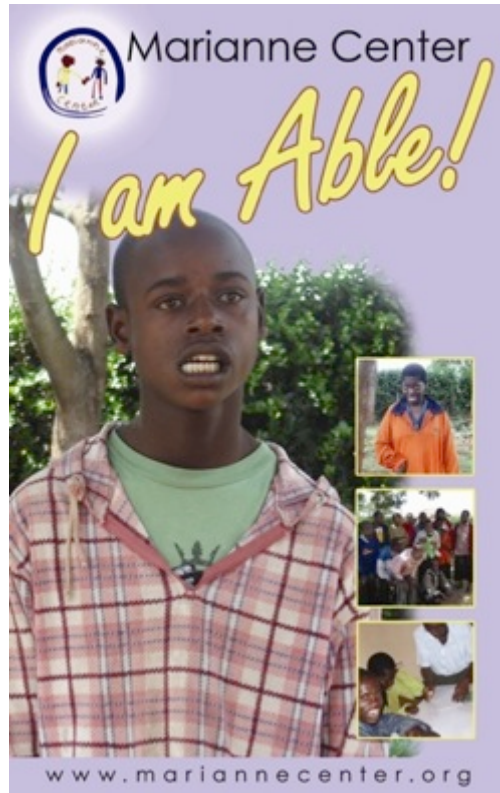


# Report Marianne Center

2024



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## **INTRODUCTION**

2024 was a remarkable year for Marianne Center. With the completion of key projects, a growing number of students, and valuable contributions from our donors, we made significant progress in our mission to support young adults with intellectual disabilities.

Over the past year, we have received various contributions for the activities of Marianne Center. With this report, we would like to inform you about what we have achieved in 2024.

## **RESULTS 2024**

Since officially opening our doors in January 2010, we have accomplished a great deal. We are very grateful for this and hope to continue our activities in 2024.

### **Our General Objectives:**

- Supporting (young) adults with intellectual disabilities by providing specialized training, facilities, social skills, personal hygiene lessons, cooking classes, and basic technical skills to enable them to perform simple jobs
- Achieving financial independence to cover the center's operational costs
- Challenging the social stigma in Kenya associated with intellectual disabilities
- Raising government awareness about the educational needs of people with intellectual disabilities
- Reaching out to approximately 3 million people in Kenya with intellectual disabilities and giving them and their families hope for a better life.

## **GOALS 2024**

Before the end of 2024 we wanted to have achieved the following specific things, in order to achieve the general objectives;

- The furnishing of the new building, bio-digester installation, and the paving the compound;
- Training of our staff;
- Obtained official registration for TVET (technical and vocational education and training);
- Finding local partners who can take Marianne Center under their wing;
- Inform 200,000 people about Marianne Center and the possibilities for the mentally disabled through our training;
- 45-50 students at Marianne Center.

Below we will describe how and whether we have achieved these objectives.

### **Activities**

The number of students has increased from 36 to 46, with 24 female and 22 male students. We hope to grow to over 50 students in 2025. With our new, fully furnished building, we will have enough space for this growth.

### Courses Offered in 2024:

- ADL (Activities of Daily Living): Personal care, hygiene, health, and safety
- Language: English, Kiswahili
- Mathematics and Money Management
- Housekeeping and Hospitality
- Sewing and Garment Making
- Cooking & Baking
- Handicrafts: Tapestry, weaving, beadwork, drawing, and painting
- Haircare and Beauty: Styling, hairdressing, and nail care
- Agriculture and Gardening
- ICT Skills
- Job Preparation & Basic Business Skills
- Sports



At the beginning of 2024, we hired a new teacher to offer a Hairdressing and Beauty course. Students learned how to style and braid hair in the African tradition, and the enthusiasm of the students was high.



We had 10 staff members in 2024, including 6 teachers. Staff training is crucial to ensure the best possible care and education. This year, we organized a training session with the Kenyan Institute for Special Education (KISE), covering curriculum development, communication strategies, and teaching methods. The training -funded by Wilde Ganzen and other organizations- was highly valuable and will be continued in the future.



### **Home visits**

During school holidays, our teachers visit students at home or stay in touch with parents by phone. This allows them to assess whether the skills taught at Marianne Center are being applied at home. Teachers also provide guidance to parents to help integrate this knowledge into daily life.



For example, in May, teachers visited Daniel Muriithi, a student at Marianne Center. Daniel is the seventh of nine siblings, and his single mother struggled to provide him with education before he joined the Center in 2019. During holidays, he earns money running errands for market vendors, a role supervised by his mother to ensure his safety. She hopes he will learn knitting and money management skills to become more independent.

To further involve parents, we plan to establish a Parent Council next year, providing them with a platform to share ideas and feedback. Their support is invaluable in ensuring the success of our students.



