From the Director

Dear all

Victoria Friendly Montessori desires for a complete transformation where all children finds life in all its fullness. In our services to children and community and in our sense of togetherness and team work, in our being sensitive to community norms and cultural values and above all, the vision we hold for our program, 2017 was a success.

Visible at a glance of our program, a standing modern Victoria Friendly Montessori school remain our mother project and entry point to the Rusinga community.

Our successful involvement in all community programs; Water Sanitation and Hygiene, Agriculture/ Food Security, Economic Empowerment Programs, Health program, all summarized in our Community Social Service delivery as initiatives intended to improve the wellbeing of children and their families. The completion of four new modern classrooms and the launch of junior farmers’ field school gave our 203 children and their families hope and momentum to achieving their desired goals. The provision of 40 pieces of 1000 liters to 40 families up scaled our quest for food production at household levels.

To all staffs at VFM, we will achieve our transformative objectives with all of us getting real with each other about the existence of multiple challenges and how VFM needs to show determination in exerting its presence as one of the leading community based organisation in Rusinga Island. Thank you for your commitments to serve children of this island. As we plan to enter 2018, remember that no one has the story you have lived here, lessons you learnt, families you supported, children you gave hope. You are therefore a unique mixture like a fingerprint dipped in ink and you will leave a mark like no other in the lives of children.

Our vision

Working towards a society in which all children are able to live dignified existence with equal and just access for their future.

Our mission

A happy children center endeavor to improve the situation of orphans and vulnerable children by providing care and protection, guide the re-integration process to the society and address the factors leading to the situation.
The year that ended was accompanied by a number of complexities ranging from limited resources for community service delivery, however we still managed to achieve.

In this regard, I would like to recognize some individual whose countless efforts fuelled the activities. All staffs at VFM showed competence and professionalism in their service delivery. To our volunteer who provided their skills and expertise to pioneer our skillful parenting models, thank you and I pray for a serious engagement in the next years

I feel obliged to recognize efforts of Harrie Oostrom and the entire board of Imani Foundation, our relations with donor partners was only possible with you.

Hilde Klok and the entire Koornzaayer Foundation team, I feel proud as your commitments saw a complete modern eleven classrooms, ablution block and other investments i.e. agricultural project we implement with Free Kenya Foundation.

Liesbeth and the team at FEMI Foundation, your contributions to this program was very key. We found it interesting to learn from Tanzania beside huge donations we receive for the program.

I equally find it meaningful to send our gratitude to family at Peter van Vliet foundation, without your support and commitment to this program, we would have found it difficult to record all these achievements.
Message from the Administrator

The year 2017 was very important as we actively launched our community programs besides our vibrant education project established at Joost Smit Learning Center. Our volunteers and all field staffs were there to see a smooth community entry.

I have learnt of several attempts of development in the island that never achieved their objectives. Some programs had planted a seed of handouts and this washed away positive mind sets and replaced it with poverty mind sets. As we started implementing the designed activities, our great threat was community who always relied on free handouts.

The VFM program has achieved a lot in ensuring the community change their attitude to participating actively in the projects. Today we share success with the community. In our sustainability plan, we hope the program will be community driven at the end of it all.

In school, children dress well courtesy of their caregivers, their personal hygiene well improved as VFM only focused on advocacy. In the community they are ready to accept loans in our economic programs as a sign of commitment. We only supported families to register into National Hospital Insurance Fund scheme as the registered families actively funded the initiative. Water tanks were never free, the community accepted to pay half the price and this is to be passed on to another family. (Pass on – give me 10 and I will give back 5 to support another person)

Today the community in dialogue meetings are able to prioritize their needs and plan on how to solve their problems, VFM only facilitate.

What is the uniqueness of VFM programs?

We embrace community ownership and involvement. We facilitate their desired priorities and above all is our integrated approach. That one beneficiary is targeted with all activities for total transformation.

Moving forward I encourage all stakeholders to always embrace the wellbeing of children. As my director always challenge us, what permanent mark do you want to leave in the heart of that innocent child? Is it a mark of hate or love, despair or hope?

I hope 2018 will be a year of more success.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The year that just ended was a year of commitments, it was commitment from all of us who gave our program a priority. Children and their families were actively committed to the improvement of their wellbeing.

We recorded a number of achievements that if it were not for the commitment of all players these would have not be achieved. I am sure you will be amazed to read the achievement here below.

Many organisations and individuals contributed to our achievements and I therefore want to thank them here.

Firstly, it is with sincerity that I thank all children of Rusinga whom we are serving. I know well that they are very innocent and that their condition is not their own making. As we report the year we pray for our deceased two children, one we lost through an accident and another died of sickle cell anemia.

I also want to thank all the staffs at VFM whose endless efforts of giving hope to these children was eminent in the year 2017. This team is amazing one. Millicent demonstrated her superior role in overseeing the education project, Nelly and Margret, I thank you for the commitments you had and how you up scaled our community service delivery. Philip our administrator was seriously engaged to ensure all were achieved even with the very little resources that was at our disposal.

