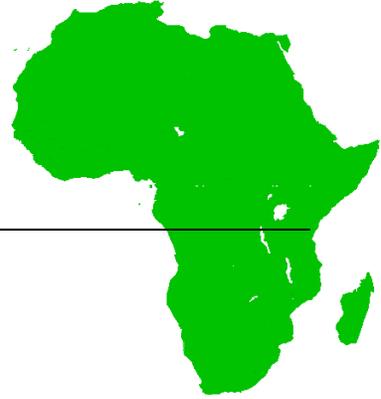


PROJECT'S PROGRESS



VILLAGE EDUCATION PROJECT KILIMANJARO

Registered Charity No 1041672

Registered company limited by guarantee in Tanzania: No 69681

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SUPPORTERS' NEWSLETTER – Summer 2009

Another busy and successful year, in which our Whole School Development Programme that is working with all parties to improve the quality of primary education, is having a direct impact on the country's education. Our computer centre and our vocational training school continue to serve the community, and plans for development are being implemented, as outlined below. Also our 32nd building project was completed to give Kochakindo primary school its own pre-primary building.



Kochakindo's new pre-primary school

Since the charity's inception its main aim has been to enhance the quality of education in village primary schools. We began, and have continued with the much needed improvement to school

buildings. However, it is the education in the classroom that determines the pupils' prospects, and the quality of primary education has been in decline for many years. To improve the quality of teaching is a huge task necessitating close work with local teachers, school communities, district education officials and the national central Ministry of Education. Improvements to teaching are also dependent upon improvements to administration and management both within the school and within the educational system. The charity is a small fish in a big pool but our commitment to a long-term programme working step-by-step and taking account of available resources, cultural attitudes and political conditions, and by suggesting sensible, practical, low-cost solutions has gained ministerial approval and national publicity.

The work of the Whole School Development Programme is at 'grass roots' level in order for the problems facing teachers to be fully understood so that workable solutions can be tried and tested.

Pre-primary education for 5- and 6-year-olds has been a major focus. Mr Temba, a tutor at Singa Chini Teacher Training College, continues to work with us. In October 2008 a one-day seminar was held for the headteachers of the 20 primary

schools whose pre-primary teachers had attended our previous training sessions.



The headteachers attending the pre-primary seminar

The headteachers had not all realised the importance of pre-primary education. Mr Temba reminded them of the responsibilities of a headteacher towards the pre-primary school, and of the need to restrict the intake to 5- and 6-year-olds only, and to divide the teaching sessions so that they are taught separately.

The pre-primary teachers attended for the following four days. Their training addressed the stages of child development and its importance in planning activities for the pupils.



Bob Phillips demonstrates sports activities

Practical sessions on how to teach the skill of writing and how to draw simple blackboard drawings were given, as well as suitable sports activities for the young pupils. Mr Temba was assisted by Bob Phillips our full-time volunteer who had been an education adviser to the borough of Stockport. In order to assess the success of the various training sessions Mr Temba, Bob Phillips and Mama Sandi, our teachers' resource centre co-ordinator, visited eight pre-primary schools in early February. It was clear from the classroom observations and discussions with the teachers that

they needed more help with transferring the printed syllabus topics to the classroom.

Helen Doherty who spent three months working in one of the schools in 2007 and whose career in the UK was in infants' schools, had already assisted with a draft scheme of work. The aim of this is to help the teachers, many of whom on their own admission are floundering, to link subjects and to match syllabus topics with activities. At present teachers follow tradition and teach half-hour periods of maths, Swahili, science etc in order to cover the curriculum. Helen's scheme is set out for each month, and has been discussed with Mr Temba of the teacher training college. Mr Temba would like to promote the scheme but needs reassurance of approval from senior education officials. The scheme will be expanded to set out work by the week so that it provides sufficient guidance and support for the teachers. Its aim is to encourage teachers to let their pupils learn through educational play and informal activities as a relief from sitting at desks and looking at the blackboard. When completed, the scheme will be discussed with district officials before being presented to the central ministry officials.

