



**OLALO of ...**  
(Luo)

August 2015

**DARAJA of ...**  
(Swahili)

**BRIDGE of...**  
(English © )

**HOPE**

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:16*

When Olalo planned the trip to Kenya, our focus was to go and see...see Oyugis where Corinne and Sonko ministered to the people, to absorb the culture and experience day-to-day life in a small Kenyan town.



Our other focus was to go and meet...meet the students sponsored through Olalo, the people we've sent for medical help when no others means were available, to meet the 100+ kids who attend Oyugis Soccer Academy to learn soccer

skills and hear the Word of God, and to meet our amazing Kenyan Team of volunteers who keep things running on the ground in Oyugis... Kennedy, David, Arthur and Nasri.

We tried to prepare ourselves to experience a third world culture. A country where most families live on less than \$1 a day, electricity is off as much as it is on, the water is unclean, if there is any at all, and general living conditions unimaginable to us. We knew life was hard and poverty abounded, but we realized we couldn't fully comprehend it until we'd be in its midst, experiencing it firsthand. I often wondered how I would control my emotions and handle the difficult things I'd see, situations so desperate and without hope.

I was expecting the worst....and then God opened my eyes to also see the best.

He showed me first of all, I came to Kenya to experience their world, but I was seeing it from my own perspective. It was my life style, my living conditions and my world that I applied to theirs.



What I perceived as hardships and obstacles were just everyday conditions; nothing out of the ordinary for the typical Kenyan family.

Once I was able to look past my "perceived inconveniences" of life, I found the people to be incredibly

resourceful and hard working. There was never rushing from one place to another and always time to greet one another, stop for a chat and just visit for a while. People took care of one another and opened their homes to other kids – related or not – who needed a place to live for a multitude of reasons. Life was tough already, but doors would open to take in an orphan or two, or other child who would otherwise be in worse or unsafe living conditions.

The people were friendly and very curious about the mzungu's in

their town. Most people had a smile, friendly greeting and a wave hello even from a long distance off. We were always greeted with great enthusiasm by the children. In bare feet, mismatched and worn out clothing they would come running to meet us wherever we went and break into infectious giggles and laughter when we spoke to them and shook their hands.



The young people we met had great ambitions and pride. Many strived to get the education needed to become doctors, teachers, engineers and follow agricultural pursuits. They had visions of a better and stronger future for themselves and for the benefit of their people, the people of Kenya. This rich, vibrant and colorful culture was capturing my heart as the heat, humidity, rain and everyday inconveniences faded from the forefront of my mind.



I'm not saying difficult living conditions and hardships didn't exist...they abound! Life is hard in Oyugis, Kenya.

There are no washing machines or dryers, microwaves or ovens... but there's clean clothes, cooked meals and heart-warming times gathered around a table enjoying the food and the time spent together. Garbage collectors don't pick up weekly trash cans or recycling and many homes don't have indoor plumbing or even toilets. Each day can be a struggle to provide food for the family, see a doctor or find the money to keep a child in school, and yet in the midst of these circumstances, it's all taken in stride as just the way it is.

In the grand scheme of it all, there is much to be envied by the way they live. Life is by no means perfect or easy, but they have something that is so noticeably missing from the lives of many of us here in the States. It's not something they work at or consciously consider, it's just who they are!

My hope is someday, you will all get to visit Kenya and experience this rich culture for yourself. Go and find out everything you've been missing!

Nyasaye Ogwedhu! Merry



“We’re Not In Oregon anymore, Toto....”

Through the generosity of the Portland Timbers, Portland City United Soccer Club, Reid Saunders Foundation and donors of Olalo, we had over 400 pounds of soccer items, food, medical supplies, games, toys and hygiene items to pack up and take to Oyugis. Among the many items were donated Bibles. Numerous people advised us to pack them deep in the bins so they wouldn’t be confiscated or cause us problems going into Kenya.

Knowing that over 82% of the population of Kenya claim to be Christians, I checked with some Kenyan friends here in Oregon who regularly lead mission trips to their homeland, and asked if this was something I should be concerned about.

The answer was a resounding NO! “People would be happy to pray with you in the streets,” they said. “If you went to any school and said you wanted to come teach about Jesus, they would usher you in the door.”



It didn’t take long to see that the name of Jesus was everywhere in Kenya. Vans, a major means of transportation, are covered with pictures of Jesus and statements of faith written across their sides. Crusades are happening in the streets and at schools. Churches are everywhere.

One of my favorite memories of Kenya was early on a Saturday morning when Teresa, Sonko and I walked to the bank to convert some money into Kenyan shillings. Sonko said we had to get there early because the lines would be long.

We stood outside the bank while Sonko introduced us to employees as they entered the building to prepare for their work. (He knows EVERYBODY!)

It wasn’t long before I heard singing off in the distance...like a choir gathered to worship...it was sweet, melodious, harmonized....

”When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way! While we do his good will, he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey....”

I realized the singing was coming from inside the bank. I stepped up to the window and peered in. The lobby was crowded with employees sitting on folding chairs and worshipping.

“Oh, how I love Jesus....” was sweetly sung and then another song. Next they prayed, folded up their chairs, went to their work stations and opened the doors for business.

I was speechless...overwhelmed...and so totally blessed! The freedom they had to sing praises to their savior made me sad for America, where just mentioning the name of Jesus brings ridicule, distain and judgment.

That morning’s sweet blessing only deepened my growing love for Kenya and its precious people.

### Impacting Lives .....

Two bedroom apartment, 1 bath, kitchen, small living room....how big could it be? Maybe nine hundred square feet?

