

Dear Kudimba friends.

Here is our quarterly feed of Kudimba news.

We begin this newsletter with sad news.

We were completely surprised when we received news in April that our good friend and Kudimba trustee George Allard had passed away in the UK. George was associated with Kudimba from the very beginning and even before that. He played an important role in the development of the project. We are very grateful for what George did for Kudimba and we will miss him and our friendship. In his memory, a beautiful corner will be set up in the Kudimba garden, a lovely place for people to sit, under the Jacaranda tree.

We have regularly talked about our friend Johnny in these newsletters. Johnny is 21 years old and started participating in Kudimba more than four years ago. He has a hearing and speech impairment. Johnny feels at home at Kudimba, he is like a part of the furniture so to speak. Because we know Johnny well and we understand that he is very capable, he recently became an employee at the project rather than a participant. He leads the technical team together with his friend Robert, who has the same disability. Johnny was very proud of and committed to his new job. Unfortunately, Johnny and his family have been deported to Dzaleka, a refugee camp about 100 km west of Lifuwu, where Kudimba is based. This is the second time in less than two years that this family has had to pack up and move for an indefinite stay in the camp. The family fled Rwanda more than 20 years ago and have since integrated well into the local community of Lifuwu, in Malawi. They are self-reliant and contribute to the local community. We cannot influence the government's plans for this family, but we have committed to continue to deposit Johnny's monthly allowance. He and his family desperately need the funds. The refugee camp was originally built for 12000 people and currently at least four times as many people are residing there. As the situation is very precarious for the family, continuing to pay Johnny's allowance is the least we can do to make a very uncomfortable situation a little better. We hope Johnny and his family can return to Lifuwu soon, back to where they belong, back to work and back to their normal lives.

Since there is a lot of work to be done in Kudimba and we have one less staff member, we have temporarily employed Ididi. Ididi is a young man from Lifuwu, who also has a hearing and speech impairment. He is married and has one child, but struggles to make ends meet. He usually does piecework wherever an extra hand is needed in the village. When he cannot find work, he comes to Kudimba as a volunteer, where he receives free meals in return. He is a kind and gentle man and we are always happy to see him. While Johnny is away, we have offered him a temporary job in Kudimba, helping the technical team along with his friend Robert.

Later this month we will employ another additional staff member. Fanny, who has worked for Kudimba in the past will return to Kudimba, also for a temporary job.

Fanny has experienced great hardship in her family recently and we hope this opportunity will get her back on track and at the same time she can contribute towards an important task at Kudimba. Fanny will provide one-to-one care to our young Shanilla.

Shanilla is now 5 years old and recently returned to Lifuwu after a 6-month absence. The family stayed in the home village after the death of the father. Shanilla's mother has a very difficult time taking care of her children, and specifically she struggles to care for Shanilla because of her extensive special needs. Shanilla was in bad shape when she returned to Kudimba, she was weak, had skin problems and showed signs of malnutrition.

We want to get Shanilla healthy and fit, we want to support the mother to generate an income and we want to boost the other children in the family in this way. We have developed a detailed plan for the family, with the help of our two visitors who are currently in Kudimba, Lotte and Sharon.

Lotte and Sharon have visited Kudimba in the past, doing their internship there when they were students. Then they had to return home early - very much against their will - because of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Lotte and Sharon qualified and counted the years, months, weeks and days to return to Kudimba. Three years later, they have finally succeeded. With great enthusiasm, they are back in the role of volunteers, sharing the day to day life with our Kudimba family.

Before their departure, they set up a fundraising campaign, a bake sale, to have some means to assist where needed during their stay in Kudimba.

With the proceeds, they were able to buy a generous emergency kit for Shanilla's family. The family now has the means to feed themselves as well as set up a small business to generate some much needed income.

Deciding on who and how to assist in cases of hardship is not easy, as there are many people in need around Lifuwu and we cannot help everyone.

For that reason, we usually try to limit our work and focus on what needs doing within the Kudimba walls and we do that as best we can. However, in case of extreme hardship, especially if it involves a Kudimba participant, we try to be a bit more flexible and find a solution.

Lotte and Sharon also bought 52 mosquito nets locally for Kudimba's staff and participants. Lately, we have seen a big increase in absence and illness among staff and participants at Kudimba due to malaria infections. Lifuwu is a high-risk malaria area; the parasite-carrying mosquitoes thrive in areas with plenty of water, and since Lifuwu is on the shores of Lake Malawi and has had to deal with a lot of excess water after the extreme rainy season, it is a prime spot.

Unfortunately, the type of malaria which people suffer from in this area of Africa is also the most dangerous type, caused by the plasmodium falciparum parasite. It can cause death if left untreated. Many of the Kudimba participants have sustained a disability due to a brain infection with malaria at a young age, which was treated too late.

Prevention, early detection and treatment in case of malaria are the most important interventions to prevent serious, sometimes lifelong consequences. Sleeping under a mosquito net is one way to significantly reduce the risk of infection.

Another major change and improvement is that the team can now conduct on-site malaria tests in Kudimba, making it much more efficient to start timely treatments.

The loyal Kudimba nurse Rodney helped with the distribution of the nets and combined this with an educational session for parents on malaria prevention and the correct use of the nets. Rodney took the opportunity to communicate with them about hygiene and preventing infectious skin problems, another problem that is on the rise in Lifuwu.

Meanwhile, the foundations for Kudimba's new kitchen block are finally emerging. There have been a lot of delays because the area where the kitchen is being built was flooded, slowly the land has been drying and works have now started. Once the foundations are ready, we have been told that progress on this project cannot be disrupted any further due to weather conditions. We are very excited because we know that our new kitchen block will be a huge improvement for the place and it will enable Kudimba to provide better service and expand even more.

Slowly but surely, we are now starting to think about the future of Kudimba and the future of our

teenagers and young adults. We are brainstorming about possibilities to create opportunities for independent living and meaningful work through income-generating activities. The plans are still at an early stage, but if you have been following Kudimba for a while, you will understand that we are driven, committed and stubborn, and that our ideas often turn into reality.

Last but not least, a special thanks to all the people who have contributed to Kudimba's work, whether financially or in other ways. There are a few more people who have pledged a monthly donation to Kudimba, for which we are very grateful. Monthly donations really help to bear the running costs of our project, without which the project cannot operate.

For anyone in Belgium considering setting up a monthly (or a one-off) donation, we can provide a tax certificate allowing you to reclaim 45% of your donation. Please do not hesitate to contact us about this if you are interested.

We end this newsletter with sunny summer greetings from the entire Kudimba team

Ps: If you prefer not to receive any more Kudimba newsletters in the future, just drop us a word and we will stop sending them to you, you will still be able to follow our updates on our website: <https://kudimba-foundation.org/> or on our Facebook page : <https://facebook.com/Kudimba/>