In March 2009 Jane Firth joined Mr Temba to give a further three-day seminar for the pre-primary teachers. Jane is a teacher-trainer of early-years' teachers who had previously worked in Uganda. Jane prepared materials for the teachers - sets of dominoes, finger puppets, beans for counting, number squares, stringed bottle tops for counting etc. All were made on site out of cardboard, water bottles and other readily available, free or cheap materials.

Jane's aims were for the teachers to grasp the importance of a practical, multi-sensory approach to learning numbers up to 10, and to know the mechanics of learning to write with the essential preliminary stages and that letters should be taught in 'families'. The teachers were involved for the three days in practising activities, singing number songs and making more materials for their pupils to use. Jane emphasised the importance of using 'concrete' items before introducing abstract notions (such as the written digits themselves), and stressed the teaching of 'number-bonds' for addition and subtraction. All were repeatedly demonstrated with 'concrete' items such as beans, bottle tops on string and pupils themselves.



Pre-primary teachers making their own teaching aids

Jane visited six pre-primary schools spending the entire morning session in each school. She helped the teachers to implement some of the activities, and observed that the Tanzanian tendency to use choral chanting was impeding the pupils' learning as the chant takes over from individual concentration and practice. Jane plans to return for two further visits in 2009 to reinforce work with pre-primary teachers and to begin to work with teachers of standard I pupils. Jane had worked with Mama Sandi and Mr Temba translating everything for the teachers.



Pupils show their understanding of counting

The weekly in-service training sessions taking place in two primary schools have brought encouraging results. Bob Phillips conducts the sessions with Dilly Mtui, the project's co-ordinator. All the staff attend and school administration and management as well as

classroom management have been addressed regularly. Mathematics has been the focus for the teachers' development in subject knowledge. Bob has given demonstration lessons and leads group discussions where the teachers help each other to understand difficult topics such as fractions, algebra, areas of shapes and long division.



Effective group-work in a demonstration lesson

Bob has, additionally, spent time with each headteacher and his deputies to assist with the school timetable, the school budget and financial plans. We are now enjoying a completely open and frank relationship with each school, and recently one of the headteachers pleaded, "You won't leave us, will you?"

It is evident now from our extensive work in the primary schools that the main impediment to the pupils' learning is the teachers' insufficient knowledge of their subjects. To address this we have started compiling materials for teachers to be able to 'get to grips' with their topics. We have started with mathematics, and materials for long-division and fractions have been prepared. These are being translated into Swahili. This is a separate exercise from assisting the teachers with *how* to teach the topic, which will be addressed in subsequent material.

In November 2008 and February 2009 the school committee members (akin to school governors) of three primary schools were given a total of four days of training conducted by Mr Lusingu and Mr Mkiramweni both of Singa Chini Teacher Training College.

This covered how to form effective committees, the process of electing members, the responsibilities of members, the need for sub-

committees, and the relationship between the school committee and teachers, parents, the village government and the community. All the participants additionally considered the efficient preparation and running of meetings, the code of conduct among the committee officers and members and the role of the headteacher, and were taken through a detailed analysis of the school budget and their role in its preparation. This was very successful and each committee invited the two trainers to attend their next meeting in order to observe and offer further advice. Later discussions with these schools' headteachers revealed that this was some of the most important help. Support from the communities for their schools has been lacking, and now the school committee members have been informed of their crucial roles and motivated to attend to their duties.



Discussions in the school committee training sessions

The successful workshops held last year for the district education officers and chief inspectors of schools of Kilimanjaro region were to have been continued. However, retirements and transfers of officials have delayed the planning. Also a facilitator able to deal with their demands for training in management and communication has been hard to find, although we are now in contact with the business school of the University of Dar es Salaam.

