

# HABARI

A voice for young people in Africa



Issue 36 | Spring 2009




# Editor's letter

Welcome to the first Habari of 2009. In this edition we share with you the achievements of the Build a Farm programme over the past year and feature some fascinating first hand accounts of the Build a School programme by supporters who have visited the projects.

The Build a Farm programme has gone from strength to strength over the past year: the farmers' success in 2008 has led to over a thousand family members benefiting from their improved incomes, making a real difference to their ability to send children to school, access health care and feed themselves. The Buliisa Orphans Project is just one example of the continuing good work – in 2009 it will utilise the programme's farming skills to give Ugandan orphans a proper diet.

We value the feedback that our supporters provide and feature an interview with marathon running marvel Richard Thomas and his son, Matt. Long standing patron Dame Diana Rigg and Build Africa ambassador Tom Lindsay also provide candid accounts of their trips to Africa, while Cedric Fairclough writes movingly about the difference his wife's legacy has made to Aputiput Primary School.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Habari.



Chris Pearson,  
**Editor, Habari**

## **Please don't hesitate to contact us with your thoughts, comments and opinions:**

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# A Word from Dame Diana Rigg



I was greatly looking forward to visiting Uganda and seeing for myself the work done there by Build Africa. Over the six days of our stay we drove down rutted tracks, deep into the countryside, visiting five schools and a community rice-growing project. At every school the children gave us a rapturous welcome, followed by speeches from the Head, representatives of the Parent Teachers Association, the community and local officials.

All were touchingly grateful for Build Africa's support; indeed the organisation was frequently complimented on never failing to deliver on its promises. At every school the same needs were listed – a fresh water supply, housing for the teachers, sports facilities and books.

At every school the same ratio was repeated: one book between ten pupils. It struck me forcibly that Build Africa could mount a campaign dedicated to providing books for every school. Books, irrefutably, are the one essential means of education and without them the teachers are frustrated and their children will continue to be handicapped by ignorance.

A final word to compliment the teams in Kampala and Kumi. They were dedicated, knowledgeable, practical and full of laughter despite the difficulties of the job.

**Dame Diana Rigg**

## Food for thought!



It is impossible to overestimate the importance of maize to rural communities in Africa. It is the staple food of

millions. In the UK, we know it as 'corn', where it is eaten as sweet corn or corn on the cob, or in a treated state, as cornflakes or popcorn. In Uganda, the cultivation of maize is lifting hundreds of rural farmers out of poverty through the support of Build Africa.

Farming is the most accessible industry in Uganda, yet millions of people practice it with very little gain. Over 80% of the population lives in rural areas and relies on subsistence farming for survival. Many cannot even produce enough to feed their families. Even if the farmers can transport crops to market, they get a poor price due to the small quantity and poor quality of the produce with which they are able to bargain.

In response to these pressing issues, Build Africa's 'Build a Farm' programme provides farmers with improved business skills and techniques, as well as establishing a community-based savings and credit scheme that allows farmers to access credit, save their profits, earn interest and reinvest in their farms. It also set up a district-wide market information system that allows Build Africa farmers to gain access to reliable information such as the market value of maize.

### **"A-maize-ing" Achievements in 2008**

The Build a Farm Programme has gone from strength to strength in the past year. The number of Build Africa farmers jumped from 150 in 2007 to 236 in 2008. Eleven groups of farmers received training in improved farming techniques as well as gained access to markets that would have otherwise been impossible to penetrate.

The training paid off. By year end, the farmers were able to double their yields and greatly improve the quality of their maize crops. The farmers served three major clients: the Victoria Seed Company, Naseco Seeds and the World Food Programme. Farmers delivered thousands of kilos of dried maize to the World Food Programme, helping to feed refugees in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. Farmers made an incredible profit of 23 pence per kilogram of maize (up from 3 pence per kilogram before their involvement in the project) – certainly their shining accomplishment of 2008.

The farmers' success in 2008 has led to over a thousand family members benefiting from their improved incomes, making a real difference to their ability to send children to school, access health care and feed themselves. Now, in 2009, the 'Build a Farm' programme is set to work with a total of 250 farms.

