

## End of Isamilo Sponsorship - End of Masomo

Dear friends of Masomo e.V.,

In recent months, there have been significant changes in the management of the Starehe Children's Home. These have brought about some issues that have affected Masomo's activities. The Starehe Children's Home now has a new owner and will be called "Village of Hope Mwanza."

On the one hand this is great news, as the *Village of Hope Africa Society* already successfully manages seven orphanages in five African countries. The new organisation has decades of experience with children and will treat the children with care, love and responsibility to help them become independent adults.

On the other hand, the transfer of ownership also brings a new concept of care for the children. Masomo funded the children through sponsorship as well as the running of the Nursery school. After handing over the Nursery School in December 2011, the Isamilo Sponsorship Programme has remained our core task. There are some important changes which will take place which will affect their school attendance. *Village of Hope Mwanza* intends to build a school for children aged 1 to 12 on the grounds of the orphanage where all the children will be taught. Since this cannot be directly implemented, the children will remain at local schools for the time being. It is important to the *Village of Hope* that all the children attend the same school. They hope that the social structures within the orphanage, especially the feeling of togetherness among the children will strengthen. Therefore the new owners do not wish to allow only a few children attending an international school.

In November, during its constituent meeting, the Board of the *Village of Hope Mwanza* decided to take 12 of the 14 children out of Isamilo School. In January 2013, these children will be enrolled in a local Tanzanian school. Two children were exempt from this – Miriam and Paul – as they will be taking their iGCSE examinations which are very important and will therefore remain in Isamilo School until July 2013.

We have tried to prevent this decision through numerous meetings, letters and discussions. Unfortunately, the *Village of Hope* has rejected our appeal. We informed them that some of the children have been enrolled at Isamilo for more than 8 years; that there has never been envy among the children, and that those 14 children are exceptionally bright and gifted; that we would bear all costs for these children; that you cannot just tear them out of their routine – the school has played a very important role in the childrens' lives; that a degree of an international school will enormously increase the childrens' opportunities for an independent life.

However it was not to be. We could not convince the board to reconsider their decision. We are very disappointed and saddened by this, however as we have no legal rights, there was nothing more we could do. We would have loved to accompany the children on their way to graduation, but we hope that the acquired knowledge, experience and close friendships the children have made will continue to have a positive impact on their lives for the future. When Miriam and Paul finish their iGCSEs in the summer of 2013, Masomo will cease all activities.

We would like to thank you with all our hearts. Your loyalty, trust and support has helped the children make enormous progress and has motivated us to build the school to educate the children in Mwanza.

We wish you all the best for the future and would like to leave you with a small phrase which we stand by "Many small people, who in many small places, do many small things, can alter the face of the world".

Kathrin Titze, Vorsitzende, on behalf of all Masomo members