In August 2008 Katy Allen, the charity's director, presented a paper at a conference in Dar es Salaam. The paper extended arguments propounded in a previous paper produced in January 2008, and recommends solutions for good teaching and learning of English as a foreign language from Standard III to VII and how to address English teaching in pre-primary and

Standards I and II. The paper was brought to the attention of the international team-leader on a UNICEF project for in-service training, and Katy and he subsequently met and are in liaison.



Dilly, Katy and Professor Maghembe in the Minister's office

In March 2009 Katy Allen and Dilly Mtui had their second official meeting with the Honourable Professor Maghembe the Minister for Education.

Katy's recommendation for the reintroduction of a textbook used some years ago for the teaching of English in primary schools has been accepted, as well as her suggestion that the teacher's books be translated into Swahili so that the teachers fully understand the explanations and instructions. The charity will now be assisting the Minister with research for a pre-service training English course for prospective primary school teachers, as well as consideration of a new approach to English as a subject in pre-primary, Standard I and Standard II.

Katy and Dilly have also had meetings with the Tanzanian Broadcasting Corporation to consider the possibility of reinstating the schools' broadcasts that were popular and effective in the 1960s and 1970s. There is initial enthusiasm for the project but nothing can be considered further without a commitment to funding.

In late February the Swahili daily paper 'Nipashe' had a two-page feature on Katy and her work. In March Katy and Dilly were interviewed by the English-medium national daily paper The Guardian about the Whole School Development Programme and their recommendations for Tanzania's primary education sector. In August 2009 Katy, Dilly and Dr Anne Samson will be presenting a colloquium at a Pan-African conference in Dar es Salaam on the main theme of literacy.

Dr Anne Samson visited in August 2008 and April 2009 to review the Whole School Development Programme which she oversees and researches. Anne is an active educationalist in many UK government projects, and her South African origins provide invaluable experience and understanding to apply to the developing education system in Tanzania. Anne is now eager for the next stage of the Whole School Development Programme to begin, whereby our work is replicated in two further primary schools. We cannot rely on volunteer assistance from Europeans continuing, and so the next phase will rely on Tanzanians for implementation. Of great encouragement is the readiness of the staff in the existing two schools to be involved with the new schools to offer support and advice. Plans for this next phase are being discussed with the district education officer.

Our work now is fulfilling our aim of forming the essential link between the primary schools at the 'grass roots' and the Ministry of Education on education policy and planning so that lasting change and improvements can be effected.

TEACHING VOLUNTEERS

Our 'gap year' teaching programme continues and five exceptional young people started their assignments in January 2009. They are teaching English to standards I, III and V in four primary schools. They have entered into village life and are mastering Swahili with amazing speed, and three of them have joined the youth choir in the church.

In the Easter holidays they travelled together to Bagamoyo. Walking there they were waved to and beckoned over by a small group to whom they spoke in Swahili. The introductions revealed that they were with no lesser person than the President of Tanzania, the Honourable Jakaya Kikwete. They persuaded his bodyguards to take the photograph below.



Helen, Ed, Ellen, the President, Olly, Sarah & Felicity

The volunteers pay a fee to join the teaching programme and this pays for two school outings each year. In August 2008, 25 standard IV pupils enjoyed four days on the coast at Pangani, and in March 2009 a group of 48 pupils from standard IV went to Lake Manyara National Park. For the first time the tree-climbing lions were witnessed and they saw three large cubs sitting comfortably in a nearby tree.



Tree-climbing lions delight the pupils

We have written to universities to advertise what we can offer for gap year students, and we are represented at gap year fairs and are listed in many gap year books. However, we always need more applicants particularly from post-university and career-break volunteers.

We held a reunion in London in July 2008 for all volunteers who had worked with the charity since 1998 and the message from all of them was heartening; they had had an unforgettable experience and they think about the place and the people daily, and in many different ways their lives have been enhanced.