**The successes of Build Africa farmers shows that by addressing the need for training, cooperation and access to markets, the cycle of poverty in the rural areas of Uganda and Kenya can – and is – being broken.**

**With your support, we can give farming communities in rural Africa the chance to realize the full potential of the maize crop, enabling them to increase their incomes and consequently improve their homes, gain access to better health care and send their children to school.**

## Giving Ugandan Orphans a Better Diet

**At present, there are nearly 2 million HIV/AIDS orphans in Uganda. It is estimated that there will be 8 to 10 million orphans in 10 years time, the result of currently infected parents succumbing to the disease.**

In 2009, Build Africa aims to improve the lives of orphans and vulnerable children living in the remote district of Buliisa in Uganda. It will support the 2,914 children attending Waiga, Nyamukuta, Butiaba, Kisomere and Wanseko schools as well as out-of-school youth groups and households that care for orphans. The project will also work with the local government to help implement the national policy for orphans and vulnerable children.



The Project will utilise the skills and knowledge gained through the Build a Farm programme to help make a lasting difference to the lives of young people affected by HIV/AIDS. It is an all too familiar story: because of the widespread poverty, orphans are often cared for by community groups and families who struggle themselves to make ends meet. But with Build Africa's help providers and carers will acquire the business and agricultural skills to improve both their own standard of living and that of the orphans they look after.

Many of us remember our first primary school experiments in horticulture, growing mustard and cress and carrots. In Buliisa, a back yard garden will do much more: it will supply the whole family with all the nutrition it needs. Similarly, by establishing well maintained and efficiently run school gardens the problem of how to supply lunch to the pupils would be solved.

At Build Africa, we consider difficult subjects like HIV/AIDS to be an essential part of our programmes in East Africa. It is an important part of the ongoing care and support that Build Africa provides to vulnerable children outside the classroom and beyond the building of schools. The Buliisa Orphans Project is also an example of how important the acquisition of new farming skills is to Uganda's rural poor. By improving the capacity of carers to provide a proper diet for orphans, it illustrates perfectly the difference your support is making to the young people who need it most.

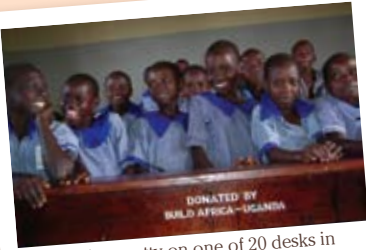
**Build**   
**A FARM**

## A major donor reflects on his visit to Uganda

In October 2008 Tom Lindsay and his son Alex accompanied Dame Diana Rigg on a fact finding trip to Kumi District in Uganda. Tom has made a significant contribution to our Build a School programme and we wanted to show him first hand how the work is progressing. It was a thought-provoking and at times emotional experience. Tom says in his round-up of the visit: "We got to see an amazing country with the potential for an amazing future". Always honest and constructive, here are some extracts from his travelogue...



Tom cutting the ribbon at the school's opening ceremony



Girls sitting pretty on one of 20 desks in the classroom.



An eager student sitting at his new desk.



Dame Diana Rigg and school supporters Tom and Alex Lindsay with the District Education Officer.

### **...on community participation:**

*"It was clear to me that Build Africa's model of working with communities and the local authorities is definitely the right approach and is working very well. It seems that many charities turn up and make promises and then fail to deliver. Not Build Africa. I was seriously impressed with the relationships that the Build Africa Uganda team in Kumi have developed with the local councils and with the communities. They are exceptional people."*

### **...on School Development Plans**

(a three-year plan uniquely designed for each school by the teachers, pupils, parents, and local education authority and facilitated by Build Africa to identify specific plans and targets for the schools): *"This school development initiative seems to be the backbone to the programme. It also seems the local education department want to see it built into its own work. That would be great!"*



Out with the old, in with the new. You can see the old classroom on the left behind Diana, Alex and BA staff members Seraphine and Kevin, with the new classroom on the right.

