

Poverty and its hidden forms

Sometimes we don't even know how our neighbour lives and we can't even imagine the joys and worries he has in his life. And have you ever been imagining how someone lives in another part of the world? Therefore, it is understandable that we often have inaccurate and by media distorted information, about the lives of people in Kenya. Helping poor people in Africa is then automatically envisioned by many people as helping kids with bloated bellies, who are standing in torn clothes in front of a mud hut. But poverty has many forms. We would like to introduce to you at least some of the topics that adoptive parents ask the most. For example, questions may arise when they learn from a letter that the family of a child they support has a cell phone and a television, or that their adopted high school student (or more often a college student) uses Facebook and Instagram. However, the ownership a television or telephone is not a sign of luxury and that the child no longer needs our support. 21st century technology has arrived in Kenya as well as in other parts of the world.



Mobile phones

Nowadays, mobile phones are commonplace and can be found in every clay house in Kenya, they are even owned by extremely poor families - these phones are mostly very simple Chinese cheap models. The SIM card is given free by the mobile service providers and the call costs and basic data are cheaper than in our country. The whole technological development in Kenya has basically skipped computers and people send money via mobile phones – they pay via special M-Pesa application, which replaces banking. Mobile phones are also important from a medical point of view. Thanks to them, some villages may be able to call an ambulance, the examinations made over the phone are expanding or there are special applications for smartphones created, which can people use for AIDS and other diseases testing. In short, a mobile phone is a

very common and necessary thing in Kenya today and helps to solve many problems.

Internet and Social media access

Most people have the possibility to access the internet in an „internet café“ where, of course, they have to pay for the computer use. Sometimes the child brags in the letter that he has an email address, but then he does not reply to the adoptive parent's email because he does not have the money to go to the café. Most high schools have barely one computer at the office. Better access to the internet have the university students.

However, simple and cheap smartphones with basic data allow you to use e.g. Facebook. Social networks are very important for all adolescents in today's world - even in the very poor areas of Kenya. Phones are banned at schools and therefore students use them when they are back home for holidays from the boarding schools. And like every teenager, teenagers in Kenya are trying to look the best on their photos, they even try to picture the reality better than it actually is. And not just in the photos itself but also the information they provide. Not many people share their worries, difficulties and challenging events. There are indeed enough difficult issues that Kenyan teenagers have to deal with and not boast about on social networks - the position of women in the community, the high risk of HIV and other illnesses, the uncertainty of whether the family will be able to pay for their studies, the fear that if someone gets sick, they will not have money for treatment, lack of



space at home to study, demanding housework and care for younger siblings, corporal punishment and humiliation by teachers at school, etc.

Household equipment

Today we can also find television in most clay houses. Even in Africa, people want to know what's going on and want to have fun at a football match or a movie. People also try to decorate and make their home cozy with a pictures on walls and decorate other furniture with fabrics. But this is not excluded with the fact that they cook only in an outdoor fireplace and go several kilometers just for water.

Hairstyles and clothes



Kenyans are naturally very tidy. Even very poor people try to walk neat, have clean shoes and clothes, be nicely combed, as this is taken as a standard in Kenya. In most cases, people buy clothes on the markets. They get there a very cheap second-hand clothing from Europe, which they then adjust as needed. Thanks to this, even a simple t-shirt and pants can look very well. In the same way, the sophisticatedly braided female hairstyles can look "luxurious".

Girls can knit various types of braids at an early age. This is why women usually make these hairstyles each other, for example from artificial, otherwise colored

hair, which are cheaply available in every drugstore and self-service store. It is part of their culture.

Last word at the end

From the very beginning, we decided to focus on development cooperation in stable situations (humanitarian aid - for comparison - on the contrary, focuses on current situations in war conflicts or natural disasters). In stable areas, it is possible to build projects together with local people, and thus change their lives to better ones. That is why we have been looking from the beginning in Kenya for people who will cooperate with us and improve the situation in which they live, they will understand the importance of education and self-involvement instead of passively waiting for help. And that allowed us to create a stable team in the management of the organization and voluntary coordinators who are reliable and take their work as a mission.

Some adoptions last for many years (even 10 or more) and the adoptive parent accompanies his child from primary school to

the final exams in high school or even further, to university. During that time, the life of the adopted child can change a lot. And that is one of the goals of our program - to support poor families to improve their situation. And when we help educate one of their children, we try to motivate them that they can manage to provide education for their other children on their own. In short, we try to ensure that if we help the family, its members do not just stand idly by for further help, but they try to improve their living situation on their



own. Nobody wants to help in the way that the situation remains just as bad as it is and does not develop in any way.

As mentioned at the beginning, poverty has many forms - even though the family can live in a stone house, have a mobile phone, internet, television or clean, nice clothes, they do not necessarily have food on the table every night, access to drinking, safe water or money for health care and medicines. And often the family has no idea whether they will be able to provide education for all their children or if they have to choose between them. There is no social system in Kenya, so at a time when the family is failing, no one will help them, no one will provide financial assistance or a pension. Nowadays, due to the coronavirus crisis and the limitations associated with it, all "our" families have a big problem securing food and basic necessities - just washing their hands often with a soap is an unsolvable problem for many of them. A problem we can't imagine.

Thank you very much for your support in the form of money, energy, hope and especially the desire to help where it is most needed.

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