Doesn’t matter. It was big enough to fill with 40 kids hungry enough to squeeze in to study the Word of God and pray together.

Enough said....



A little bit of Oregon in Oyugis...

About a 5 minute walk from the Omondi's apartment is the Matata Nursing Hospital where the majority of ill and injured get sent to see a doctor, have basic tests and receive medications through our Change for Change Medical Fund.

Right on the front of the building is a menu of sorts that lists the services they provide, how long each service takes and what it costs.

We were scheduled to have a hospital tour by its administrator, but he was called away on business. For several days we thought we were going to personally experience the hospital due to a bad reaction Pete was having to the malaria pills he was taking, but fortunately we did not.

We did get to see the inside workings a bit though, while we waited for the 82 year old woman who was knocked over by her cow to get x-rayed.

(See her story and how Olalo helped in the sidebar)

When we first got to the hospital, we were greeted by the security guard just inside the door. What really caught my eye was the gold "Oregon" baseball hat he was wearing. Those Ducks are just everywhere!

We all waited in the hallway for test



results. It was clean, but it was hot! The building behind this main entrance hallway was where patients stayed overnight. I was amazed to learn that overnight stays in some hospitals usually meant two



to a bed. YIKES!

Hospital stays also means that if the patient does not have insurance, then food or water is not provided unless friends or family bring it in for you. Full coverage insurance that covers **everything** can run from \$1.50 to \$17.00 a month...a fortune for most and well out of reach.



Two blocks from Matata is the Blazers Sports Bar. Nick, the owner, came out to greet us wearing his TrailBlazers t-shirt (which I'm told he wears everyday.)

Even at over 10,000 miles away, we found a little of Oregon!



The call came early morning about an 82 year old woman who had been knocked over by her cow. She was in terrible pain with a suspected broken hip, unable to move and totally out of food. Sonko and two of the boys borrowed a car and drove an hour out of town to see her. It was just as reported. Her daughter-in-law, who had recently lost her husband was there but couldn't lift her and had no way to help. Sonko, Nasri and Okali carried her to the car and brought them both back to the Matata Nursing Hospital for x-rays. While she was being treated, Sonko gave the daughter-in-law money to purchase food to bring back to their home. As suspected, the woman had a broken hip. They wanted her to travel about 3 hours away to a surgical hospital and for several weeks of rehab. We prayed about Olalo's continued involvement and how we could help with such huge looming expenses. After much agonizing we realized we had done all we could. It was beyond Olalo's ability to help at this point. We paid the hospital costs and for pain medication, their food supply and a cab to take them home. We heard that the pain medication was offering her relief, but she had stopped eating because of her inability to move out of bed to use the outside bathroom – basically a hole in the ground. Sonko brought her a supply of adult diapers and more pain medication to keep her comfortable while her body worked to heal itself. Just prior to Corinne and Sonko coming back to Oregon, Sonko heard that the diapers were causing too much irritation and she stopped eating again. This time, he was able to devise a make shift toilet out of an old lawn-type chair with a hole in the bottom for her to use. He also bought her a 3 month supply of food through Olalo's Community Fund. We haven't heard any updates since, but we expect to hear how it's going in the next few weeks. THANK YOU, Olalo donors for all you do! None of this could be done without your continued financial support and prayers!

## Student Life...

We toured WIRE Secondary School, where three-quarters of the students sponsored through Olalo attend.

The school sits on a hillside with a sweeping view of the hills of Oyugis. Rugged terrain between the concrete buildings where classes are held were a challenge to navigate (for us old folks). Classrooms filled with neatly uniformed students sitting at long wooden tables – no air conditioning in the day's heat, just open windows waiting for a breeze, concrete floors and walls, a classroom built for learning...no distractions! (except us).

Classes are held 6 days a week, from 7am until 6pm. Three months on, one month off.



Many of our students live in town and leave their homes by 6:15 in the morning for the 45 minute walk to school. The walk home at the end of the day gets them there by 6:45 to do homework, chores, have dinner and get to bed.

It's a pretty tough life when compared to our schools here in the US, but Olalo's students are so incredibly grateful for the opportunity our sponsors have afforded them, you never hear them complain.

There are so many others kids waiting for sponsors so they can get an education. Almost every day Sonko is getting requests from desperate parents looking for help so their kids can attend school. Even while here in Oregon the calls keep coming.

We need help. We need sponsors to cover the costs for school tuition, uniforms and basic school supplies. Would you help us by getting the word out to your circle of friends, coworkers and family?

Thank you for considering how you can help!



Olalo of Hope-Kenya is a faith-based nonprofit working in the east African country of Kenya.

Our Mission is to help break the cycle of poverty by building strong communities by working with various partners and communities to empower individuals and families with opportunities for the furtherance of education, healthcare and skills needed to affect life change within their communities.

### How to find us....

**On the Web:** [www.olalo.org](http://www.olalo.org)

**FaceBook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Olalo-of-Hope-Kenya>

**Email:** [Olalo.of.hope@gmail.com](mailto:Olalo.of.hope@gmail.com)

**Mail:** Olalo of Hope-Kenya  
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Clackamas, OR 97015

Remember to designate which program you want to direct your donations to. Without a specific program designation, funds are put into the General Fund and used as needs arise for education, medical, missionary support or community support.

Olalo of Hope-Kenya has no paid staff and is an all volunteer organization.

**Olalo Programs include:**  
**School Tuition, Uniforms, School Supplies**  
**Change for Change Medical Fund**  
**Community Support**  
**Orphan Care**  
**Missionary Team Support.**

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