My name is Carol Halbert and together with my husband Shaun I visited the Mathare slum in 2007.    Having travelled extensively in both Africa and Asia we had seen extreme poverty and human suffering, but we had never experienced the abject poverty that we witnessed in Mathare.  As we walked through the maize of alleys with open sewers running past the rusting corrugated iron shacks where families live; as we made our way through the piles of rubbish, both human and household waste, that lay strewn everywhere, as we saw children as young as 3 years old left unattended, we felt overwhelmed with both sadness and anger.  Sadness that these children had to endure such a life of unimaginable hardship and anger that in the 21st century this could be allowed to happen.

Since that time we have come across some inspirational people in the community who are striving to provide an education and a feeding program for the orphans and vulnerable children there.  One such person is the Headmaster Richard Wanjala Manya of the Patmos Junior School.  Together with his committee members and volunteer teachers he has managed over the last 5 years to ensure that the poorest, most needy children have the opportunity to attend the school and receive a daily meal.

Shaun and I have worked closely with Richard since 2007 and we have found him to be an inspirational leader.  His hard work and commitment to this school has been remarkable.  In order for a project to be successful it is important that the community are involved from the outset and this is what Richard and his colleagues have sought to achieve.  They researched the best income generating projects which they felt would work in the Mathare slum and came up with the idea of the Maize Farm and Posho Mill Project.  They were successful in their proposal application to the NGO Kitchen Table Charities Trust and in March of 2011 were awarded a grant to enable them to start the Maize Farm Project.   The first harvest last year managed to produce enough maize and beans to support the school feeding program and this year they have planted an extra acre and purchased a posho mill to grind the maize and help generate additional revenue for the school.

The school now accommodates 85 children and it is clear from the latest school reports that they are benefitting enormously not only from the education they are receiving at the school, but also as a result of the daily meal they are now receiving as part of the school feeding program.  Many of these children would go hungry were it not for the meal they receive at the school.

Richard and this community based organisation have been totally transparent and accountable at every stage, producing reports, receipts and photos, and I have every confidence in them.  I feel privileged to be part of this project, to be associated with people who are inspiring change in  communities that had once been defined by crime and hopelessness, people who are determined to give the children of Mathare the opportunities to reach their full potential.   I would urge anyone reading this to look at the website: [www.patmosschool.org](http://www.patmosschool.org/) and to seriously consider becoming a supporter of this project.

Carol Halbert

UK Representative of the Patmos Care and Development Centre – Patmos Junior School, Mathare, Nairobi.