

JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER

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THEY HOPE FOR A FUTURE



On June 18, approximately 100 girls, who are in their last year of primary school, traveled to Isaya's home in hope that they might attend secondary school in 2027. Some girls were brought by mothers because they want their daughters to have a future of their own choosing, that they didn't have. Fathers also come with some of the girls, because they are seeing the value of education for their daughters. Other parents come because they don't have the ability to pay for their daughters to attend school and the girls will be forced into marriage in exchange for cows instead.

Isaya and Nguvu who first rescued their young sister more than 12 years ago, have helped more than 300 girls. When they spoke to the parents, they encouraged the girls and parents in their quest for education and gender equality. We try to give them hope, but let them know that we are working on raising funds so that Osotuwa Foundation can support more girls.

Please see our website to learn more about our program, help support us or sponsor a girl in secondary school: <https://www.osotuwa.org/>.



MADAM RODA



At the annual celebration last December we had the pleasure of meeting Madam Roda – a Geography teacher from nearby Moringe Secondary School. We asked her if she would be willing to come to encourage the girls in their schoolwork at a June seminar. She was a very enthusiastic speaker and held the girls' attention throughout. They loved when she even sang with them before starting the seminar!

It is very beneficial to have Swahili-speaking women come to advise the girls. Madam Roda was able to be very specific and answer questions about doing well in school. Her presentation was especially helpful for younger girls to prepare for success. She discussed strategies like studying in groups, going to the library if books are in short supply and putting a lot of effort into learning English.

Madam Roda and her family are great examples of what we are striving for in OF. She married a Maasai man who had gone on to further education because his family valued it. This is the generational change that we envision.

In addition, a local nurse came to speak to the girls about staying healthy, avoiding pregnancy, female circumcision, etc. We have had several pregnancies among our girls in this past year and are always trying to teach them about making good choices.

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RECOGNIZING GOOD PERFORMANCE



Each June and December, when our girls come for seminars during their holidays, we recognize those who achieve Division I and II (out of 4 Divisions). It is like getting an A or B average. This is quite an accomplishment for most girls who have started secondary school not knowing their national language of Swahili very well or any English. In primary school they are exposed to Swahili, but still speak their native Maa at home and outside of class.

Our goal is to encourage girls in good performance that may not be valued in their home and community. Osotuwa Foundation looks forward to being part of these girls' joys and successes. There are girls who have completed the Isaya's program and are now supporting themselves as teachers, medical professionals, accountants, etc.

Unfortunately, we have had a couple of girls failing a grade or their National Exam. Fathers may use this as an opportunity to marry their daughters and get cows for themselves. We have one girl, Tumaini, whose father wanted to force her into marriage, but Nguvu was able to convince him to allow her to attend hairdressing school. She is now working and supporting herself (below)!



CHANGING A CULTURAL NORM

We love to talk about our successes, but there continue to be challenges with fathers, uncles, and brothers seizing the opportunity of girl's failure in school or pregnancy to sell them into marriage. This is a cultural practice for the Maasai that has existed for centuries. Cows are their livelihood and represent their "savings account." Daughters have been seen as the way for fathers to gain wealth, as well as the way that their new husbands/father-in-laws will gain children for their family.

In the Kenyan Maasai, free mandatory secondary education has decreased the number of girls being forced into marriage, but enforcement is difficult in more remote villages. In Tanzania, secondary school is not mandatory so forced marriage after primary school is the norm for the Maasai.

We have had several girls get pregnant in the past year leading fathers to sell them into marriage. Up to a few years ago girls were not allowed to attend school when pregnant or if they had babies. That was changed and now they can stay in school, but even if they are able to continue, they usually lose a year and the momentum they had achieved.

One of our older girls is currently pregnant and being forced into marriage – her dream is lost. She did very well on her Form 4 National Examination - all set to go on to Advanced Education (like our 11-12th grades) and then hopefully to university. Her mother had brought her to us 4½ years ago to escape being sold by her brother and a sponsor miraculously came forward that same day so that she could attend school! This story demonstrates how vulnerable these girls are when they spend time back at home, even after 4 years of school.

Our vision is for all Tanzanian Maasai to see the value of education and gender equality. We emphasize to the girls the importance of keeping their eyes focused on doing well in school and making good choices. Please help us change this cultural norm by sponsoring a girl: <https://www.osotuwa.org/support-us>.