### ***Nature walks***

One of the regular activities at Marianne Center is nature walks. Our center is located in Kiambu County, a beautiful area rich in wildlife such as vervet monkeys, diverse bird species, and colorful butterflies. Just three kilometers away is the breathtaking Great Rift Valley Viewpoint, offering a unique experience for our students.



These walks serve as both relaxation and physical therapy. Many students face physical challenges in addition to their intellectual disabilities, and these walks help strengthen their muscles and promote mental well-being.

During the walks, students learn about different landscapes, farming practices, and environmental conservation. In 2024, they planted 25 avocado

trees and 100 other tree species on our grounds.

Additionally, these walks encourage social interaction. Students greet people they meet, improving their social confidence and increasing awareness about Marianne Center.

### ***Furnishing our new building***

In January 2024, we completed the construction of our new building, a major milestone. It is now fully furnished and wheelchair accessible. Key improvements include:

- Kitchen completion
- New dining hall flooring
- Installation of a biogas digester and rainwater harvesting system
- A walkway around the building
- Security cameras
- New beds, tables, and chairs
- Additional educational materials

This was made possible through generous donations from various foundations, with Wilde Ganzen matching 50% of contributions.



Security cameras



Path around the building



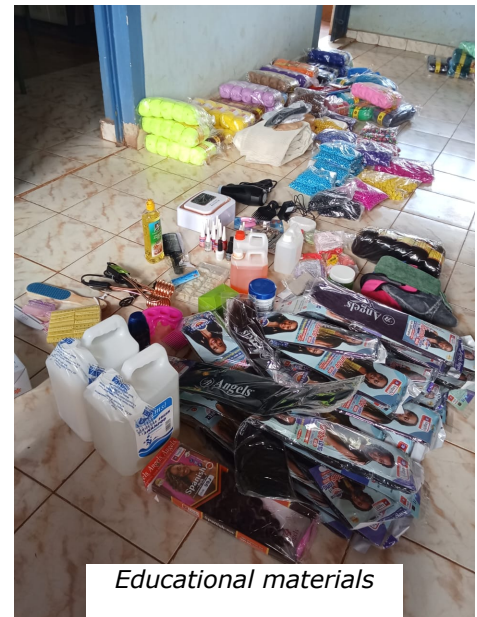
New beds and bed covers



New tables and chairs



Meeting room



Educational materials



Floor dining hall



Biodigester



Ramp



*Water harvesting*



*Cabinets kitchen*



In May, Wilde Ganzen made a spontaneous visit to Marianne Center. We were very happy with their visit and proud to personally show them all our activities. It was great to see that Wilde Ganzen was also very satisfied with the visit and the activities of Marianne Center.

## ***Financial independency***

Self-reliance is a core value for Stichting Marianne Center (SMC). Therefore, we strive to ensure that Marianne Center Foundation in Kenya can increasingly sustain the continuity of the center independently. While this is an important goal, experience has shown that achieving financial independence through income-generating activities remains a challenge. Such activities often require significant time investments and capital, and success is not always guaranteed.

The cultivation of vegetables in the greenhouse helps reduce the costs of our nutrition program, but unfortunately, not as much as we would like. Additionally, the school fees paid by parents cover only about half of the required amount. Due to inflation and widespread poverty in Kenya, many families struggle to afford the full tuition fees.

To prevent students from being excluded due to financial constraints, we have established the Sponsor a Student program. This initiative ensures that children from low-income families can still access education and support. School fees cover approximately 50% of the annual operational costs, with a significant portion (about half) allocated to staff salaries.

Thanks to this program and the support of donors, we can continue working toward our mission while also striving for a more sustainable financial foundation for Marianne Center. At the same time, we are increasingly focusing on attracting financial support from local funds and businesses.

Last year, we took the first steps toward official registration and government recognition. This recognition will not only help us secure local funding but also allow us to offer government-accredited courses and exams. Additionally, external candidates will be able to take exams at our center, such as for a sewing course, which will generate additional income for Marianne Center.

The registration process is complex and time-consuming, but we remain determined and will not give up. This milestone is crucial for the further development and financial sustainability of our center.

## **Networking**

This year, we have engaged extensively with business organizations, government departments, potential sponsors, community organizations, local authorities, and the church in Kenya.

### **Social Media**



A new parent introduced us to a government official, and while we have yet to see concrete results, the collaboration has been going well so far. These connections are important to maintain, as we hope they will bear fruit in the long run.

One of our students' parents is a social media influencer and has once again provided valuable support this year. Thanks to her efforts, we were able to produce two live shows streamed from Marianne Center. These broadcasts attracted 30,000 live viewers, with a total of over 90,000 views. As a result of these live shows, we also welcomed new students. Following the broadcasts, and with the help of parents, we were able to organize an end-of-semester event for both parents and students. Events like these strengthen the bond between parents and staff and significantly improve communication.