I lastly appreciate the efforts of all our lovely donors who gave this program another chance in 2017. As we have always maintained, it is not that you have a lot to send to Rusinga but it is all about your commitments to serve humanity. Thank you for your caring heart.

Let me thank Mr. Denis and Mr. Philemon our area administrators for their endless pieces of advice and personal commitments to this program. Through you we realized success during our rapid result child birth registration initiative. We were rated the most committed organisation to have supported 1000 late birth registration I one month.

Government departments that supported our work; ministry of agriculture and ministry of education, ministry of health and I recognize Tom Mboya Health Center for the successful partnership, department of social services, the registrar of birth (Agnes Augo).

I lastly acknowledge the committed beach management units whose leadership saw a proactive fishing community in Rusinga Kamasengre. This team ensured that all children in the beach set ups were enrolled in school.
Introduction

Ten years ago, VFM was existing in the minds of the founder Tom and co-founder Millicent. It was a dream that was to be achieved. Tom had a lot of passion playing with children on a weekend after a long weeks work. These children lacked so many basic social amenities and most of them were not enrolled in school at a school going age.

A school was the best option, where they could be offered knowledge and above all, it was to give hope to the hopeless and less fortunate young children of Rusinga. The work was started but did not succeed, however he never gave up, he still brought children together played with them and even shared meals with them.

We never could have imagined that just in five years, a school could have been establish to support over 200 needy children by 2017, today a school with almost all basic facilities is standing to give hope to children and their families.

The school as the first project offers amazing products to the children; two meals during week days, good learning environment, qualified and passionate teaching and support staffs, safe water for drinking, health services like treatment of minor illnesses, however home environment was still unfriendly for children.

Parents and caregivers are not empowered to offer basic needs to their children. Food not available and children go missing it during weekends, health seeking for children is not met, child rights not prioritized by the community, sanitation and hygiene at home is still a threat including unsafe water for drinking and other domestic uses. Poverty levels is the major factor contributing to all the conditions affecting children and their families.

We then started community activities to bridge the gaps that are still existing.
**Sustainable livelihood:** the overall objective of this is to promote participation of children, youth and adults in initiatives for adequate food and household income. Specifically the program aims to support communities increase farm production through adoption of good agricultural practices; sensitize and support community initiatives on soil conservation and agro-forestry; strengthen the capacity of communities to seek technical support and devolved funds from the government; strengthen the capacity of farmers to engage in market led production and value addition; and promote access to community based savings and lending opportunities.

To help reverse high poverty levels eminent in Rusinga, VFM and the community through problem prioritization meetings identified low household income as their main challenge. Rusinga is an island and fishing is the main economic activity, however with the high population of fishermen and poor fishing method and poor fishing gears, fish is already depleted and families who are solely dependent on fishing currently face severe livelihood challenges.

Economic empowerment program is to boost household income generation through alternative group activities. Community members are organized into common interest groups for empowerment, children, young women, young men, and women with interest in dress making, poultry keeping, horticulture and savings and internal loaning form the empowerment groups.

They are offered trainings and small scale business startup loans at 5% interest.
FOOD SECURITY/ AGRICULTURE

Food secured families: this program is modelled to ensure families are involved in activities that can ensure food on the table.

There is food insecurity in Rusinga since very few people engage in agriculture for food production. Land potential for agriculture is available along the lake but production is not realized due to low involvement of the community in Agriculture.

Children go hungry sometimes missing all the meals and as a result low school attendance rates are recorded in schools.

VFM has modeled an agricultural project that is focusing in the involvement of community member in food production for household consumption. Community members are offered trainings on agribusiness and gardening.

Free Kenya Foundation has been funded by Koornzaayer to train and establish a resource center in Rusinga to provide knowledge, practice and skills for food production.

Kitchen gardening is an activity that ensures families produce vegetables next to their kitchen.
WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

The school has a modern ablution facility for children, however this is lacking in the community. Despite VFM providing clean drinking water to most families in the neighborhood, some families are still not able to access safe water.

Our WASH activities are campaign based and advocacy is the main tool to ensure every home/family is embracing WASH concept. A model home must have clothe line, dust bin, pit latrine with hand washing leaky tin and soap, dish rack and by extension pit latrine to public places like beaches and other schools.

This concept is to ensure proper waste management and water borne disease and other disease control.
SOCIAL SERVICES

Families in Rusinga face numerous social problems that VFM currently partner with the communities to reverse. VFM call to see a child friendly community where all children are living dignified livelihood, however children still become victims of child abuse and neglect, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, poor drinking water, poor or no health services, domestic violence and many other problems not listed.

With support of the social workers and other program staffs, families are supported through these issues.

Counselling

Members of the family are offered psychosocial support at home during household visits that are conducted weekly and sometimes appointments are made outside their homesteads.

Skillful parenting (Families Matter! model)

VFM facilitators are skilled to offer parents the basics of parenting and child protection. The model basically intends to also reduce new HIV infections through parent involvement with children and pre adolescents. It offers parents with skills to offer sexuality messages and enhance parent-child communications.

