

PROPOSAL TO THE

Rotary Club Global Grants Committee

Sponsored by the Wednesday Rotary Club of Abilene, Texas

For the Mercy Center Foundation, USA & Kenya

Expanding Girls Secondary Education in Kenya

Revised February 23, 2016



Thank you from Lare, Kenya!

I. INTRODUCTION

Grant revised on 2/23/2016 to reflect increases in enrollment in school.

Mercy Center Foundation USA is an organization of volunteers dedicated to serving the needs of the people of Lare, an isolated community of 40,000 people in the Great Rift Valley of Kenya. Our mission is to bring hope to the people of Lare by providing sustainable, affordable, medical, and educational assistance regardless of religion, politics, ethnicity, or nationality.

The Mercy Center Foundation USA coordinates with the Mercy Center Lare thru Sr. Rose and other leaders of the Bd. has undertaken a unanimous decision to build the Lare Secondary School complex and to raise funds and build partnerships that can assist girls to attain a quality high school education. There are 135,000 people in the surrounding farm communities in Lare, Kenya.

To date we have constructed infrastructure and facilities, which include:

- A water initiative, which has provided a continuous supply of clean water to the village. Electrical power was also brought to the village and basic structures, as needed for medical, education and microenterprise initiatives.
- A medical initiative, which has provided a clinic and essential health services to the village.
- A microenterprise initiative, which works toward bringing the village and school to the point of being self-sustaining through agriculture and the manufacture of small products for sale internationally.
- An education initiative, which constructed and created a girl's secondary school, where in the school's sixth year of 2016-2017, presently 350 girls are enrolled, with expansion planned to accommodate enrollment of 450-500 students.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM OR NEED

This project requires an estimated \$42,350 USD to outfit a new kitchen, dining hall and furnish the new dormitory for girl's secondary education in Lare, Kenya.

The Mercy Center school for girls in Nakuru County, Lare, Kenya has been in existence for three years and during this short time we have achieved a rating of number being number 80 in over 2,000 private schools in Kenya. Considering the tremendous challenges the school faces, this is a great tribute to the intellectual quality of both the girls and those teaching them. We believe educating girls will make a great difference not only in Kenya but also in the world. The Ministry of Education in Kenya has allowed the school to remain open in spite of the primitive kitchen and living conditions contingent upon the forthcoming help from outstanding grant proposals. The reason this exception was made due to the excellent performance of the students at national academic competitions. Mercy Center School was rated number 4 school in the district in 2014. Following are the needs:

Kitchen: Cooking is now done over an open fire outdoors or in a hut when it is raining. The school now has the structure for the kitchen completed but is waiting for funding from this grant to outfit the kitchen with the appliances and fixtures needed for cooking and baking. (See Photos).

Dining Hall: The girls currently eat outdoors sitting on the ground. When the weather is bad they have to eat in classrooms or hallways. (See photos)

Housing: The dormitories are very overcrowded with wall-to-wall beds. There are not enough toilets, sinks and showers for the number of girls living at the school. The Ministry has also cited the school for this issue as well. In addition means is needed for doing laundry, which is currently done by hand. A washer and dryer are added for the purpose of laundering linens and girl's clothes.

Budget: \$42,350.00 USD

Kitchen: (from Kenyan company <http://bottosolar.com>)

2 wood cooking stoves	\$ 6,420
1 King brand baking oven	\$ 2,174
1 Dough Mixture	\$ 1,200
1 Freezer – Commercial	\$ 1,500
1 3 Burner Bio Gas Stove	\$ 680
4 Hot Pots	\$ 1,620
1 Refrigerator	\$ 500
Misc. fixtures & utensils	
Subtotal	\$14,094 USD

Dining Hall:	
70 Tables	\$ 4,754
420 Chairs	\$ 8,815
Subtotal:	\$ 13,569 USD

Housing:	
70 Double Decker Bunk Beds	\$10,727
Washer & Dryer (Samsung)	\$ 3,960
Subtotal:	\$14,687 USD

Total: \$42,350 USD

In January 2003, the Government of Kenya announced the introduction of free primary education. As a result, primary school enrollment increased exponentially and the current rate of Kenyan children that attend primary school is at about 85 percent. Despite having provided access to free primary education, the government has not extended this to the secondary schools in the country.

