growth and progress across our programs. However, in March we had to adjust and completely rethink our operations for the year.

Education and Centre Life

In the start of 2020, we had 42 children in primary school (15 girls and 27 boys) and 46 in high school (15 girls and 31 boys). Seven of our young adults were in college and another seven were at the polytechnic in Rathithi, along with 45 local youth. Six young children were new to the Centre and preparing to join primary school, and 13 youth were also supported by the Centre as they started small businesses and/or prepared for employment.

All schools were closed in March due to COVID-19. At that time, we wanted to reduce the number of children at the Centre to reduce the risk of spread of the virus, especially in the dorms and the dining hall. About half of the children were sent to stay with extended family or local foster families. We continued to provide food for these children so they would not be a strain on the families' resources. For the children who remained at the Centre, we provided informal learning and other programming to keep them engaged and productively occupied. These programs included academics, life skills, counseling, agricultural production (both crops and livestock), arts and soccer.



The economic shutdown to prevent the spread of COVID affected many families in Nyeri and across the country. Families with little savings found themselves in desperate situations as businesses closed and jobs were lost. In May, the county government asked us to take in another 63 children and youth. After a review of their family circumstances, health and educational background, about 20 of these young people were able to be reunited with their families. Others stayed at the Centre and are now in school.

Medical Clinic

Our medical clinic has continued to serve the community, with extra precautions in place. The county health department provided face masks, general medications, and personnel assistance (a clinical psychologist on standby to handle substance addiction cases). The Centre's nurse also participated in a series of trainings on management of COVID-19.



Rathithi Polytechnic

We are so excited about our new polytechnic. Our poly, which formally launched in November 2019 with 52 learners, provides high school and eighth-grade graduates with both the technical skills and leadership/empowerment to be able to provide for themselves and contribute to their communities. The exceptionally high rates of unemployment (and underemployment) for young people in Kenya, which is even higher for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, means that there is need for special effort to ensure our young people are prepared for their futures. A well-thought-out skills development program, which the polytechnic is putting in place, is a key component of such an effort. Programs include agriculture, catering, tailoring, computer operations, masonry, plumbing and life-skills and leadership.

Of special note for the polytechnic initiative is the fact that its leadership is based on beneficiaries of the CYEC program. The institution's manager, Bernard Odour, belongs to the first cohort of children to be rescued from the streets of Nairobi at the inception of the national program. He is now a university graduate and is working with several other former street-dwelling children who are now instructors at the institution, with more set to join when they graduate from their respective colleges and universities.

Like all education institutions in Kenya, the polytechnic had to close in March 2020. By that time, the number of students had grown to 66, with most of the increase in computer applications. While it was closed, we continued to develop the facility, with a focus on housing and the agricultural program. One of the major objectives of the polytechnic is to contribute to solving communal challenges including but not limited to food security. While agriculture employs 40 percent of Kenyans, productivity is low and declining. Many farmers lack access to even basic inputs and technical assistance, and much of the land is poorly suited for agriculture. For this reason, the polytechnic is developing training programs in conservation agriculture to increase production sustainably. We installed a greenhouse for high value production, shown here with green peppers.





We planted a quarter acre of traditional African vegetables including cowpeas, amaranth, black nightshade, and other greens.

We also refurbished a building for staff housing, as they moved in to prepare for reopening in 2021. What a change!



Before



After

And we built basic housing and a small, shared kitchen for students.



To prepare for reopening in 2021, we renovated several classrooms and labs to ensure adequate spacing, and we installed handwashing stations throughout the school. At our shop, we built chairs to replace tables for spacing and we fabricated an ornamental gate for the entrance. We are thrilled to have students return!



Zawadi Youth Enterprise Programme

The Zawadi Youth Enterprise Programme (Z-YEP) was established in 2010 to provide business incubation services for youth at the CYEC. Through the Z-YEP, the youth start businesses (individually or in teams), develop leadership skills, and learn how to manage and grow their businesses. In 2020, these activities were on hold, and several youth who had started businesses lost them during the shutdown. It was a difficult year for all small businesses in Kenya.

