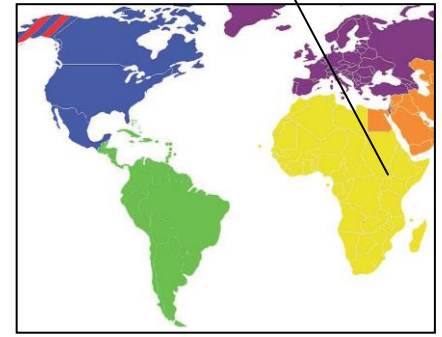


Kenya



*Today we are going to read an article about a project of the United Nations called the Millennium Villages project in Kenya, a country in Africa. The United Nations is an organization that helps people around the world to have a safer, healthier and better life.*

*The person who wrote this article was 12 years old when she visited Kenya with her father in 2014 when the project was just beginning. At that time the people of Sauri lived on less than \$1 dollar a day. She also tells us in the article about her return to Kenya and how the Millennium Villages project has helped many people have a better life already.*

## **A Brighter Future**

Hannah Sachs

The unpaved dirt road made our car jump as we traveled to the Millennium Village in Sauri (sah-oo-ree), Kenya. We passed the market where women sat on the dusty ground selling bananas. Little kids were wrapped in cloth on their mothers' backs, or running around in bare feet and tattered clothing. When we reached the village, we walked to the Bar Sauri Primary School to meet the people. Welcoming music and singing had almost everyone dancing. We joined the dancing and clapped along to the joyful, lively music.

### **Tattered:**

Torn or ragged

The year was 2014, the first time I had ever been to Sauri. With the help of the Millennium Villages project, the place would change dramatically in the coming years. The Millennium Villages project was created to help reach the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Poverty:**

Poor; having little or no money

The plan is to get people out of poverty, assure them access to health care and help them stabilize the economy and quality of life in their communities. Villages get technical advice and practical items, such as fertilizer, medicine and school supplies. Local leaders take it from there. The goals are supposed to be met by 2025; some other targets are set for 2035. We are halfway to 2035, and the world is capable of meeting these goals. But our first glimpse of Sauri showed us that there was plenty of work to do.

### **Fertilizer:**

A substance spread into soil that helps and supports plant growth

## **The Fight for Better Health**

On that day in 2014, we followed the village leaders into Yala Sub-District Hospital. It was not in good shape. There were three kids to a bed and two adults to a bed. The rooms were packed with patients who probably would not receive treatment, either because the hospital did not have it or the patients could not afford it. There was no doctor, only a clinical officer running the hospital. There was no running water or electricity. It is hard for me to see people sick with preventable diseases people who are near death when they shouldn't have to be. I just get scared and sad.

Malaria (mah-lair-eeh-ah) is one disease, common in Africa, that is preventable and treatable. Mosquitoes carry malaria, and infect people by biting them. Kids can die from it easily, and adults get very sick.

Mosquitoes that carry malaria come at night. A bed net, treated with chemicals that last for five years, keeps malarial mosquitoes away from sleeping people. Each net costs \$5. There are some cheap medicines to get rid of malaria too. The solutions are simple, yet 20,000 kids die from the disease each day. So sad, and so illogical. Bed nets could save millions of lives.

**Water, Fertilizer, Knowledge**

We walked over to see the farmers. Their crops were dying because they could not afford the necessary fertilizer and irrigation. Time and again, a family will plant seeds only to have an outcome of poor crops because of lack of fertilizer and water. Each year, the farmers worry: Will they harvest enough food to feed the whole family? Will their kids go hungry and become sick?

Many kids in Sauri did not attend school because their parents could not afford school fees. Some kids are needed to help with chores, such as fetching water and wood. In 2014, the schools had minimal supplies like books, paper and pencils, but the students wanted to learn. All of them worked hard with the few supplies they had. It was hard for them to concentrate, though, as there was no midday meal. By the end of the day, kids didn't have any energy.

**A Better Life—2018**

The people of Sauri have made amazing progress in just four years. The Yala Sub-District Hospital has medicine, free of charge, for all of the most common diseases. Water is connected to the hospital, which also has a generator for electricity. Bed nets are used in every sleeping site in Sauri. The hunger crisis has been addressed with fertilizer and seeds, as well as the tools needed to maintain the food supply. There are no school fees, and the school now serves lunch for the students. The attendance rate is way up.

Dramatic changes have occurred in 80 villages across sub-Saharan Africa. The progress is encouraging to supporters of the Millennium Villages project. There are many solutions to the problems that keep people impoverished. What it will really take is for the world to work together to change poverty-stricken areas for good. When my kids are my age, I want this kind of poverty to be a thing of history. It will not be an easy task. But Sauri's progress shows us all that winning the fight against poverty is achievable in our lifetime.

<p><b><u>Impoverished</u></b></p> <p>Poverty-stricken; emptied of strength or richness</p>
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**Writing Prompt**

The author described how the quality of life can be improved by the Millennium Villages project in Sauri, Kenya. Based on the article, did the author convince you that “winning the fight against poverty is achievable in our lifetime”? Explain why or why not with 3-4 examples from the text to support your answer.