However, the Kenyan Government is aiming to increase the percentage of children who move on from primary to secondary education with a special focus on girls' education. Increasing this percentage will present a major challenge, since the fees charged by secondary schools are much higher than those charged by primary schools. In fact, "national" level secondary boarding schools cost around \$920 per year, which is prohibitive for most rural Kenyans whose per capita income in Kenya is approximately \$360 USD per year. Kenya is also faced with large gender disparities in education. Traditional preference for sons over daughters diminishes the value of girls' education and early marriage and pregnancy from as young as age 10 prevent girls from enrolling in or completing basic education. The Mercy Center Secondary School project would meet the critical need in the remote and impoverished community of Lare, where few prohibitive options remain for high school age girls. The only accredited secondary school in this community of 40,000 inhabitants is the Saint Francis School, which is run by the Mission. This is a single stream, co-ed day facility with over 200 students.

Moreover, most of the students that attend the Saint Francis School are boys. This is due primarily to the previously discussed practice in which parents prefer to send boys to school rather than girls. Additionally, because of the fact that it is a day school, girls face the double burden of managing schoolwork and having to manage the household when they return home. The personal story that is shared by Sister Rose is all too common among many girls in the developing world thus making it that more difficult for girls to begin and succeed in completing their school years.

The Mercy Center Secondary School is open to all girls ages 14-18 in the area surrounding Lare, Kenya, regardless of ethnicity or creed.

The community surrounding Lare, like others in Africa, is experiencing a high incidence of school dropout rates of girls in this age group. These girls are dropping out of school for a number of reasons. First of all, in many cases, the parents lack the funding to support their children by providing basic necessities. Therefore, many young women migrate from the area to Nakuru or Nairobi looking for work, despite their lack of marketable skills. More vulnerable young women end up in the prostitution rings and become infected with HIV. Others must terminate their education due to pregnancy or early marriage. There is also an orphanage in the nearby town of Nakuru with a large number of orphaned young women.

Excluding rural communities from receiving education is seen as a violation of human rights universally recognized and adopted by the U.N.'s ---- Universal Declaration of Human Rights n 1948.

The loss of participation from girls in Lare, Kenya in the education process will have a serious and deleterious effect on the local population over time. This has already proven to be the case in the country and in the region. Large populations of unskilled and uneducated women will lead to a negative cyclical dynamic perpetuating poverty and stunting the growth of the community at large. This can be seen in the high incidents of abuse against women, rate of girls left in orphanages that are unskilled and without family support, trafficking, prostitution and increased rates of HIV/AIDS in the community now. These outcomes are seen as a direct result of the culture of exclusion that has taken root in Lare, Kenya many years ago. This culture strongly defines and limits a girls' and woman's role in their communities.

Other issues that remain brutal are still practiced in Kenya against the girl child. The major practice of female genital cutting continues today. "The World Health Organization (WHO)

girls are at risk each year of one of four forms of cutting, ranging from the symbolic to life ruining. Although some see it as a matter of hygiene, others see it as a rite of passage into womanhood. Its Muslim, Christian and Animist defenders all cite religious grounds. Where the practice is a prerequisite for marriage, economic factors play a role too.

Attempts to stamp out the practice have gathered pace and now 18 African countries have banned it, although laws are patchily observed. Tasaru Ntomonok Initiative, a group in the Narok district in Kenya, has a safe house for girls fleeing their families. Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization, a women's NGO, offers circumcision through words, an alternative rite of passage without the bloodshed."¹ The special outreach to the community and programs for health and education in this project are aimed at fostering new ideas and considerations for alternative solutions to this practice that continues among the tribes of Lare, Kenya. Careful consideration and approaches to tribesmen and community leaders over time will be made through the community outreach programs to be planned.

