

## Personal Stories

Every year the children that graduate from the school after nine years of primary schooling are proof of great team work from sponsors, the school and the parents/guardians. When they are first admitted into the school, some are orphans, some are homeless but all of them have a common predicament-insecurity and poverty. Many of them are traumatized at first but through their journey in school these children have received the chance to change their lives and their destinies. Please note that, the names used are not the children real names for identity protection purposes.

We present some of the stories below:

**Story 1:** *Jane a shy beautiful girl knocked at our office door; she was alone and looked extremely hungry and exhausted. It was clear that she had walked a long way to our school. She had heard about our school and believed the school could help her. A home visit was made by our sponsorship group and her living conditions were found to be dire.*

*Her parents abandoned her, her birth date is unknown. She lives with her deaf, unstable grandmother. The child sleeps on the floor, food is hard to get, and they live in an iron sheet room with two plastic chairs. The few utensils were on the floor.*

*Her deaf grandmother showed signs of hope after our visit. This child is now happy in class 9 and she is a full boarder in our school.*

**Story 2:** *Mary is an 11-year-old girl who lives with her sick grandmother who works as a house help for a certain family. Mary's mother died in January and suffered from a mental condition. The grandmother is poorly paid and has a bed placed in the living room where her, Mary and her brother sleep. No one wants the girl to be there, neither the grandmother nor the owner of the house, so the girl must constantly hide behind the curtains.*

**Story 3:** *James is 15 years old. When James was 3, he lost both his father and mother: The father, an alcoholic, disappeared and abandoned James in his grandfather's custody; the mother also disappeared, and no one has seen her since. The grandfather did not want to take care of James, who has since lived with this emptiness. When he was 10, his uncle adopted him. James has lived with him ever since, but his uncle treats him badly and does not cover James' basic needs. James is in every way a child who has never experienced care and warmth.*

**Story 4:** *Janet is a slightly quiet, polite and very reserved girl of 12 years. Janet's mother, who suffered from a mental illness, disappeared when Janet was just 4 months old. The father has also disappeared. As is customary in Kenya, the mother's sister took Janet in, but throughout the years it has been a constant struggle and threat to Janet that neither the sister nor her husband have wanted her at home, which means they are treating her badly. Three years ago, the aunt suffered a serious car accident and she became paralyzed on one side. This situation has given Janet even greater problems. They live in a small one-room house, with no water nor electricity. The sister's husband is out of work and the family is totally dependent on well-wishers to meet their basic needs.*

**Story 5:** *Henry's family was split by AIDS. His father and mother had died when Henry started school. Henry and his 13-year-old teenage sister lived alone in the slum in a small tin shed without water and where electricity was disconnected because the two children could not pay rent. Although the 13-year-old sister made every effort to take care of her younger brother, they often did not get food, and Henry quickly entered one of the many boy groups in the slums with drugs, violence and thefts to survive. Henry is now in class 5 in our school.*

**Story 6:** Lawrence has gone to school for a year and is now in class 6; he has never had parents and has never had a home. Until he turned 12, there is great uncertainty about his life; but when he was 12 years old, an aunt took him in to provide him with a schooling. This aunt sells fish from a small stall in the slum area, but it does not give her enough income to pay rent even in the slum area. Lawrence is a child without a permanent home, and all his most basic needs are not met.

**Story 7:** Grace is in first grade but still mourns the loss of her father who died two years ago. The mother became mentally ill after the birth of Grace and disappeared. After her father's death, Grace has been with her aunt, who is alone with her own five children. The aunt suffers from severe asthma. She has a small wooden booth by the roadside from which she sells vegetables. Little Grace now runs around the school happily.

**Story 8:** John's only relative after the death of both his parents is an aunt; she sees John as a great burden, and so he sometimes come to school without any basic care such as food and decent clothing as well as shoes

**Story 9:** Sarah in the Kindergarten lives with a random old woman from the slum. Sarah's father left her at the lady's workplace claiming to be gone shortly, but he never came back. Sarah calls the old, tired and forgetful woman "mother".

**Story 10:** Evelyn's family was split up when, as the firstborn, she got two twin brothers. The father's family tried to kill one of the brothers as it is culturally a taboo to keep both twin children in certain tribes. The mother, who is almost blind, has therefore been alone with the children and has been homeless for several years. Evelyn has taken over all the adults' tasks of providing food and shelter for her small family. The twins are now at an orphanage and Evelyn in our boarding school, where for the first time in her life she is "just" a child.

These are just a few of Rudolf Steiner School children's stories. They represent fates of innocent children who need help.

When you meet these children in primary school and in the kindergarten, they immediately seem happy; but often, in their eyes, a tinge of sadness can be seen, an insecurity in their way of life. They may react psychologically e.g. with anxious nightmares at night, where the fear of being killed is revived again and again, others react physically e.g. with epilepsy-like seizures on daily basis. As the holidays draw near, and the school has to close down including the boarding school department, the children become more insecure and cry because of what awaits them. Not all have a secure place to go and hence the feelings of insecurity.

They are all children and young people that have seen and experienced too much violence and insecurity in the slums.

BUT there is a new path of hope, out of instability and poverty, comes the children's changed destinies when they come in to the caring arm of Mbagathi School.

It is this underprivileged part of the community that is, and always has been, the target group of the Mbagathi School. We know giving these vulnerable children a new opportunity in life is something you would consider. There is a clear humanitarian emergency and we therefore ask for your help!