### **Expanding Our Network**

Throughout the year, we also participated in the SUNSHINE Rally, organized by the Rotarian District, which drew around 7,500 attendees. Additionally, Marianne Center took part in a sports competition between Cheshire Home and Blue School. Engaging in such events expands our network and increases our visibility, potentially leading to new collaborations in the future.

As part of this networking process, our interactions with these schools provided valuable engagement opportunities for our students, which could lead to future partnerships and new opportunities. These experiences not only help students build confidence but also foster a strong sense of self-worth.



Through our website, Facebook page, church, and sponsors, we are reaching more people with the impact of our activities. This year, we estimate that we have reached around 150,000 people.

While we would like to reach even more, our current financial situation does not allow for this expansion.



## Local Authorities

We maintain regular contact with local government and the community chief, who assist us in spreading information about Marianne Center within the community. They also play a crucial role in encouraging parents to enroll their children with intellectual disabilities at our center.

Furthermore, we collaborate closely with the Assessment Centres in Nairobi—government agencies that assess the nature of intellectual disabilities and refer individuals to Marianne Center or other suitable institutions.

For students without sponsors, we refer parents to the National Council for People with a Mental Disability (NCPWD). Unfortunately, this government institution has become significantly more reluctant in recent years to provide tuition subsidies, partly due to the elections held this year. The process requires substantial time and effort from parents, posing a major challenge for many. Despite repeated efforts from our manager, we have only been able to secure limited financial support for our students.

Additionally, our manager frequently communicates with the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) to strengthen our collaboration further. KISE remains a valuable partner by supporting us with referrals from parents seeking vocational training centers for their children with special needs. Our goal is to become an official referral point for KISE as a vocational training institution for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Moreover, KISE also provides essential training for our staff, helping us further enhance the quality of our services.

### *Visitors and other support*

We also experience strong engagement from the local community through donations of food and clothing, which we have been fortunate to receive several times this year.

We are especially grateful for the support of a dedicated supporter of Marianne Center. He has taken beautiful photos of our students and created a promotional video for us: [Watch the video here](#).

Currently, we are working on establishing a partnership with the CHESHIRE Children's Home, located in Limuru. This organization rescues children from the streets and extremely vulnerable situations. We aim to collaborate so that their students with intellectual disabilities can join Marianne Center for vocational training once they complete their schooling. This partnership would be a valuable addition for both institutions.



We are also grateful for the donations received from the Safaricom Foundation as part of the Ndotu Zetu project, which supports students in learning sewing skills. They provided one commercial sewing machine, a steam press, scissors, and measuring tapes. This support is deeply appreciated.

Additionally, we have welcomed several visitors who have donated food and clothing. We are thankful for all the support we have received.

## GOALS 2025

To achieve our overall objectives, we have set the following specific goals to be realized by the end of 2025:

- **Further professionalizing our staff** through targeted training programs.
- **Obtaining official registration for TVET** (Technical and Vocational Education and Training).
- **Attracting local partners and strengthening financial independence**, aiming for 60% of operational costs to be covered by local income.
- **Increasing awareness of Marianne Center**, reaching 200,000 people with information about our activities and opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities through training and education.
- **Strengthening and professionalizing our curriculum** to enhance the quality of education.
- **Improving administrative and financial systems** in Kenya for better efficiency and transparency.
- **Expanding our student base**, ensuring that at least 50 students actively participate in Marianne Center's training programs.

These goals are key to further developing Marianne Center and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

## ASSESSMENT PROJECT

The overall activities of Marianne Center are constantly monitored and regularly evaluated against our mission and objectives. Monitoring is done regularly, especially during the management meetings that take place on a monthly basis. We also strive to have an annual evaluation of our activities carried out by the Ministry of Education in Kenya, although this has not taken place in recent years. We want to keep improving and optimizing our activities to provide the best training for the mentally handicapped people in Kenya. As a result, we are always open to advice, expertise, etc. from partners, the government or other persons/institutions.



Each term, a performance report is made for each student by our teachers. This helps us in assessing progress in the development of the students. Performance assessment of our employees takes place every year. Upon graduation, our students receive an exit summary graduation report. This states for each component how they have developed and what level they have achieved.

Every month our manager makes a (financial) report. It is also the intention that the financial administration will be audited annually by an external auditor. In January 2025, Knijpers Group in Kenya will assist Marianne Center in setting up a new administrative and financial system.

Our Kenyan board consists of four directors, they are all professionals with extensive experience in matters such as management, entrepreneurship, organizational development, health care and knowledge about intellectual disabilities. For example, our chairman, Bernard Thairu, has seven years' experience in a similar position at a similar training center in England. Our center manager Anthony has years of experience as a project manager for non-governmental organizations. All employees hired at the training center are professionals with extensive experience in related fields. All staff, apart from one Dutch director, are Kenyan and they are responsible for the ins and outs of Marianne Center.



**We thank all our donors and well-wisher for their support!**