

## Dear adoptive parents, supporters and friends of CenterNarovinu

In May 2002, first 100 children from our program of long-distance adoption started attending school. Since then we have been able to support more than 4 000 children! It brings us great joy, but we couldn't do it without you. With your help, these children have been able to receive education, find jobs, become responsible parents and even volunteers helping other children in need. In the bulletin, you will find moving stories of adoptive parents, children and even volunteer coordinators,

who take care of the children in the project. If you believe that this project is meaningful (we sure do), please pass it on! Thank you. We wish you nice days and look forward to meeting you, for example this Sunday 18.6. when we will host a celebration on the Cargo ship on the bank of Vltava river in Prague.

**Za Centrum Narovinu Simona Heřtusová**  
simona.hertusova@adopceafrika.cz

**I LOVE YOU MIRKA** My reply to the question „how many kids do you have“ is four. Two daughters in Czech and two in Africa, in Kenya. I adopted Odri in 2007 when she was seven and was attending 1st grade at basic school. I choose her together with my daughters from the database of children waiting for their adoptive parents. Odri had an amazing smile. We agreed to do everything to keep that smile on her face. This year she is attending third grade of a secondary school and is on her way to fulfil the dream of becoming a lawyer.

Regina was adopted as a three-years old in 2012. She is attending „our“ school on Rusinga Island. She likes it there very much. She is nifty girl eager for knowledge. To be closer to my Kenyan girls I became a volunteer and then coordinator of adoptions. Thanks to that I met many great and kind people. I am really happy to be a part of Centre Narovinu at least a little bit. I am happy to help with organization of meetings and various events. And I am glad that my Czech daughters got involved too. As adoptive mother I can't wait to get letters and photos from Kenya. The moment we received a few words written by little Regina herself - like I love you Mirka - I can't describe the feeling. It is the best and the most beautiful reward you can imagine.

*Mirka Mirňáková*



Stories of other adoptive parents, children and volunteers can be found on pages 4 and 5.

## We are celebrating 15 years of experience with the project Adoption of African

### Children – project of long-distance help. And we say YES, IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Big thanks to all adoptive parents as well as supporters of the Club of Friends of Adoption, who sponsor and support the children in Kenya. Let's celebrate together:

**Sunday 18.6. - multicultural festival NAROVINU AFRICA FEST, Cargo ship on the bank of the Vltava river in Prague.**

Music performances, workshops for whole families, screening of moving stories of the long-distance adoption, exhibitions, and good coffee and tea from our fair trade shop.

P.S. Don't bring us presents, bring a gift for the kids in Kenya. We thank you in advance for any sports supplies, teaching aids, books in English, lego, or construction kits.

**In the afternoon of Thursday 25.5., on the occasion of the Day of Africa, an AFRO TRAM will go through Prague** (music, snacks, moving stories of long-distance adoption...).

Throughout June, you can also meet us at Prague festivals, where we will be selling products from our fair trade shop as well as organize workshops for the whole families: 10.6. Festival Keleidoskop, Praha - Pankrác, 17. 6. Festival Respekt, Praha - Výstaviště, 23. a 24. 6. Festival United Island, Praha - Karlín.



## Who is in the team of Center Narovinu? Introducing Dana and Simona

**Who am I? That's a burning question and I am still looking for the answer!** Mainly I feel to be a humanist and I believe in a big potential of a human and the possibilities of further development in the personal, spiritual and social sphere. I am a rebel so I do not intend to become reconcile to how the things are when it doesn't make any sense. I do not understand why in the 21st century with this awesome technology and progress there is still poverty, war and violence. That's why I am trying to develop and support everything that leads to reconciliation, love and compassion, to overcoming pain and suffer, to expanding human knowledge, and creating new non-violent culture.

And that's probably the exact impulse that has led me from the work as a teacher in kindergarten through the various social activates of Humanist movement all the way to Africa. I was born in Prague and I have been living here since then. I have a pedagogical education. I have been happily married for 25 years and I have one adult son. I work in a private graphic studio and as a director of Center Narovinu which I established as a small association together with Simoná Heřtusová in 1995 mainly for publishing newspapers „Narovinu“ and for voluntary activities in Prague Smíchov.

