

**Benedictine Missionary**  
**INES**  
**Illeret**  
**Marsabit County**  
**Kenya**



## **News from Illeret**

Christmas 2022

Dear friends and supporters,

Wednesday 22.VI.2022 Ruraka, Nairobi. Today, aged 64, Fr. Florian's life on earth ended and he returned to our Father's eternity. He left us with some duties to carry on with.



The picture on the left shows Fr Florian in the year 1987 at the construction site where the new Monastery in Tigoni was to be built. There was nothing but plain land. The picture on the right shows what you find at the same site 35 years later in the year 2022. Africa is growing and Fr. Florian was part of it.

The Benedictine Community in Tigoni now consist of 51 confreres at 5 locations. Tigoni, Ruraka, Nanyuki, Illeret and Egypt. Fr Florian dedicated his whole live since the age of around 20 to the mission in Africa.

Especially his last assignment in Illeret, lasting for 15 years is well known to our community of supporters by our regular postings for Christmas and easter. The school project INES started 2014 and had to be invented from scratch. Nobody has ever tried to build an education system that works with no educated teaching personnel, easy to transport, highly moveable on a donkeys back, scalable and pinpointed to the needs of a totally illiterate society.

Florian took on the challenge and succeeded with the help of God and his supporters all over the world.

Edwin Changamu, the INES Manager in Illeret writes:

Dear Friends of Fr.Florian

INES history in Illeret, Marsabit County Kenya is littered with Fr. Florian type of education which is unique but best for the nomads who do not need uniform ,ringing of bell and maybe insufficient teachers to handle different subjects but Multigrade Multilevel learning. Learning MGML encourages learners to think by themselves, do practical work and be ready to solve problems they encounter in

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their day to day life with the guidance of one teacher but with different levels of learners. INES therefore, has moved the emphasis of teaching from teacher lectures to learner centered methods. All learners are actively involved. In this way, learners acquire useful methods, discussions and ways of acquiring knowledge and skills. The Fora learners acquire and develop positive attitudes towards self and peer development.

We are grateful to INES German group, donors of INES program, INES Kenya and everyone who is taking part in the INES development, writing, editing and production of learning materials. May the almighty God grant you merry Christmas and happy New Year with prosperity and generous donation. The uniqueness makes INES incomparable to other education system for nomads. Our road ahead will go far and it is a step towards making INES proud. The INES donors have the latitude and wide spread powers to assist and implement the system from where it is and where it should be. Formerly



the system depended on the decision of late Fr. Florian and his handpicked teacher Edwin K. Changamu who left the government work to join INES after thorough training by the German ladies Ruth Wuerzle and Theresa Schaller who had the knowledge of mobile schools from India and Regensburg University.

*The making of Math bags*

*Edwin (right) conducting teacher training in Math*

We the INES team both in Kenya and Germany gladly tag ourselves as INES TEAM. The Benedictine fathers from Tigoni, Fr. Florians family in Germany and St. Ottilien will lead and assist INES on the firm foundation of the late Fr. Florian, follow the education guidelines in Kenya, train teachers, support INES activities and implement further mobile schools. I am optimistic that we will do an ever better job in further developing the system and completing the remaining areas. Since INES is a process and not an event many of our people do not understand it but actually on the ground then everything turns to be right. INES system is new but it has brilliant ideas and we appreciate the donors and thank them for what they are doing, the hope they are giving to the Daasanach people in the North of Kenya, to make them proud of their INES and to achieve schooling without separating the learners from the parents.



Thank you and welcome.

Yours faithfully

Edwin Kambagah Changamu, INES program coordinator, Illeret, Kenya

### INES KENYA

We have now 10 schools running. They teach introduction ladder of learning, language ladder of learning in the languages Dassaneech, Swahili and English, mathematics ladder of learning. Only development of the last ladder of learning – life studies - has not yet been started.

