

Dear Richard,

as promised, here is some background information on Rebecca Silau Ole Taota.

Taota is her family name. She was born on June the 1st in 2009 and she is now in Class 1 so she has been at our school, the Osiligi Obaya Primary School, for three and a half years. (Osiligi means "hope").

Her parents have both been to primary school and her father Josphat Kunana Ole Taota speaks quite good English. He is a rare breed of Maasai man in that he takes a strong interest in Silau's education and will come to parent's meetings. It is on his family's land where we have put our first borehole and allotment project which will help 80 families to grow food. This will make Silau's home an important hub for the community.

Silau has a younger brother and her mother, Susan Sikonka had another baby last year. The family live in the settlement of Naironde, 4 km from school, so Silau has quite a long walk compared with other pupils. They live in an iron sheet hut.

Silau's grandfather owns the land where she lives and he has two wives. This means that her own family have no assets of their own other than a handful of cows and goats. That was the situation in February. I'm not sure if the animals are still alive because the drought is so severe that many livestock have died in the area. These animals are the family's only source of income as they have no work. They also have one cat, one dog (to protect the livestock and guard the hut and livestock enclosure) and two donkeys.

Silau's favourite food is rice. In class she like to be appreciated, for example, by being given a biro without ink so she can pretend she's marking books like her teacher. Her parents describe her as friendly, obedient and active and they say she likes singing, jumping and being with other children.

Please let me know if there is any information you would like me to find out when I visit Olepolos next month.

My best wishes,

Helen