I have been particularly interested in foreign development cooperation - recently mainly in complex development of project Island of Hope in Rusinga Island, which is really important to me and very challenging at the same time. My interest start-

**My journey with Center Narovinu started in 1995, when we established it together with Dana Feminová.** At that moment we were both volunteering in our spare time. In 2002 we added first 100 children to the program of distant adoption and they found their adoptive parents during a first week



thanks to the Czech TV and the information in the main Sunday news. When it was no longer possible to manage the organization of the project in our free time we faced the decision: Should we find the employee or should we start working in Center Narovinu by ourselves?

ed in 2000 when I visited Kenya for the first time and after I saw poverty and problems of developing world with my own eyes. And what



do I do in my free time? I have been a member of the International Humanist Movement since 2001, thanks to that I had the opportunity to learn techniques of personal development and work of Argentine writer and philosopher – Power, whose friendship, work and a message became a big inspiration for my own journey and a wide range of social activities. I am an active member of the humanist organization World without Wars and Violence. I do translations and I publish books with in New Humanism. I am a member of the international press agency team Pressenza and I also participate in the development of the project Park of Studies and Reflection in the Czech Republic.

*Dana Feminová*

And so I started with presentation of the projects, contacting sponsors, writing press releases, speaking in media, organizing public meetings, festivals, benefits, volunteer courses, workshops in schools. I regularly went to Kenya and I expanded the projects to other places throughout Kenya. How do we do, that's what you have to say :) Without big grants but with great enthusiasm and help from volunteers, adoptive parents and sponsors. And what do I do in my free time? First of all I spend my time with my family. I have two children, one daughter and one boy, one husband for 21 years. I like traveling, hiking in the mountains. I like meeting new people and visiting new places. I think about who I am and where I go. I organize seminars about personal development and also seminars about non-violence in schools. We moved from Prague to Beroun where we reconstruct a small house. That's where you will meet me in rain boots, with spade in my hand, but incredibly happy. I like creating and learning new things. I am doing mosaics, knitting, sewing, hooking, painting, studying...And I am grateful for being surrounded by many awesome and inspiring people. People with whom we slowly change ourselves and other human destinies and life on this planet.

*Simona Heřtusová*

## The difficulties of pregnant girls in Kenya



Being a young single mother can be a very troublesome situation, but being a young single mother in Kenya gets even harder as the problems multiply due to severe prejudice and condemnation. In the program of long-distance adoption, we often encounter stories of girls who have gotten pregnant. We usually struggle with the same issue: how to explain the situation to the adoptive parent, who only finds out about the birth from a photo-

graph? Such an incident can seriously threaten the established mutual trust. That's why it makes us really happy, when the adoptive parent decides to keep supporting the girl and thus giving her a better chance at tackling the difficult situation.

Christine Aluoch (ID 52096) has been in the program since 2011. Now she is 17 years old and in the second year of our high school Island of Hope Humanist Mixed Boarding School in the community center Island of Hope on Rusinga Island. She is one of the smartest and most assertive students in the class.

However, over the summer, she fell in love and got pregnant with a boy of the same age, from a different boarding school. In Kenya, sexual education is still a big taboo and the topic of sex is loaded with much prejudice and superstition. The victims of the absence of good-quality sexual education along with the remaining customs of the fishing community and low status of women in the local society, are especially young girls. Christine wished to solve the situation with her boyfriend, by his family intervened: What if she has the child with someone else? And what if she only wants to take advantage of our family? In the end, they decided to prevent Christine from further contact with the boy, who most probably doesn't even know about the baby. The only option Christine was given by them, was to give up the baby and place it in their care.

Does that sound unbelievable? In Kenya, situations like that aren't rare. If girls don't have the support of their family, or if they have no family – like Christine, who is an orphan, they get into very problematic situations. At schools, getting pregnant is considered a disciplinary offense potentially resulting in an expulsion from the school. The girls also get discriminated against and stigmatized by their communities, which greatly

affects their future possibilities of making a living. Therefore, when girls find out they are pregnant, they often feel ashamed and as if their life is over. They often keep it a secret till the last moment even from their own family, run away from home, or get thrown out.