EDUCATION
To improve equitable access to quality education:

Interventions aim to make at helping every community child to achieve the highest educational standards that he or she possibly can.

Rusinga has several fish landing beaches and the big one being Litare where VFM school is located.

Children never enrolled to school in good time and as a result retention was compromised. Orphan hood and child neglect was visual in Rusinga and adoptive families could not offer the basics to these children due to over dependency.

What began under a tree is now a modern school offering education need to over 200 needy children in Rusinga Island.

Eleven classrooms standing, modern ablution block kitchen and stores are visible.

HEALTH

Improved access to quality healthcare: Interventions are geared at strengthening the capacities of duty bearer to provide equitable, accessible and quality services as well as create demand by promoting health seeking behaviors. The interventions endeavor to create awareness and health education to all the target beneficiaries for better health outcomes.

Rusinga is an administrative ward under county government of Homa Bay. It has only two public health facilities both found to the east. This offers the
community to the west poor health services due to distance and lack of enough medical supplies.

VFM has sought to bridge the gap by operating a small clinic in school to support sick children, however by extension we reach to their parents at the village through our community health outreaches conducted by our program nurse.

Partnerships and linkages are enhanced to ensure complete service deliver. Referrals to other services like Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision, cervical cancer screening, Family planning, HIV Testing services, TB screening among others are referred.

VFM and our Integrated approach.

We have known that poverty is multi-dimensional and therefore requires multi-dimensional approaches. It is very simple and effective, one staff carries ‘a bag’ of all products to one beneficiary individually or in a group.

Our 2017 achievements

Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>NUMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic empowerment</td>
<td># of social groups formed 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># trained on IGA including loaning 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of groups embracing horticultural farming in small scale 4 of 80 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of groups embracing poultry production in small scale 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td># offered psychosocial support 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of SGBV cases managed and reported 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Achievements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of child abuse cases identified and managed 25</td>
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<td></td>
<td># of parents offered parenting skills with FMP model 45.</td>
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<td></td>
<td># offered counselling services 288.</td>
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<td></td>
<td># households visited 165</td>
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<td># children with disability identified and linked 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td># of late child birth registered 1004.</td>
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<td></td>
<td># community dialog meetings 4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>WASH</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td># trained on sanitation and hygiene 255</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td># public toilets done by community 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of pit latrines we influenced through land lords 66</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td># embracing WASH concept 61</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>HEALTH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># NHIF registered 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># community health outreaches 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># child health monitoring sessions 44 (203)</td>
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<td></td>
<td># HTS services 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># Health talk/life skills 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># Health clubs formed in other schools 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># Ante Natal Care 58.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># advocacy and referral of cervical cancer 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># Nutrition counselling 79.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Food security and agriculture | # offered kitchen gardening training 115  
|                             | # HH with kitchen gardens 42  
|                             | # supported with water tanks for gardening 40  
| Education                   | 203 children enrolled  
|                             | 11 classrooms, 4 new completed  
|                             | Kitchen dining and stores constructed  
|                             | 2 Children died.  

LOCAL EMPLOYMENTS

Unemployment is another social issue affecting youths and young women of Rusinga.

VFM has tapped the potentiality of women of Rusinga in our employment opportunities. We have employed 61.9% females against 38.1% of male staffs. 76.2% being members of Rusinga community.

PARTNERS

We had all the achievements as a result of commitments from all player in our course.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

They offered technical support and up to date VFM School remain in the helm of success. They had eight (8) assessment to ensure all services in school were child centered and child friendly.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
Our key advisors on matters of agriculture.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

We got supported with nurses and supplies for both our static and mobile clinics during medical outreaches.

FREE KENYA FOUNDATION

They offered trainings on agribusiness to our community members. They set up our community junior farmers’ field school/resource center.

IMANI FOUNDATION

Imani foundation has funded various activities in 2017 including our running cost and feeding programs at VFM School.

KOORNZAAYER FOUNDATION

They funded all our investment costs and thus all our infrastructural achievements.

FEMI FOUNDATION

They funded our running costs and an exchange visit to FTK- Lower Moshi and Greening Africa initiative. We have adopted a new *Learning from the Best* model into our integrated approach.

PETER VAN VLIET FOUNDATION

They funded our running cost and their support ensured a motivated team.
GALLERIA
1. **Skillful Parenting Sessions On Going**
2. **Free Kenya Offering A Mind Set Training To Caregiver**
3. **Community Dialogue Session At VFM School**
4. **Child Health Monitoring**
5. **Safe Drinking Water For VFM School**
6. **A Family Who Benefited Water Tank**
7. **Members Of A Social Group In Their Horticulture Plot**
8. **Director Tom Attending To A Social Group**
9. **Social Group Meeting**
CHILD PROTECTION SESSION TO CAREGIVERS AT VFM SCHOOL

4FREE KENYA STAFS AT THE RESOURCE CENTER

COMMUNITY DURING PRACTICAL TRAINING
HARVESTING HOT PEPPER

SOIL FERTILITY TRAINING