The fact that willingness does exist now among the people of Lare to build the secondary school for girls and to educate them on many such relevant and urgent topics indicates a major positive change in attitude towards education and opportunity.

Despite the exclusion of girls, women and families in Lare have demonstrated great support and an ongoing commitment for this idea and want to see the secondary school become a reality in their community. Numerous international studies conclude that if you educate a girl you will educate a community. The women of Lare are dedicated and committed to working together to see that the programs and education that is provided will better themselves and their communities over the long term. As currently planned, the Mercy Center Secondary School would open its doors to a percentage of women from the orphanage at Nakuru in seeking to assist in providing education to those most in need.

III. STATEMENT OF SOLUTION

This proposal seeks to provide several solutions to the problem of exclusion of girls from secondary education in Kenya by: expanding the school to include 350 girls in 2015-16, expanding to 500 girls by 2017-18.

- Fulfilling the mandates by the Ministry of Education to improve the kitchen, dining and dormitory/housing facilities (Rotary Grant). \$42,350
- To build new classrooms and expand dormitories that will provide access to quality secondary education to girls ages 14-18 regardless of ethnicity or creed therefore reducing the school dropout rate. Budget \$29,050
- To purchase 180 more desks and chairs for classrooms. Budget \$10,000
- To level and build an athletic field (210 hours). Budget \$20,000
- To purchase a full-sized school bus and 12 passenger van to allow the students to enter regional and national competitions and to travel to the city when necessary for medical care and school provisions. \$100,000

- Purchase or have donated 350 laptop computers Budget: UNKNOWN
- Establish a “Sponsor a Girl” scholarship program, where an individual or group can sponsor a specific girl for \$500 per year. This will cover the cost of tuition and housing.
- To enroll approximately 350 girls in school class of 2015-16, and to instill in them the importance of education and to give them exposure to quality education in science and computers along with the social sciences and humanities in order that they may make better life decisions and have better opportunities. Also plan to cultivate an athletic program to coach runners and other athletes for preparation for sports scholarships in the U.S.
- To raise the level of awareness of the risks associated with HIV/AIDS and genital mutilation among Kenyan girls, their parents and the elders of the tribes in Lare. To foster and strengthen the civil society of Lare, Kenya by promoting community involvement in the secondary school.

IV. FUNDING REQUEST

This global grant request for Rotary International totals \$42,350 USD. The acquisition of equipment and fixtures to begin as soon as funds are allocated; the need is great and the school is having difficulty continuing to operate under current conditions. The items requested within this grant will equip the school to handle enrollment of 350 girls for several years, and will continue to allow expansion to goal of accommodating 500 girls.

V. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The financial statement of the Mercy Center Foundation, USA is attached to this document.
Mercy Center Foundation, USA, Inc. is a 501 c 3 organization registered–

Federal TaxID

54-2126269

VI. EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The Lare Board has appointed Margaret Njoki as a full time program manager to oversee the construction and monitoring of the project alongside Rotary designee(s). She reports to the Board of Directors in Lare on a monthly basis through meetings and regular communication. She will also be responsible for submitting program progress reports to the Mercy Center Foundation, USA during the course of the building and/or improvements to the secondary school effort.

Funds would be channeled through the Mercy Center, USA to Mercy Center Lare Bd. of Directors. Since the initial project was funded by Mercy Center USA in cooperation with Mercy Center Lare Bd., we want to continue this partnership. Sr. Rose Wangui will travel to Lare and selected board members from the Mercy Center USA travel to Lare, Kenya to assess progress and to work closely with their counterparts. The Diocese of Nakuru will also send a representative on occasion to check on the progress of the school.