

MY STORY – KIBET

KIBET (MIDDLE)

AGE 13

OROMIA REGION, ETHIOPIA



When we arrive at our first school in Oromia Region in Ethiopia, the group of children selected for interview have already lined up behind their teacher. They're eager to talk to us about the difference the treatment programmes at their school have made.

The first to introduce himself is 13-year-old Kibet. He squints up at me in the sun, smiling shyly, but speaking clearly and confidently. He tells me he lives with his parents and siblings nearby. His parents keep cattle and sell the milk. When the cows come home from pasture in the evening, he helps his dad get them in the stables and tucked in for the night.

At the weekends he meets up with his friends and they all go swimming in the lake near home. I love it there, he tells me. After a long week of school and chores, the water is cool and he and his friends take turns seeing how deep they can dive.

Kibet says he remembers asking his mum if he could stay home from school a lot. He often felt too tired to get out of bed or join the family for breakfast. But since the treatment programmes came to his school, he hasn't missed a single day. His smile grows wider as he tells me he loves to learn. He doesn't have a favourite class – "I'm good at them all", he says with a cheeky smile. "I have to be – I'm going to be a doctor when I'm older."

He's been told by his teachers that the process doesn't stop with taking tablets on deworming days at school. He takes me to a nearby fountain and shows me how they've been taught to wash their hands. He grabs a bar of soap, hands me one too, and starts the ritual. "We have hygiene classes about how to stay healthy after taking our tablets. I don't want to pass any worms onto other people."

Kibet's time with me is nearly over and he's called away by his teacher. I walk over to her, watching her smile down at him as he runs off to join his friends.

Carolyn Henry