MSHIRI VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL

In January 2009 Felicity Beverley started work at the school. Felicity is an experienced manager from London and has set about improving the management of the school.

The school was set up by the charity in 1999 and helps young people to gain the practical skills for earning a living. Courses are run in masonry, carpentry, tailoring and crafts. The students perform well in the national Vocational Education Training Authority examinations and the vast majority, as recorded by the Principal, go on to be employed or start up in business on their own. The school is subsidised by the charity as local students' families cannot pay commercial school fees.



Felicity Beverley in her new office

The school has embarked on income-generating projects. One is the shop and café at Marangu Mtoni that sells items made by the tailoring, craft and carpentry students. Another is the carpentry workshop which is equipped with donated industrial electrical machinery where wood is planed and furniture is made to order. The school will have an accommodation block for boarding students. This has been built but not furnished or equipped. It was built after students from towns and cities started to apply to the school but could not attend for lack of accommodation. Such students would pay commercial fees to board and this will help to run the school.

Felicity is co-ordinating these income-generating projects and expanding and marketing them. At the shop and café new cold drinks are on the menu and new products have been stocked from local artisans including leather goods and batik paintings. Felicity's main task is to oversee the

completion of the boarding house. She wants it to be finished in October so that it can be advertised for opening in January 2010.

We hope to recruit a Tanzanian manager who can work alongside Felicity for several months, and we hope that the school will be self-funding within five years.

THE WAY AHEAD

Our Whole School Development Programme continues and it is hoped it will make significant changes to the primary education received by Tanzania's children. We are entering into a formal agreement with Singa Chini Teacher Training College to work together, *inter alia*, for research into pre-service and in-service training, writing and translating materials for teachers, and dissemination of results and recommendations to senior officials.



Anne Samson, Dilly Mtui and tutors from Singa Chini

All our work is extraordinary value for money. Our income in the last five years has averaged £107,650 p.a. (the best year £132,188 and the lowest income £67,012). That includes the income from our volunteer teaching programme which is all used in running that programme. We run an office in the UK, pay a modest salary to Katy Allen, and run all our Tanzanian programmes and employ 18 full-time Tanzanian staff. On top of that we have built up some reserves in the UK and some in Tanzania as a buffer to the fluctuations in the income from our donors who are nearly all individuals and not companies or institutions. Our administrative costs have averaged 3%.

If our Whole School Development work is to bring about improvements to the Tanzanian primary education system we need to pursue the

following plans: to produce and publish materials for teachers to gain subject knowledge; to research and produce material for pre-primary and standard I and II to learn English; to reintroduce schools' radio broadcasts; to develop an in-service training programme; to engage and facilitate Tanzanians to research, discuss, and disseminate results for the improvement of pre-service teacher training.

These are big plans, but we have worked for 15 years building up to them. Our long-term commitment, taking account of cultural and practical implications, has put us in a unique position to assess the needs and the solutions.

To realise our plans fully we need to increase our income. We will be looking to engage a fundraiser, part-time or on specific contracts, to help us

obtain grants from grant-making trusts and bodies. This is not the best economic time to ask individuals to increase their donations, but we would ask our many loyal donors to continue to support us if they are able to do so.

The generosity and support of our donors over the last 15 years has helped us grow from a very small charity operating a few projects to a charity with a recognised and regarded track-record capable of exerting influence at the very highest level.

We are determined to help Tanzania's primary schoolchildren and we see realistic, cost-effective, practical ways of doing so. We hope that supporters, old and new, will help us to help them.



Teachers are now being helped to encourage pupils to think

Our overall aim is to enhance the quality of education, especially for village children, in order for future generations to become confident and responsible citizens

There are rules to help charities reclaim tax on donations of any amount from donors who are taxpayers. If you would like Village Education Project Kilimanjaro to be able to reclaim the tax on your donation, or future donations, please complete the following declaration:-

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**THANK YOU VERY MUCH
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