**...on the achievements of the Build a School programme:** *"We inspected the two new classroom blocks at Obosoi Primary School - the standards were high and the school seems in good shape. We saw a truck bringing new desks for the newly completed classrooms. In comparison with some schools we saw later this school is very advanced. I think the key now is to follow up with programmes for textbooks and sports equipment. Housing and transport for the teachers is a problem – the community needs to work with Build Africa to resolve this issue."*

*"Kachuru Primary School appears to be a great example of what Build Africa can do. The second new block was just being finished. We received an excellent welcome with some great performances from the children including a particularly good performance of a poem about HIV."*

*"We had an excellent visit to Kongatuny Primary School as well with very nice singing from the choir. There was a superb turnout for the 'opening' of the new block which I much enjoyed doing. The new teacher accommodation is a great example to other communities and*

*must be utilised as such to encourage them to copy it! There was a good opportunity to meet local council representatives who I felt were particularly impressive and very appreciative of Build Africa's work."*

**...on the challenges facing the Build a School programme:** *"Amugagara Primary School is an example of a school in dire need of urgent help. Most of the classrooms have been condemned by engineers. There was a good turnout of parents who clearly see the need for help. We had a long meeting in the chapel with parents, the Parent Teachers Association, the School Management Committee plus local religious leaders. I certainly think the school deserves Build Africa's help!"*

Build Africa will be working with local communities to develop a total of 51 schools in 2009. Work at Obosoi School and Kachuru School will focus on teacher training and teaching materials. At both Kongatuny School and Amugarara School we hope to supply three new classrooms, new latrines, school furniture and teacher training.

# Going the Extra Mile

An Interview with long-time Build Africa supporter Richard Thomas and his son, Matt.



Long-time Build Africa supporter Richard Thomas has run hundreds of miles and raised thousands of pounds for Build Africa programmes

over the years through marathons in both London and New York. Richard's family has always been involved in supporting his marathon challenges and his passionate commitment to Build Africa. This year Richard will be running his first marathon with his teenage son Matt. Read on to learn more about what motivates him and his son, and why Richard is such a special Build Africa supporter.

## How did you find out about Build Africa's work and why did you decide to support the organisation? How long have you been a supporter?

**Richard:** I found out about Build Africa through my friend, Stan Miles. I have always admired Stan for his charitable enthusiasm and one day in 2001 I asked him for whom he ran his marathons and said that one day I'd like to do it. Back then the charity was known as International Care & Relief (ICR) and, before I knew it or could have any second thoughts, Stan had got me a place to run for ICR in the 2002 London Marathon! I have run every one since then for ICR/Build Africa.

## Do you have any idea how much you have raised over the years?

**Richard:** Around £45,000 I think.

## What were your impressions from your visit/s to projects in Africa? Can you give us some details about where you went and what you saw?

**Richard:** I was fortunate to be invited to join an ICR visit to Northern Uganda in 2005 and took my daughter, Verity, with me. The 2004 London Marathon runners had together raised over £20,000 towards the "Build a School" appeal and I was honoured to represent them in opening a new school block at Nyakibete Primary School near Masindi. During our stay

we visited several schools, youth training and farming projects in the Masindi District. Verity and I were overwhelmed by the warm welcome we received, the dedication of the teachers, parents and ICR representatives and the genuine heart-felt gratitude shown to us by the children. It was a life-changing experience for the both of us. In my case it has encouraged me to keep on running and fund-raise for Build Africa and in Verity's case it led to her obtaining a "Teaching English as a Foreign Language" certificate and spending much of her summer holidays teaching impoverished children in Vietnam and Tanzania. This year she plans to do the same in Malawi.

## How many marathons/London Marathons have you run?

**Richard:** I have run 7 London Marathons, 2 New York Marathons and 2 "Black Mountains Challenges" (27 mile fell-marathons in the Brecon Beacons National Park in my homeland of Wales). This year I have set myself a real challenge and, as well as the London Marathon in April, I will be running my first ultra-marathon in May, The Comrades which is 56 miles between Pietermaritzburg and Durban in South Africa. In order to qualify for that I also have to run a sub-5 hour marathon at the Duchy Marathon in Redruth, Cornwall on 8th March. That makes 108.4 competitive miles of running in 11 weeks (not including the miles of training).

**Matt:** This is my first marathon. I have run several 10k races, including the British 10k in London which I've run three times with my Dad (the first we ran together but after that I got too quick for him and left him behind).