Quite understandably, the affected girls then transfer such local experience onto the adoptive parents. They are afraid that they will condemn them, and so they keep it from them, as most of the girls long to keep studying and finish school. Even though the girls know that they can talk to their coordinators and that they should inform them about all important things as soon as possible, as the adoptive parents appreciate being informed in time, many of them don't do it out of fear.

Christine was lucky compared to other girls, because she got pregnant with a boy she had feelings for. In the local fishing community on Rusinga Island, there is a common practice called "Jaboya". "Jaboya" means, that fishermen or intermediaries take advantage of women involved in fish business- they sell the fish only to the women who are willing to have sex with them. Women are often the only providers for their children and then don't have another way of providing for their family. The same concept is also used to attract young and under-aged girls under the pretence of normal business or in exchange for fish – sex becomes money. Girls and women are often forced to have sex with fishermen due to their poverty- sometimes, they offer the women food for their little baby, sometimes they offer to purchase sanitary pads or learning aids.

Christine gets big support from our school, where girls with a baby are allowed to keep studying, but most importantly, she couldn't manage without her adoptive parent, who helped to solve the situation by sending a monthly fee, which Christine uses to pay for a babysitter for her son Gerard. As a result of that, Christina could come back to school only two months after the birth. In the letter to her adoptive parents she writes: "I wa really scared what would happen to me after I have the baby. However, you decided to take my worries away and send me money for a baby-sitter, who takes care of my baby. I thank you very very much." The financial gift also brought another happy ending to the women who takes care of Christine's baby. She too is very happy, that she finally has a job and that the small salary gives her the opportunity to provide for her own children.

Christine's experience is very important for other girls and women from the local community – her perseverance to finish her studies and to follow her dreams as well as to take on the role of a responsible mother show new possibilities and give hope. It will still take time for the status of local women to improve, however, we believe that the planned program of good-quality sexual education and big support for our students in similar situations, are steps in the right direction.

# Strong human stories of adoptive parents, children and volunteers

We selected for you few stories, but we had to cut them short as we do not have enough space. We will be publishing the full stories including additional videos and photos on our web and Facebook profile.

Because of this project, the students get information about life in other parts of the world, they learn about human soli-



arity and willingness to help. It does not matter how they will help and support in the future. At the same time, they make their opinion on importance of education. In our country, a opportunity to go to school is rather an obligation in the eyes of the children. This distant adoption is a chance to realize there are places in the world where things are very different. Children would love to go to school and learn, but their parents cannot afford it.

*Bohunka Dusíková, ZŠ Kladruby*

I went to Kenya two years ago in order to see things with my own eyes. And I have to say I got really excited about what the Narovinu Center built there. This is the right approach if we want to provide support to the developing countries and not just to collect money and send them to the project we came up with. It is important to cooperate with local community,



ask them about their needs and together with them create new, better life in the places where they are at home. It is a long-distance run, but the results are totally worth it.

*Helena Havlišová*

In 2015, I decided to visit Diana and I flew to Nairobi. I met with Diana in her school. Her father was also with me. When he asked her if she is happy I came to see her, she literally said she wants to jump with joy. We agreed we will meet with her family as well and the next weekend I went



to visit her parents and two sisters. They were very welcoming and I spent an amazing time with them. While visiting, I invited Diana to come to see us in Prague for 30 days next year (2016). When she was visiting Prague, we also became friends.

*Ljuben Nunev*

I went to Rusinga Island in 2010 for half a year to work there as doctor-volunteer. This is where I met with Narovinu Center and their projects. Somehow during this time, the clinic and all the children on from the Hope Island became very dear to me which is why I keep on coming back on regular basis. Together with my colleague we also cooperate long-distance with the clinic's staff.



But before I left Rusinga, I adopted child via Narovinu Center. I was lucky as David was looking for Sponsor at the same time. David was boy from the orphanage so I actually adopted a boy I was living close to for several months :) David got to the orphanage after both of his parents passed away and his grandparents were not able to provide enough food for him. Shortly after he got to the orphanage, also he lost his younger brother which was very hard for him. This is why he was even more aware the future of his family is with him and the only way for

brighter future is a good education. He was very hard working, social, smart and he was helping his younger classmates. More than 6 years passed since then, David will be 20 this year and he is in his last year of secondary school. I have to say he is turning into bright young man who makes both his grandparents and me very happy!

