



EMBARGOED UNTIL 9th JULY 2015

A new chance for children with disability in Kangemi

Nairobi, 9th July 2015

Australia is pleased to give a new chance for children with disabilities in Kangemi. Children with disabilities in Kenya can have a hard time in school. A lack of basic infrastructure, assistance, and already overcrowded classrooms makes getting a good education an impossible dream for many children with disability. Kangemi Primary School, in Nairobi's Westlands constituency, is working hard to make sure all their children have an opportunity to learn.

Thirteen year old Paul (not his real name) is one such child. Paul's weak muscles and poorly coordinated fine motor skills made it difficult for him to walk, let alone join in school activities. His disability means he can fall and hurt himself badly at any slight movement. When he joined Kangemi Primary School, they gave him physical therapy, allowing him to play football and other games without falling. Paul can now actively participate in school life thanks to his physiotherapy.

With the help of the Hon Tim Wanyonyi, Westlands MP, Kangemi Primary School approached the Australian High Commission in Nairobi to fund a new classroom to help students with disability. This classroom hosts the school's special needs program so children can develop the skills they need.

On Thursday 9th July the Australian High Commissioner to Kenya, John Feakes, and the Hon Tim Wanyonyi handed the new classroom and facilities over to Kangemi Primary School. Mr Feakes said:

“Today we see how the work of a dedicated few can make the difference in the lives of children, their families and this community. It is inspiring to hear the stories of the families who have worked so hard to see their children receive the education they deserve, and to meet the teachers who dedicate their time and energy to Kenya's future. Kenya's Vision 2030 prioritises the inclusion of all children in education, and to do that, we must address the needs of children with disability. Units like the one we see today will enable Kenya to realise this vision.”

Background

Kangemi Primary School was started in 1927. Kangemi Special Unit for Mentally Challenged Learners was established in 2008 with six mentally challenged learners. Today there are a total of thirteen learners some of whom have multiple challenges such as mental challenges, autism, hyperactive physical disabilities, those without limbs, without speech and behaviour disorders, among others. Australian government funding provided new facilities and a building upgrade to the primary school to assist in education and training for children with disability.

The Australian High Commission in Nairobi provides small grants to organisations in Kenya working in the fields of women's economic empowerment, women and child rights, social entrepreneurship and disability.

For further information contact:

Rob Bateson, Public Diplomacy Manager, Australian High Commission, rob.bateson@dfat.gov.au

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