## Do you have any running heroes?

**Richard:** You have to admire Paula Radcliffe for her professionalism and determination as well as Ron Hill for his longevity. Locally I admire Len Metcalfe, another Build Africa runner, who is a postman in Otford. He has retired now but in his last two London Marathons, not only did he run the 26.2 miles but he also cycled from Otford to the start in Greenwich and home again from the Finish on The Mall. What about that for courage and endurance! That said, in my book, everyone

who runs a marathon, whether it be in 2 or 6 hours is a hero.

### **Matt, are you as keen as your dad is on marathon running?**

**Matt:** This will be my first marathon. Unfortunately I am not quite as keen, or should I say, as obsessed, with running as my Dad is but I do enjoy it! A few years ago I used to run a lot of 10k races but had to stop due to injury so the marathon will be a big test for me physically.

### **Will you be running together? Will it be competitive and if so, who will be waiting for the other one to catch up?**

**Matt:** Yes, we are planning on crossing the line together! I'm sure that we will both be pushing and supporting each other the entire way.

### **Why marathon running? What do you get out of it personally? Do you swim, cycle or do any other sport as well?**

**Matt:** Completing the marathon has been a personal goal of mine for a long time and I am determined to prove to my Dad that I can do it! Obviously I'm hoping to gain a great sense of personal achievement but also I'm enjoying raising the money for Build Africa. My main sport is Alpine Skiing though; I race Slalom and Giant Slalom for York University where I'm currently studying for a degree in Politics & Economics. Last year I won a Bronze Medal at the British Universities Ski Championships in Austria and this year I finished 19th overall in the British Indoor Ski Championships in Sheffield.

**Richard:** I run to keep fit, to relieve the stress of my job but mostly to raise money for those worse off than me. I used to play rugby and represented my school, college and town but retired from that about 20 years' ago. I've always run but only since 2002 have I done so seriously. I enjoy swimming and cycling too and have participated in the Sevenoaks Triathlon since 1998. Like Matt I love skiing but have never achieved his skill levels. My other sport is golf and I'm a member of The Wilderness Club in Sevenoaks.

### **Have you ever 'hit the wall'? If so, can you describe it?**

**Richard:** The "Wall" is in your mind. You have to blank it out and run through it. If you've

trained hard enough the Wall shouldn't be a problem.

### **What has been your worst/best experience of running marathons?**

**Richard:** My best has got to be the experience of entering Manhattan for the first time after crossing the Queensboro Bridge in the New York Marathon. After the quiet of the bridge you hit a wall of noise as you reach First Avenue and your flagging spirits get a huge boost. I guess it's the nearest I'll ever get to walking onto the pitch in front of a passionate Welsh rugby crowd at the Millennium Stadium! My worst was two years ago at the 20 mile mark in Poplar during the London Marathon when the adductor muscle I'd pulled in training eventually snapped and I had to hobble the last 6 miles to the Finish. It was excruciatingly painful but I was determined to complete the race and eventually finished in 4:31 (my worst ever time).

### **Is it true that Matt will be taking a university exam the day after the race? You must be very proud of his determination and dedication?**

**Matt:** It is true unfortunately! I have a 3 hour exam at 9am the day after the race followed by another 3 hour exam at 4.30pm, so I think it will be a long day. My plan is to catch the train back up to York straight after the marathon so that I will have a chance to get to bed early and recover before my exams... I think it brings a whole new meaning to "running for the train!"

**Richard:** I am intensely proud of both Verity and Matt and grateful for the sacrifices they have made for others who are not as fortunate in life as them.

### **We really do appreciate all your fundraising efforts. What are your plans for the future?**

**Matt:** I have no immediate future running plans but do hope to improve my skiing and hopefully improve on my Bronze Medal at this year's Universities Championships in France...and, of course, as my Dad would expect me to say, to get a good degree!

**Richard:** After The Comrades I'll need a rest so it'll be time to improve my golf swing...but I'll be back for next year's London Marathon!

