

Psychology Students Volunteer to teach in slums

Following the clarion call by His Excellency the President Hon Mwai Kibaki for free primary education, many children joined the schools nearest their residence. These children were mostly drawn from lowly homes; employed as house helps, from single parent headed household, HIV/AIDS infected and affected and from dysfunctional families.

The Psychology Club of the University of Nairobi contacted the Kusoma Tu Foundation based at Kawangware Primary School to volunteer as teachers in a reading intervention. This was taken positively by the Club members who commute to the school during their free time. The chairman organized them into groups of five to ten students to attend on different days of the week. They meet their travelling expenses because the Foundation is nonprofit making. Run by a retired teacher from the United Kingdom.

What the club members anticipated was that they will only teach the pupils how to read and write. That was not to be so, these young children had psychosocial issues that required resolution. Pupils from classes 5,6,7 and 8 had different reasons as to why they were in school. Their reasons reflected their family challenges. Some came to school for the free meal offered by the Word Food Programme at lunch break, others enjoy escape from sexual harassment or to at least sleep in class, free from brutality at home and other child abuse related issues.

The members found that they have to offer counseling and guidance to groups and to individuals as they have different psychological and social issues. With the help of the Department of Psychology and the University of Nairobi fraternity, the Club will raise funds in order to carry out a more detailed research that will reveal the cause and effects of poor education



Some of the pupils tutored by members of the Psychology Club.



Undaunted by the challenges of tutoring in slum conditions, members of the Club arrive for the afternoon session.

performance. The most important service that they offer now is counseling services to the pupils and their parent(s) to lift their self esteem and help them cope with daily life challenges. The school has 1400 pupils

but has a limited staff due to the location of the school in a high risk area.

The Club is seeking how best the child can be protected and saved from drug addiction and abuse by others.