*Marie Langová*

**Me and my husband were not even 30**, and we did not have our own children yet when we saw a spot on the distant adoption in Kenya. Its motto was: You can change life of kid in Kenya for less than price of 1 coffee cup per day. We liked that since the amount of 20 CZK was affordable even for young couple. And for this money, one kid can go to school? Whow, great! We were one of the first people to sign the adoption contract. We chose 5 years old girl Maureni Achieng. We thought that in general, the girls have more difficult life in the developing world and we wanted as small child as possible so we could support him or her for a long time.

This is why I would like to thank Narovinu Center for enabling the adoption which makes us extremely happy for 15 years already!

*Petra Augustová with family*

**So I chose Winny.** Back then she was 12 years old. Today, we are 8 years together. Letters, packages, photos, school reports, results of the health checks, they always arrived and there were no issues. My choice of Narovinu Center was very good, you fully met my expectations. At the beginning, the letters were rather careful, normal, decent, just as life goes. She has been always very grateful for our support. I also learned about her sisters, where and how she lived. And then she also mentioned couple times how lonely she feels and that finally she has a good boyfriend. After three years, the contact with Winnie was interrupted and after some time in cooperation with your agency we found out Winnie left the school. The local coordinators were investigating further. After some time again we found out Winnie was pregnant and gave birth to baby girl. Since she broke the rules, she was to be expelled from the program, but because of your helpfulness we all agreed she is going to get another chance. Today, Winnie is grown-up, beautiful woman and she is studying pedagogy at university. She still has two years to finish and has 5 years old daughter. We communicate via email depending on what we have to discuss and share. And one day I would like to visit Winnie and her daughter.

*Miroslava Tovarňanská*

**Dobry den,mJmanui se Hellen Amukoa Olukusi.**Jsem z Keni mesta Nairobi.Mam Ctry bratry v Keni a dva bratry z Ceska Repblce. Wow! that is how i can remember little introduction i Czech language.

Hello.Am Hellen Amukoa.I am one of the beneficiary of the Long Distance adoption project.I was adopted in the year 2002. My parents names are Pavel and Jarmila from Liberec. They have educated me in kindergarten school, primary school, secondary school and now am in college and am so de-

lighted that i got this chance to be educated.They are making sure that am in the medical cover that is supporting me with treatment whenever am sick.They have really done a lot for me and my family and we humbly appreciate for all their support. Am much blessed to have these my loving and caring parents.

I was to study Veterinary medicine but unfortunately my Secondary education results did not qualify me to do it. But on the other hand,i realized that i like cooking and have interest in it,so i decided to do Hotel management and catering. I want to be one of the big Chefs and establish my own Hotel in the country.I will be much happy to see the long distance adoption parents including my parents spending their nights in my hotel.

Wow! the day that my adoptive parents came to Kenya,I was not believing my eyes.I thought i was dreaming but coming to reality,i was seeing my parents for the very first time and the tears of joy were just on my chick. We spend our time together and enjoyed every moments that we shared together.It was a happy moments!

I visited my parents in Czech Republic. My time in Czech Republic was the most beautiful part of my life and the most experienced one that i will never forget in both my current life and future life. I came across new things and learned a lot day by day.Wow,i have really missed my life in Czech Republic.The



beautiful castles,beautiful enviroment,new dishes of meals,the Czech language itself etc,and the most of all the Czech people. The Czech people are so loving,caring and kind.I really love them.I remember many amazing things there in Czech Republic in deed.

I love my parents so much that i cant forget them in my entire life. they have really laid a good foundation for my life.I and my family in Kenya,we are very happy and delighted for my adoptive parents . I would also like to thank my brothers and my grandmother from Czech Republic. Votes of thanks to my parents and all the adoptive parents in the Centrum Narovinu for all the support towards Kenyan children.You have really helped the less fortunate children with poor background to be able to get the most important key in life, that is education.On behalf of long distance adopted children, i say thank you very much! Ahoj!

*Hellen Amukoa Olukusi*

## Visit of Christine

In December 2015, I decided to adopt an almost six-year-old girl, Christine from Kenya, and it was the most beautiful Christmas present not only for me but for my entire family. My intention to enable her education and healthcare changed into wish of meeting her personally after first letters we exchanged.