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### Achievements

1. Ten mobile schools are running. Not all teachers have reached the same level of teaching yet. As they are trained they receive additional subjects material bags and enlarge the teaching subjects.
2. The material bags for mathematics are finished and ready for hand out according to the level of teacher training.
3. All INES purchases are done locally and at the start of the year.
4. All materials are tailored locally and the local employees are monitored closely by Eveline. Edwin monitors the sewing machines and other machinery to keep them working and running.
5. Constant communication with Tigoni Abby, Fr. Joseph, Fr. Maurus of St. Ottilien and Wolfgang and Christoph v Bayern
6. The cash flow has really improved and by the end of this year all employees will receive their salaries via MPESA. About 4 teachers have applied for their ID's and they receive cash via their spouses.
7. Our mobile schools are able to be checked regularly because we have a motor bike and Br. Stephen promised the team an old car to be used during rainy season. We selectively monitor and supervise our team.
8. Youths are asking for training to be teachers while elders want more schools in their Foras.

### Challenges

1. Benedictine monks in Kenya are not very acquainted with mobile schools and there are not many of them who train on the INES system.
2. Other projects and NGO's of short term pay high salaries to local employees with little challenges and little supervision while at INES, there is a lot of work with maximum output, supervision and little pay
3. No accurate movement of the nomads due to large herds and tribal feuds now and again. Specific movement cannot be identified along certain areas for easy location
4. Untrained teachers leave our work at will and join better paid jobs with the county or national government or NGO's
5. Our parents and guardians do not care so much about their children education. When learners move to normal state school it is more due to feeding programmes and not learning.
6. 2023 we want to start another 10 schools after having identified and trained the teachers. The necessary material with transport bags are produced and ready for handout.

This year, on July 11<sup>th</sup> 2022, the Benedictines celebrated 50 years, Golden Jubilee, of their presence in Kenya. The late Fr. Florian has been part of the Benedictine history in Kenya. He worked in Aror Parish as Parish priest during which time he inspired local people and young men and women joined the Benedictine way of life as monks and nuns.

Notable is the primary school he began which now goes with the name "St. Benedict School of Peace". The school has grown and is doing quite well. Fr. Florian initially used a parish garage as a classroom for the first pupils. Fr. Florian had had the grace of making great things from small things.

With the Golden Jubilee this year, and the passing on of Fr. Florian, it has marked the end of an era: the end of initial German Benedictine missionaries in Kenya. Fr. Florian was the only Benedictine missionary from Germany. On another perspective, it signifies the growth of the local church and the responsibility to carry on faithfully the foundation laid down by the expatriates.

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In honour of Fr. Florian, and on behalf of Abbot John Baptist, I wish to thank the family of late Fr. Florian, beginning with the mother and all brothers and sisters, for having donated your beloved son and brother to the church, and especially to Africa, Kenya. He was a blessing. Thanks for the many visits you made to Kenya and the mission station he worked. It was a sacrifice on your part. The visits made by the brothers and sisters during his vulnerable moments, the very last days of his life on earth cannot be underestimated. May God bless each and all of you.

We appeal for support in order to bring the dream of Fr. Florian into reality, especially for the Daasanach people and the mission of Illeret in general.

As an Abbey, we commit ourselves to keeping a keen eye on the mission of Illeret and the INES program and providing personnel where necessary. Early next year we will send at least two brothers to take a direct responsibility in the INES program.

As we look forward to a greater collaboration in the future, we wish you graces proper to the festive season of Christmas. May the child Jesus, incarnate among us, inspire you and your families as to bring stronger family ties!

Be very blessed

Fr Joseph OSB



Ruraka May 2022, Wolfgang and Christoph hand over the Baptising Candle of Florian to Fr. Joseph

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Tigoni May 2022, Wolfgang Marcello and Christoph saying farewell to Fr. Joseph (second left) and Abbot John the Baptist (right) before leaving for Illeret together with Fr. Maurus (not on picture) from St. Ottilien for inspection

PS: One more thing:

We happily see this letter being passed on. Please make sure that any person interested leaves the post address behind so we can keep our database up to date. This way we not only can supply a certificate of donation but also this regular Newsletter. We do have a number of donators we cannot contact for lack of details. Bank are of no help anymore for data protections reasons. e-mails welcome

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