



# Rongena, Kenya

## Community Profile



## General overview

The community of Rongena is located in Narok County in Kenya's Rift Valley. The 2,380 people living in Rongena are predominantly Kipsigis, a small-scale agricultural tribe.

The land in Rongena is fairly flat, with the exception of the river valley and some large gulleys caused by soil erosion. The village is about a 15 minute drive, or 40 minute walk, from the nearest town.

The people of Rongena have encountered barriers to their social and economic growth, such as drought, famine, malnutrition and gender inequality.

With interest and participation from the community, and the support of the local government, WE will implement the WE Villages model of development in Rongena. WE hopes to empower community members to break the cycle of poverty in their lives by providing access to quality education, clean water and sanitation facilities, health services, agricultural training, and economic opportunities.

## Kenya facts

- English and Swahili are Kenya's two official languages, although each of the country's 42 ethnic groups has their own dialect
- More than 75% of Kenya's population lives in rural areas
- Only 54% of those in rural areas have access to improved water sources
- The literacy rate in Kenya is 78% and people spend, on average, six years in school
- 26% of children aged five to 14 are engaged in child labor





# WE Villages Development Model

WE is a movement that brings people together and gives them the tools to change the world. With two divisions, WE Charity and ME to WE social enterprise, we empower people at home and around the world. WE Charity empowers change with resources that create sustainable impact.

For two decades, WE Villages, a program of WE Charity, has been engineering an international development model to end poverty. It's not a handout or a single solution, but a combination of key interventions that empower a community to help themselves.

Our core mission is empowerment. In North America, we empower people to create positive change around them. WE Villages applies the same philosophy in developing countries, where our local staff work with rural villages and regional governments to support, teach and empower people within our five Pillars of Impact: Education, Water, Health, Food and Opportunity.

## At a glance

Through WE Villages, we have:

- Built over 1,000 schools and school rooms for young people around the world, giving more than 200,000 children access to education
- Provided access to clean water and sanitation programs and facilities for more than one million people
- Provided \$36 million in medical supplies to health facilities in WE Villages partner communities
- Enabled farmers and families to produce over 15 million nutritious meals to fuel their communities
- Helped empower more than 30,000 women in eight countries with financial independence



### WE Villages is:

- **Holistic.** We know that poverty is a complex problem, and no issue or solution stands alone. We work through five key development Pillars of Impact to provide solutions that support and amplify each other.
- **Led by the community.** Our partner communities take ownership of the programs and projects that create lasting change.
- **Capacity-building.** We help community members develop the skills, strategies and infrastructure to take charge of their future and maintain long-term change.
- **Connecting communities.** When you support our programming, you become part of a global family. We connect partners and supporters in North America and the UK with developing communities to build relationships that inspire change worldwide.
- **Transparent.** We've invited third-party experts and the brightest analytical minds in the world of international development to look at our model from every angle. They confirm that our solutions are effective and built to last.
- **Sustainable.** Our goal is to provide the training and tools that communities need to thrive for generations and take ownership of the projects we've implemented.



## ★ Education

The local school in Rongena was built in 1980 and has 15 classrooms offering full primary school education, up to grade eight. Approximately 100 school-aged children are not in school for various reasons, such as poverty and early marriage. Among the barriers to accessing education is child labor, which is quite common among children between 10 and 16 years old. Boys will work on wheat and maize farms or herd cattle, and girls are tasked with taking care of their younger siblings.

There are 13 government teachers and six volunteer teachers from the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at the school. This means that there is one trained teacher for every 46 students.

Future education projects will include the construction of new classrooms that are safe and conducive to learning. We will also work to increase the quality of education through teacher training and increasing the capacity of the PTA.

## 💧 Water

Ninety percent of households in Rongena are without access to safe drinking water, and 80 percent lack access to proper sanitation facilities, such as latrines and handwashing stations. Ten percent of children suffer or die from preventable waterborne diseases, like diarrhea. The school does have latrines, but they are in need of renovation due to rain damage.

Women and girls are the primary collectors of water, and must walk up to eight kilometers to the Amalo River to fetch water for their households. As a result, children are unable to regularly attend school, and women are unable to be home in time to prepare food for their children, and prevented from participating in women's groups or other income-generating activities.

Future water projects will include the construction of clean water systems and latrines, and mobilizing community members to maintain and manage them. WE Charity will also provide education on improved water and sanitation practices to stop the spread of disease and keep the community healthy.



Current school blocks in Rongena.



## Health

Access to quality health care is limited in Rongena. Community members prefer using formal health services, such as clinics, rather than traditional healing methods. However, the existing health clinic in Rongena is not adequately stocked with medicine.

The most common services accessed at the clinic are the immunization of babies, and treatment for malaria. The most common health problems for children are diarrhea and malnutrition, while adults suffer from brucellosis, bacterial infections such as typhoid, and upper respiratory tract infections.

WE Charity will focus on health education in the community by conducting workshops on personal hygiene, first aid and more. WE will also implement the 10 Habits to a Healthy Home program with women's groups, where they can learn about ways to improve their own health and the health of their families.

## Food

The main occupation in Rongena is farming. Men grow crops, such as maize and beans, while women sell the vegetables at the market, along with milk and charcoal. While community members are able to eat three times a day, their diet does not consist of the vitamins and nutrients needed for a healthy lifestyle. In addition, the community has suffered from drought and a maize fungal disease, which has severely limited their agriculture productivity.

WE's agriculture and food security projects will include the construction of school gardens and school farms. The formation of an environmental club at the school will give students the opportunity to learn about growing vegetables. Agriculture training for men's, women's and youth groups will also be key to encouraging sustainable farming practices in the community. Through these initiatives, WE hopes to increase agriculture production and provide a long-term solution to food security in Rongena.





## Opportunity

The men in Rongena are skilled in carving and masonry work, while women are skilled in basketweaving and tailoring. Despite this skill base, 80 percent of community members live on less than \$1 a day. In a community where the average family size is eight, this income is not sufficient for parents to support their families. As a result, many households live in extreme poverty.

Alternative income projects will include the formation of women's, men's and youth groups in the community of Rongena. WE Charity will facilitate participative trainings on financial literacy, leadership and budgeting. WE will also help mobilize group members to start savings initiatives, also known as merry-go-rounds, which help community members take ownership of their financial status and gain control over resources. WE will also help community members identify a locally appropriate income-generating activity to improve their standards of living.



For more information on WE Villages projects in Kenya or WE's international development work please visit:

[WE.org/we-villages/where-we-work/kenya](http://WE.org/we-villages/where-we-work/kenya) or email [info@WE.org](mailto:info@WE.org)