I found Mrs. Jitka on Facebook, who was willing to join me on a journey at the beginning of February 2017. We flew to Nairobi, from there we drove by car to the Kakamega town in the northwestern Kenya to see Christine. Afterwards we visited the community centrum on the Rusiga Island at Lake Victoria. We ended our trip in Mosamba, where two adopted girls were waiting for my friend Jitka. Ms. Čapková from Narovinu Centrum helped us with the trip planning by communicating with the office in Nairobi, ensuring the accommodation in Nairobi and a car with the driver Victor for our journey to Kakamega, where Christine with her parents lives. Actually she lives in an earthen house built between small fields. Her whole family welcomed us, including the granny, and in front of the house gathered the children from neighborhood and some of their parents too.



Initial embarrassment lasted only for a moment. Soon came to present giving and Christine liked most a pink bike brought from Nairobi. The bike has been promised to her for a good school report. Early in the evening we walked around the village accompanied by a group of children. Second day, we went to Christine's school and the school director welcomed us and showed us the classrooms and introduced us to teachers in the teachers room. We spend the most of the time in Christine's classroom. Her class had around 40 pupils. We divided candies to everyone from a huge bag and some children recited and sang songs, and so did Christine. In the afternoon, Christine was freed from school. We went with her and her father to do the shopping for the whole family and had lunch together. She was doing her math homework during the lunch time. She is very smart and talented, she really makes me happy. I even thought her one English nursery rhyme and we were clapping

it to the beat. In the evening we returned to their house. Also children from neighborhood came and painted pictures for Czech children with the great interest.

Leave-taking was very sad, because we became very close with Christine. Firstly I was sorry I had only two days to meet Christine, but after the visit I had to state it was a reasonable length of visit. The meeting was very intensive, but we needed the translation all the time and therefore we could not spend time only in two, as I formerly planned.

However, I and Christine agreed that I will stay longer next time and I will practice more Swahili and she will English. I guess she will be far more successful.

Two strong experiences were expecting us on our backway to Mombasa. The first was the visit of slum Kibera, one of the biggest in Africa. Our driver Victor took us to the place, where he grew up. The most of the housings are built with loam and sticks and the roof of corrugated iron. Streets between huts are narrow and sewage flows through them. We visited also the school there. It got classrooms without windows, earthen floors and shabby blackboards. Unimaginable for an European! In spite of that we met people with laughter on their faces. A pleasant surprise was the visit of the community centrum on Rusiga Island. The name "Island of hope" is really accurate. We were fascinated by enthusiasm of children and teachers in kindergarten, and the older students, which study over evenings to have good results and so they open the way to better life. We very much enjoyed the computer room, where work in Word was thought. Classroom equipment is funded by donations from Czech sponsors. May the spirit of this "island" spread in Kenya and other places that need it so much!

*Gabriela Pelclová*



## Adoption of African Children – Project of Long Distance Help

**You can contribute also via one-time contributions to the Club of Friends of Adoption!!**

Do you like the idea of supporting the education of children in Kenya? Do you want to be in regular touch with the children and their family and receive photographs, certificates and letters? Join the programme Adoption of African Children – Project of Long Distance Help!!

For all who like the idea of supporting the education but the current situation does not allow them to support a particular child in Kenya, there is the Club of Friends of Adoption. The fund is made up of one-time contributions and supports chil-

dren who have lost their adoptive parents so they can successfully finish their education.

The account number of fund is 107-6829480277/0100, Prague 5. Variable symbol of the Club of Friends is 800. You can send a one-time contribution or send regular or irregular amount of money throughout the year. Thank you in advance for your support and help!! We choose stories of three children you can support. For detailed information and more children, please visit [www.adopceafrica.cz](http://www.adopceafrica.cz).

**Vincent** (ID in database 41380) attends 8th grade at Toto Bora Academy school. He has three siblings, Faith, Fildah, and step-sister Hildah. His father died in 2003 and mother is a farmer. The family lives on 3,000 Shillings a month (about 725 CZK). They live in their own two-room cottage with thatched roof, they use wood for heating, kerosene for lighting and water from a nearby spring. We're looking for adoptive parents for Vincent who would help him to complete basic education or even support him at high school



**Priscar** (ID in database 51959) attends 4th grade at Buruburu Girls Secondary High School. She likes to play football and netball. Her father died in 2002. Mother sells clothes and earns about 6,000 Shillings (about 1,500 CZK). Family (5 people in total) lives in rented two rooms. Priscar has lost an adoptive parent so we are looking for a replacement to help her finish the high school.