Othaya Eco-Village

Development of the first eco-village site in Othaya started in 2014. The eco-village provides a place for the youth to live, work and save as they transition to independent living. Othaya has a beautiful natural environment, and one of our main income-generating activities will be eco-tourism, with hiking, river rafting and biking, as well as agri-tourism. We have built traditional huts for guest housing, a kitchen facility, a dining hall and latrines. The fertile agricultural land at Othaya produces a variety of vegetables for the Centre and is a key component of our efforts to produce much of the food needed for our program. Several youth live at the eco-village now, and we will soon have capacity for more. This [video](#) highlights the activities at Othaya.



Partnerships

The Centre continues to benefit from the network of partnerships it has created to bring together creative, dedicated people and institutions to develop and implement innovative programs. Key among these are US and Kenyan institutions including Penn State University, Kansas State University, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology and Kagumo Teachers' Training College.

While none of the international partners could visit the Centre in 2020, both Penn State and Kansas State stayed engaged through virtual classroom visits, shared curriculum and planning for future initiatives.

The Zawadi Society is a Kenyan organization through which local civic groups, businesses, religious bodies and individuals support the Centre's programs through volunteering, mentoring, financial or in-kind support. In 2020, local supporters provided valuable in-kind support, especially in the provision of food. The CYEC is a valued local institution!



2021 Priorities and Initiatives

The Children and Youth Empowerment Centre, like the rest of the world, has faced both a health and an economic crisis this past year. The shuttering of the Kenyan economy dried up much of our local sources of support and resulted in most of our ‘graduates’ losing their jobs. This has reinforced the importance of our role, supporting and equipping the most vulnerable, including children at the Centre and young adults at the polytechnic.

In 2021, our children are returning to school, eager to get back to learning (and seeing their friends!). The Rathithi Polytechnic is reopening to returning and new students, and we are moving forward with official registration. While we realize we will not return to a pre-COVID normal, we are looking forward to a more stable new normal.

Our priorities in 2021 are focused on further development of the polytechnic and building opportunities for our youth as they transition to independence.

Your support has enabled us to build a strong foundation, to help us survive these challenging times. Please join in this commitment to our shared future by supporting the vital work of the CYEC as you are able.



Zawadi Fund International 2020 Financial Statement

Donations	2020
Direct donations	\$72,342.33
Indirect donations (Global Giving & Network for Good)	7,621.26
Total Income	\$79,963.59
Expenses	
Dispersal to CYEC	\$71,117.06
Residential care	40,774.13
Education and Training	8,081.78
Enterprise Development and Infrastructure (including poly)	17,280.62
Agricultural inputs	4,980.53
Business expenses (website, etc.)	\$20.17
Bank, transfer and on-line collection fees	1,462.86
Total Expenses	\$72,600.09
Net Change in Assets	\$7,363.50
Assets at the beginning of the year	\$3,447.93
Assets at the end of the year	\$10,811.43

ZFI has no paid staff, keeping our overhead expenses to a minimum. That means your donations go straight to support the children and programming at the CYEC!



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2020 Zawadi Fund International Donors

Because we are a lean, grass-roots organization, every donation goes far and makes a real difference in the lives of our young people and in our programs. Every *Friend* matters to us and is changing lives. Those who give \$1,000 or more a year are *Sustainers*, ensuring that our children and youth have a safe home, nutritious meals and care. Those giving \$2,500 a year or more are *Builders* enabling us to invest in our young people, providing education and development. *Investors*, donating \$7,500 or more a year, allow us to invest in opportunities to grow our programs in a meaningful way.

Investors

Warren and Mary Lynn Staley

Cindy and Bob Steer

Builders

Amy Freeman

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