

Profile No. 1:

Local Kenyan female farmer

**Sale of piece of land on small farm to benefit entire village
in drilling of first communitywide borehole**

Prepared by Jane Lee, HKA board member, August 2016



*Nyanchori Village, Southwestern Kenya, East Africa, July 24, 2016 – Meet **Jane Sarange Bosire** (shown above), a widow and mother of three children, who sold a portion of her small vegetable farm (roughly 25 feet by 100 feet) at the center of this mountaintop tea-farming village for the benefit of her entire village, so that her neighbors would have the ability to draw water from this first-of-its-kind collaboratively funded communitywide borehole.*

In late July 2016, an estimated 250 people – including local residents and representatives from the Nyamira County (Kenya) government and Hopewell Valley, New Jersey (NJ), USA – gathered for what was called a **Borehole-Commissioning Day** to celebrate the drilling and near-completion of Nyanchori Village’s new borehole. Bosire was an honored guest at the event.

Bosire sold her land as part of the non-profit **Hopewell-Keroka Alliance** (HKA) charitable organization’s initiative to bring to her village clean, dependable, more easily accessible water for drinking, bathing or household use year-round (*please see accompanying overall water article for greater detail*). The resulting time savings, and the health benefits derived from, clean, accessible water should prove an economic boon and quality-of-life blessing for area residents.

HKA Keroka – the on-the-ground sister organization in southwestern Kenya to **HKA New Jersey**, based in Pennington, NJ – purchased Bosire’s land in September 2015. Six months later, the county government approved the HKA borehole application and committed money toward the project’s completion in March 2016. County engineers drilled the borehole 200 meters deep, more than 650 feet down, that same month.



For the greater good: Above, HKA New Jersey board member and college student **Mandy Lee** introduces Bosire during the public borehole ceremony in late July 2016. NJ students – for example, Lee, when she had been a high-schooler herself – had spent years hosting myriad fundraisers (bake sales, soccer all-nighters, simulated water walks and coin collections, by jar, among others) to raise more than \$14,000 US total toward the drilling of this borehole.

In turn, Nyamira County (within which Nyanchori lies) plans to fund the remaining balance and bring this first borehole and its required piped-distribution system to fruition, perhaps by the end of this calendar year.

“The borehole is going to support the community and create opportunities,” Bosire says. “It will make (*getting*) water easier. Rather than fetching water from far away, we can focus on digging and working the farm.”

In her fields that lie like a ribbon down the sloping hillside behind the two-room home she shares with her children, Bosire raises, among other things, maize (corn), beans, pumpkins, kale-like greens and bananas. She owns three cows – a female cow and her two calves of different years – and three chickens.



New well a gift, asset to community: On the land she sold, Bosire touches the yet-to-be-completed borehole (*shown above in right foreground*) – still a mere pipe sticking out of the ground, with a metal cap soldered on top, at the time of the public borehole celebration in late July 2016. The day should come soon when water will be piped to large holding tanks a bit further uphill (across the gravel road from Bosire’s home and farm) for use by Bosire, her extended family and fellow residents.

This borehole is likely to be the first of several similar boreholes to come for Nyanchori and surrounding villages in the years ahead, officials say.

Life as a farming widow is not easy, especially when it comes to daily water procurement, says Bosire, whose husband Andrew died at age 37 several years ago within days of having contracted a fast-moving stomach illness.

Bosire says she currently draws water from a nearby river.

“It takes a lot of time,” Bosire says. “There can be many people waiting. A big line. I can spend six or 10 hours waiting for water.”

Fetching and hand-hauling water currently can take members of households, primarily women and children, an average 4.6 hours each day to fetch water, by bucket or other vessel, from distant springs, streams or other sources one or more times each day, as found by a special water survey of area residents conducted by HKA New Jersey in late July 2016.

That’s time lost for other daily uses or pursuits, not to mention the possible health costs associated with the use of unclean water. Typhoid and other water-borne illnesses have been known to strike in this area due to the use of contaminated water.

Water must be boiled to make it safe and sanitary for human consumption here.



Farming life goes on: Following the communitywide borehole celebration that hot afternoon in late July 2016, Bosire shows off her two-day-old calf (*shown above*), tethered in the shade under cover, alongside Bosire’s home a bit up the hill from the borehole site. The calf’s black-and-white mother cow grazes nearby.

Bosire’s fields lie in between her home and the borehole. Her grove of banana trees, laden with hanging bunches, grows at the roadside in front of her home. The land is lush and rolling. One person has called this area a “bread basket of Kenya.”

Bosire says she sold her land for the borehole “to get water for the community” and for her own family’s financial support.

She says she came to Nyanchori Village in 2001 from her childhood village far away to marry her husband here in his childhood village. As the solo head of her household now, she tends her own fields and livestock. And she currently is learning marketable skills (such as sewing boys’ and girls’ school uniforms and loom-knitting coordinating sweaters) through her village’s newly launched **Seeds to Sew International** women’s collective, fostering female employment and financial empowerment (www.seedstosew.org/2016/06/16/nyanchonori-seeds-sew-launch).

“I strain a lot because I’m alone, no husband,” says Bosire. Despite the hardships of life, Bosire says that, with knowledge and a powerful faith in God, a person can do anything.

Founded in 2008, **HKA New Jersey** is a tax-exempt, non-profit charitable organization that works hand in hand with its sister organization **HKA Keroka**, based in Nyanchori Village, the latter organization of which manages wide-ranging community-desired health, education and infrastructure-improvement projects on the ground in this corner of southwestern Kenya.

HKA New Jersey has raised about \$170,000 US total over the past eight years in support of these projects, including this first borehole, rooftop water-collection systems, all-weather roads, and the construction of a tea-buying center to boost local commerce. Both HKA New Jersey and HKA Keroka are all-volunteer organizations, their board members each giving freely of personal time and talent. (*For more information or to donate funds or volunteer time, please see: www.hkalliance.org.*)