**Christine** (ID in database 52587) comes from a polygamous family. Her mother is the first woman of her father. There are five children in the family of whom Christine is the youngest. Father is a fisherman, mother takes care of children. However, the income from fishing is not sufficient to provide basic needs for the whole family. Christina's family lives in a three-room clay cottage. They use wood for heating, kerosene for lighting and water is collected from a nearby lake. Christine goes to the kindergarten at the Island of Hope Community Centre and is waiting for adoptive parents who would help her with education.

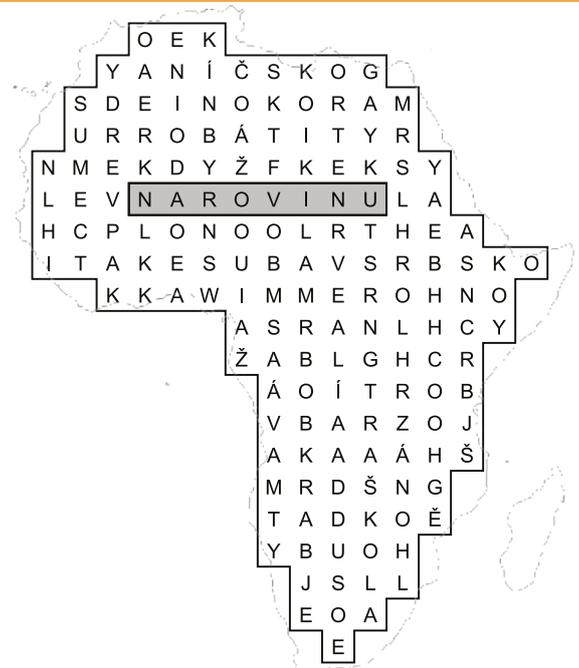


## Wordsearch

*We have created a wordsearch for fun and joy to adoptive parents and supporters of Centre Narovinu, because we are excited too – our Agnes (ID 40990), who we have been supporting since 2008, has finished her primary school and this year she continues with secondary studies. Lenka and Jana*

*Legend:*

AMARUS, AMBO, AZORY, BARZOJ, BÍGL, BOBR, BORT, ČÍNA, ENIODA, ENOSIS, ERML, GOOSE, GRIFONEK, GROŠ, HCOOH, HEER, HOUBY, HRZÁN, CHRT, KAPVERDY, KDYŽ, KEKSY, KRAB, KRYSA, LAYÁ, LODR, MALI, MAROKO, NUDA, ORTEN, OSEL, OSUD, RYBNÍK, SRBSKO, SUMEC, ŠKOLA, THEA, TMAVÁ, USEKATI, VOLNO, VOSA, WIMMER, ŽÁBA.



## Island of Hope on Rusinga Island

The community centre Island of Hope is a real complex project. It is attended by over 500 children a day. The centre has 47 local employees, 65 orphans in the orphanage, 93 kids in kindergarten, 272 at primary school and 31 students at secondary school. The clinic has registered 15 120 patients and 68 babies were born here in 2016. 197 hens are kept at the farm, there are also 2 ponds for tilapias. These are also kept in 6 cages in the Victoria Lake.



### Send it forward! You can support this project in many ways:

1. Buy presents from our Fair trade or a gift certificate „Send it forward – donate hope“ (e-shop and shop in Prague).
2. Volunteering – join the Club of Friends of Centre Narovinu.
3. Adopt a child from Rusinga Island in the project of adoption for distance.
4. Send a financial gift for the project Island of Hope (number of the account: 107-6829480277/0100, VS: 900).
5. Start a company partnership – we offer mutually beneficial cooperation
6. Internet shopping using Givt.cz (you do not pay extra money and via your purchase you support our project)

*We look forward to cooperation.*

Dana Feminová (tel.: 777 711 911, dana.feminova@adopceafrika.cz)  
executive director, main coordinator of projects of development cooperation





**Fair Trade Shop**

# Pass it on!

**100% of incomes will support children from Kenya's community centre Island of Hope**




**Gifts with a story**