

HABARI

A voice for young people in Africa

ISSUE 31 - SPRING 2007



FIRM FOUNDATIONS

Giving thousands of young people a high quality primary education through the BUILD-A-SCHOOL project

Also in this issue:

- Add your voice to the Global Campaign for Education
- Giving Goats: Why alternative gifts do work.
- ICR's young supporters page: Fun and games for the kids!

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to your spring *Habari*. This issue focuses on education - an integral part of our work and the foundation on which all our projects rest. Education is the key to fighting poverty and gives young people the power to make informed decisions about the things that impact on their lives. We take a look at how the schools we work with are progressing and launch our new Build-a-School programme. As the name suggests, this initiative is all about building schools and enhancing the quality of education received by the young people we work with.

We are changing our name to better reflect our work and our ideals. And the new brand will be launched with the next issue of *Habari*. In the meantime, we would love to hear your feedback on the proposed name.

BUILD AFRICA - Young people challenging poverty

Your views are very important to us and we are keen to incorporate them into the new brand. Please get in touch and tell us what you think.

Best Wishes

M Harrison

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Janet with her teacher at Tididiek-Okorom school, Uganda

Please don't hesitate to contact us with your thoughts, opinions or comments:

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EVERY CHILD DESERVES A FULL PRIMARY EDUCATION. EXPERTS FROM ALL FIELDS AGREE THAT PRIMARY EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY.

So why are there still over 46 million children in Africa not going to primary school?

Many developing countries are caught in a vicious circle. They are often crippled by debt and do not have the money to invest in basic education. Without an educated workforce the economy of a country suffers and this results in less resources. However, for some countries the situation has changed. In 1998, Uganda's debts were cancelled, giving them the freedom to introduce free primary education nationally. Increased funding from the UK government has helped Kenya do the same.

The introduction of free primary education in Kenya and Uganda was fantastic news. Millions of children, whose parents could not afford an education, could now attend school for the first time. It was a real breakthrough. However, this meant that enrolment numbers skyrocketed, putting an already over-stretched education system under immense pressure. The situation is such that most classes now contain as many as 100 pupils, sitting on dirty ground under a tree with no textbooks to read or paper to write on.



Something needs to be done.

Between the 23rd and 29th April, developing and developed countries throughout the world will unite in the Global Campaign for Education to demand basic education for every child as a fundamental human right. This is an opportunity for the people of developing countries to put pressure on their governments to increase spending in education. It is also a chance for us to pressurise our own government to increase support to developing countries.

Go to www.campaignforeducation.org and add your voice to the thousands around the world shouting for the right to a decent education.



BUILD A SCHOOL

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the World” - Nelson Mandela

With this in mind we are launching the BUILD-A-SCHOOL project. We want to engage with communities in Uganda and Kenya, and together, build the schools that will give their children a full, decent education.

However, it’s not just about building stuff. As well as building the classrooms, we want to provide equipment and resources, train teachers and strengthen the curriculum. We want to give thousands of children in East Africa the start in life they deserve. And we feel so strongly about it that we have devoted an entire website to it.

www.build-a-school.org

We want to ensure that the children in the communities we work with receive a high quality primary education. To do this we have to get the basics right:



The BUILDINGS

Children are having lessons either sitting on the ground, uncomfortable and exposed to the elements or in unsafe, dilapidated old huts. With help from the local people, we will provide schools with weather-proof, dry, safe and spacious buildings where the children can work in comfort, without the distractions of the outside environment.



The EQUIPMENT

Basic materials such as paper, pencils, blackboards and even chalk are in very short supply, making teaching a very difficult task. ICR aims to provide schools with sturdy desks and chairs, so that children can work in comfort, as well as textbooks, writing materials and blackboards.



New classroom block at Olungia Primary



The SANITATION FACILITIES

Toilets are essential in keeping the grounds hygienic and ensuring the health of pupils and teachers alike. A clean, on-site water supply in the form of a water well, means that the pupils do not have to trek miles to the nearest water pump for a drink. We also want to ensure each school has first-aid and within this, essential sanitary supplies for female pupils.



Last and certainly not least The EDUCATION!