# A message from Mandhawun Sarah

Mandhawun Sarah, a pupil at Nyakibete School in the Masindi District of Uganda, tells us about life at school and home in this recent letter:



**Build**   
A SCHOOL

# Fundraising

## Calling all teachers and pupils!



Build Africa is in search of British schools that have an interest in linking with schools in Kenya and Uganda. By supporting our education programme, schools in the UK will have the opportunity to exchange letters, photographs and pictures with African pupils and teachers. They will learn at first hand a wealth of fascinating facts about life and learning in Africa and receive an introduction to a subject that is real and relevant. British schools able to raise a significant amount will also have the opportunity for their teachers to visit their counterpart school and meet the teachers and students in person!

**Please call Helen Sharpe at Build Africa on 01892 519619 or [Helen@build-africa.org](mailto:Helen@build-africa.org).  
uk to get started!**

## London Marathon 2009



On the 26th of April 2009, Build Africa supporters Richard Thomas, Mathew Thomas, Kim Valentine (representing her employer The Consortium, a company raising funds to build a school), Alan Wilson (representing his employer SELB, also raising money to build a school), and Phil Vernon, a Build Africa Trustee, will tackle the arduous 26 miles of the London Marathon along with 35,000 other runners in order to raise over £15,000 for Build Africa.

**Thank you in advance to our runners and their sponsors, families and friends for their kind support. For those of you who still want to get involved, you can sponsor our five brave runners and help them to reach their fundraising goals by going to [www.build-africa.org](http://www.build-africa.org) and clicking on the London Marathon news icon.**

## Adidas Women's 5k Challenge

If you missed a place in the London Marathon but would still like to raise much needed funds for Build Africa, then the 2009 Adidas Women's 5k Challenge may be for you. The biggest and best women-only run in the UK will be held in Hyde Park on Sunday, September 6. Open to women of all ages, the race is a great way to kick start a new health regime and have a day out with the girls at the same time.



Those of you who ran in last year's race will also be able to invite a relative, friend or colleague to run in the 2009 event for only £5! That £5 will go straight to Build Africa during the online entry process.

**So get your running shoes on and do something memorable on September 6! For more information and an application form, contact Helen Sharpe on 01892 519 619 or [helen@build-africa.org](mailto:helen@build-africa.org).**



## Ellen's Legacy Lives On

In September 2008, Build Africa supporter Cedric Fairclough embarked on the trip of a lifetime to visit the schools and communities in the remote district of Kumi, Uganda. However, the journey began over a year previously when his late wife Ellen introduced him to Build Africa's Build a School project. Sadly, Ellen passed away in 2007, but moved by her enthusiasm and passion for this project, Cedric decided to support Aputiput School in Uganda in Ellen's memory.

When Aputiput School first opened in 2004, there were no toilets, classrooms or teaching facilities and children were sent home when it rained as there was simply no shelter. The few books that they did have were tatty as there was nowhere dry to store them at school. There was one temporary structure that housed 150 pupils in three separate classes, all sharing just one blackboard.

Cedric visited the newly-built school with Build Africa staff to celebrate its official opening and were warmly welcomed by the pupils, teachers and local community of Aputiput. It was an

incredibly moving moment when Cedric stood up to give his speech on why and how he had come to support Aputiput. He then presented the Head Boy of the school with a framed picture of Ellen to honour her memory. As Cedric officially declared the school open, the children flooded excitedly into their new classrooms and the whole community joined in song to celebrate this momentous occasion. As we drove away it was humbling to think about the incredible difference that one person had made to Aputiput and the many future generations which will benefit.



*“Being involved in this project with build Africa has helped me through the most difficult period of my life and the knowledge that Ellen’s name is now associated with Aputiput Primary School in Uganda gives me a feeling of great achievement and satisfaction.”*

Cedric Fairclough

If you are interested in Building a School like Aputiput in memory of a loved one or even as part of your own legacy, Build Africa would like to show you the difference your gift will make by taking you to visit our projects in Uganda or Kenya. Please fill in the form below and return it to Chris Pearson at the address below or call **01892 519619**

**Build Africa, 27 Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1HT, United Kingdom.**

I would like to learn how I can 'Build a School' through a legacy gift or in memory of a loved one:

Name

Please contact me to discuss leaving a legacy or an 'in memory' gift with Build Africa.

Address

Phone  Email

