



**NURTURING BRIGHT FUTURES**  
**Serving Children and Families in Northern Kenya**

**August 2025**

## Background



For decades, families in Korr have endured cycles of drought, water scarcity, and harsh living conditions. These hardships often forced children to spend their days herding animals or fetching water instead of attending school. Education was viewed as less important than survival.

Korr, located in Marsabit County, is a remote and arid region where life has long depended on livestock. For the Rendille community, camels, goats, and sheep are not only sources of food and income, but also symbols of wealth, pride, and cultural identity.

Today, however, change is beginning to take root. Parents and community leaders are starting to see education not as a luxury, but as a necessity. They understand that education can provide their children with opportunities beyond the traditional livestock economy and protect them from the cycle of poverty that has gripped the community for generations.

## Early Start Africa Objectives in Korr

Early Start Africa runs an early learning centre in Rongumo village of Korr that serves about 130 children. Our goals go beyond classroom learning to include;

- 1) **Expanding access to early childhood education** – ensuring children begin learning at an appropriate early age, laying a strong foundation for future success.
- 2) **Developing the whole child** – nurturing not only literacy and numeracy, but also social, emotional, and creative skills for every child.
- 3) **Strengthening parental involvement** – we know that when parents support learning, children are more likely to succeed and remain in school.
- 4) **Breaking cycles of poverty** – equipping children with knowledge and skills that can lead to new opportunities outside herding of cattle.
- 5) **Building resilience** – preparing children to face a rapidly changing world with confidence, hope, and adaptability.



## What We Offer

At the center of the ongoing transformation at the Early Start Africa ECD Center- Korr is partnership with parents and the County Government of Marsabit. The centre has now become a safe and welcoming haven for children. It is more than just a school; it is a hub for learning, nourishment, and hope. To achieve our mission, the center provides:

- *Play-based learning that allows children to discover, imagine, and explore.*
- *Interactive lessons where children learn to read, write, count, and communicate.*
- *Two nutritious meals every day, which are critical in a region where food insecurity is rampant due to persistent drought and poor road infrastructure.*
- *Community resource where church meets on Sundays and young men meet on Sunday afternoons to develop spiritually and forge for the future of their community.*

We attribute this progress to growing partnerships and support from our parents, dedicated staff, Early Start Africa board, the centre Management Committee and the County Government of Marsabit. Due to this partnership, teachers are trained, learning materials are supplied, children have daily access to nutritious meals and drinking water and regular community meetings are held to ensure that education is embraced as a shared responsibility.

We celebrate parents who are active partners and often walk long distances to attend meetings, celebrating school milestones, and encourage their children's learning at home. Their involvement has created a sense of pride and collective progress.

## Stories of Change, One Child at a Time

In this report, we highlight stories of two children that demonstrate transformative work of Early Start Africa in Korr.

### *Arihto Hallo's New Journey*



Six-year-old Arihto Hallo, now in Pre Primary 2, once spent her mornings helping her mother fetch water and care for her younger siblings. Today, she delightfully spends them drawing shapes and sounding out words at the Early Start Africa ECD Center- Korr. It would be expected that soon she would be betrothed (booked for marriage) in exchange of a herd of cattle.

Her father, Amalo Hallo, admits he once questioned the value of school. "I thought education would not change much for us," he says. "But when I see Arihto reading and teaching her brothers letters, I know her future will be brighter."

Arihto's story is one of many, showing how education is opening new doors of hope for children and families.



## ***Laban Lechu New Dawn***

Five-year-old Laban Lechu, a Pre Primary 1 learner, lost both his parents at a young age. Now under the care of his guardian, Khobocha Eysimgudere, Laban starts each day at the Early Start Africa ECD Center- Korr instead of wandering around the village without direction. Something he always did.

Khobocha says, “Life has not been easy for Laban, but school has given him joy and hope. When I see him singing, counting, and playing with other children, I know he has a chance for a better future.”

Laban’s story reminds us that even the most vulnerable children in any context can find strength and opportunity through care and education.



Arihto and Laban’s journeys are just two of the many stories unfolding in Korr. Each child who steps into the classroom carries a dream, a promise, and a brighter path ahead. Together, these stories remind us that education does not only change individual lives, but also transforms the entire community.

## **Our Outcomes**

As a result of the ongoing efforts, we can already see;

- 1) **Increased school enrollment** – more children are now in school than ever before.
- 2) **Active parental support** – parents are changing their attitudes toward education and are becoming engaged, supportive, and proud of their children’s achievements.
- 3) **Confident learners** – children are developing academic skills, social skills, creativity, and self-esteem.
- 4) **Shifting community mindset** – education is now seen as a valuable path for the future beyond the traditional ways of life.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

While progress is obviously encouraging, several obstacles remain on our way:

- 1) **Lack of water:** Harsh climate, long periods of drought threaten access to water which is a vital commodity for running our programs and for the community. We have to buy and transport water from about 100 kilometers away which is extremely costly.
- 2) **Need for sufficient food:** Feeding 130 children daily requires a steady supply of food. This remains an uphill task for our resource constraint and young organization.

## Call to Action

Education in Korr is not just about classrooms, it is about breaking poverty, empowering families, and opening doors for generations to come. The transformation in Korr is inspiring, but it cannot continue without support. We invite partners, donors, policymakers, and well-wishers to join us in this journey. By investing with and through us, you are not only changing the life of one child but also shaping the future of an entire community. Every contribution matter whether it is funding, teacher training, learning materials, or advocacy.

Together, we can ensure that every child in Korr has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. Education is the seed of hope, and with your support, these seeds can grow into a future full of possibilities- for every child.

- 3) Limited learning resources: Our centre needs more learning materials such as reading books, blocks, crayons, toys and floor mats.
- 4) Staffing needs: Our child-caregiver ratios are not where we would like. We currently have four staff handling 130 learners i.e. more than 30 children per caregiver/teacher which works against recommended standards.

These challenges are real, but the determination of parents, teachers, and children shows that the community is ready to overcome them with the right support. We therefore appeal to individuals, corporates, church and parachurch organizations, foundations and governments to identify opportunities to participate and ensure this no child is left behind. ***Not on our watch!***

### Future Outlook

The vision for Korr is bold but achievable: to collaboratively transform community by raising a generation of children who are holistically developed and primed to contribute to nation building.

Looking ahead, the focus will be on:

- 1) Expanding early childhood education to reach more children in more remote areas.
- 2) Training and supporting more teachers from the region to provide quality care and education beyond our centre.
- 3) Strengthening partnerships with government, other local and international NGOs, and other stakeholders for sustainable resources.
- 4) Empowering parents to remain at the center of their children's education.

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