Perhaps the most important element of a school is the quality of teaching. Many teachers have to travel miles to reach school everyday. This and the poor wages make it difficult for schools to retain teachers. In partnership with the local community, ICR plans to build accommodation blocks, so staff are encouraged to stay at the school. We also invest in training, so teachers gain the confidence and skills to provide pupils with a full educational experience, and learn how to teach culturally sensitive subjects such as HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. We also place huge importance on the parent-teacher relationship, encouraging the discussion of issues such as the barriers parents face in sending their children to school.



Teaching at Olilim Primary School



The RESULT....

All this hard work means the children get the best possible start in life. Getting a decent education in a safe, secure place creates a solid foundation, helping these kids to break the cycle of poverty endured by their parents before them.

“We wanted to have a school that could give our children a good education. It seemed to be a dream. Now the dream is real.” - Mubyama Businge, Founder of Kizibu School, Masindi, Uganda.



BUILD A SCHOOL

Thanks to your support, in 2006 we raised over £250,000 and transformed the lives of the 10,000 children who attend 27 schools across Kenya and Uganda.

ICR worked alongside the local rural communities to help improve the education in 13 schools in Uganda and 14 schools in Kenya. Many of the schools evolved from dust bowls with unhealthy sanitary conditions, to schools that are safe and secure with long-lasting classrooms that children can learn in.

32 classrooms built for over 4,500 pupils

11 schools equipped with desks for over 3,500 pupils

7 latrine blocks built for 1680 pupils

A dormitory and kitchen block built for children with special needs

19 schools received teacher training

Everyone in the villages was encouraged to get involved. Members of the community often contributed up to 20% of costs by giving bricks, transporting water to the building site and giving their time to help dig foundations. Involving the community like this ensures the local people begin to take ownership of the school and thus take far greater pride in their children's education. It also gives us the confidence that when it is our time to move to another area, the community will continue to maintain and repair the facilities.



The results speak for themselves. Enrolment rates are up in all of the schools and absenteeism is down. And most impressive of all drop-out rates of young girls due to early pregnancy and early marriage are down by a massive 40%.

CASE STUDY: Omaditok Primary School

Omadiotok School was founded in 2002 by the people of Ngora County, who were determined to provide an education for their children, despite a lack of funding and resources. Parents wanted to set up a local school so that their children, some only six years old, did not have to walk the gruelling trek to the nearest school everyday.

When ICR first visited Omaditok in 2004, the pupils were having lessons outside, under trees or in dirty, dangerous structures made of mud and sticks. They had few textbooks and it was only due to the dedication of the teachers and local community that the school was kept together. Now, thanks to funding from Meda Barnfond, ICR is working with the local people to transform the school. And, already, so much has been achieved:

- Three classrooms have been built at the school
- A four-stand pit latrine has been built
- Chairs and desks have been provided
- Textbooks, writing materials and posters have been provided
- A water tank has been funded
- Funds given for first-aid kits including sanitary products for the girls
- Funds given for teacher training, pupil health education and community education programmes



Enjoying the new classroom

Although there is still much work to be done, the pupils of Omaditok are already reaping the benefits. They now have their lessons in safe, comfortable classrooms, equipped with desks, textbooks and writing materials. And the number of girls attending the school has increased by 76, meaning attendance is now at 441.



BUILD A SCHOOL

Omaditok Primary is just one of many success stories from the Build-a-School project. However, there are still hundreds of schools barely surviving in Kenya and Uganda that really need our help.

Our plans for 2007 are well underway. This year we will be working in 34 of the poorest schools in Kenya and Uganda. Already we have forged relationships with members of the community, with whom we are working to ensure the best is done for each school. This year, through the new Build-a-School project, we want to raise over £400,000 and make even more of an impact.

Check out the Build-a-School website www.build-a-school.org to see which schools we will be funding this year and exactly what they need. You can watch the schools grow, see how construction is going and how the pupils are enjoying their new facilities. ■

**Amida writes to us from
Jeeja School in
Masindi**

Dear Friends,

I am grateful to have the chance of writing to you this year again. How are you and how is your work?

In my class we have been busy revising books ready for end of year exams and our teachers help us in the way of reading and writing skills.

This year we had a music dance and drama competition organised by ICR where our school managed to carry the trophy after winning all the eleven schools. I hope to act again next year.

Our school this year has received the teachers house with support from ICR. Our parents collected stones and sand for the building. Five of our teachers are now sleeping at school.

Thank you very much for the love you have for our school. God Bless you.

Amida Kiiza

