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Please Pray

In these difficult financial times, pray for the continued generosity of our donors, which allows us to walk with communities like Katilu on the journey to transformation.

Advent Greetings to All Our Friends and Supporters

There is much to share. The village of Katilu that I wrote about in my last newsletter continues to remind me what communities in even the poorest regions of the world are capable of accomplishing with their own resources.

Last summer, before the goats were donated, development staff from Reformed Church of East Africa met with a group in the village who wanted to start an income generating activity (IGA). Their idea was to build a guest house. Initially the group believed that this project could only become a reality if some well-wisher (donor) gave to the project. The RCEA staff told the group, "Why would you expect the donor to take a risk that you yourselves are not prepared to take?" Realizing that a well-wisher for this project was unlikely, the group discussed the idea of raising their own funds to build 12 guest units using traditional materials. There was a lot of enthusiasm for the idea, and the group voted 17 to 3 to go ahead. RCEA staff, recognizing that the three who voted against would likely lobby later to reverse the decision, asked those three what they needed to come along with the decision. At first they lobbied. They told the group, "You will never follow through, we need someone to push us. It's risky, we may get killed picking sticks along the river, let the donor save us the trouble." RCEA staff told the

three that the vote was done, the group was going to raise the money to build their own guest houses, and what did they need to come along with the decision. The community naysayers, realizing the project was going ahead, suggested that the project be broken down into phases and to seek police security to reduce risks. With this added wisdom the group accepted the suggestions and there was 100 percent buy-in. The guest houses were built, and five months later the group had earned almost \$1,000 in revenue. With those profits the group's next project is to build a kitchen.

This Katilu story is not over. The day of our goat distribution the headmaster of the local RCEA school asked for funds for a borehole project at their school. I normally don't respond to such requests; however, when staff from Canadian International Development Agency and the Canadian High Commissioner's Office said that they were interested in supporting the project and requested CRWRC to facilitate the project, I said we could do it but only if the community



This is one of the houses made for katilu local Guest House. It is the first house. The stick fence was made to surround a site of about 400 X 400meters

In this site we now have all other houses for guests .

demonstrated ownership of the project. CIDA funds had to be spent quickly so we didn't have much time. I called the General Secretary (GS) of RCEA, who is from Turkana and a well respected community leader, and told him what CIDA was willing to provide funds if the community provided funds as well. The GS talked with the community and they agreed to raise \$3,000 or 10 percent of the cost of the project. Churches from all across Turkana raised funds for the project. Within a month the funds were raised. A quarter of those funds came from the Katilu guest house group.

The story of Katilu is a story that I see repeated in community after community in Kenya. When poor communities see their own resources and believe in themselves, they can achieve remarkable things with only a little coaching and training.