

Women of the project

A continuing and very important part of our project is the work which we do with adults in our community. Those of you who have seen previous news over the years will know that we have run several projects with men and women, often in the attempt to help people develop the skills and confidence to earn some small income to help feed their families. Some of those people have now been able to improve their lives and feeling of security. Many of the participants have tragic family stories, but many say that they have now found a new family of friends at the project.

We have run Literacy classes for adults and young people over the years and often those students continue to come to school after finishing the course for other things, e.g. sewing or bead-making. Here are some of the women of the latest class receiving their certificates.



Now there are two groups of women who come to school in the afternoons, as well as the children. There is a lovely community feel about this, all working together and supporting each other. Most recently we engaged a basket-making teacher for some of the most recent literacy students.



Hopefully we will be able to sell these baskets from the project and at other outlets. This new group complements the sewers and bead-makers, who now regularly sell their goods at Gisozi Memorial Centre and other places in Kigali and to visitors to the project.



Our sewing group continues to make dolls and they are now experimenting with many different designs of bags which are very popular. Alex, our most recent American volunteer and I recently took very many dolls and baskets to the USA to be sold at charity fairs by our good friend Todd and his wife. See their website <https://www.africabags.org> We are grateful for their support. They are doing amazing work in Malawi and we are happy to be able to support them in their work while making money for our food programme from the profit from our sales.

Many of you will remember the newsletter written by Chris last year, describing the bead-making. The women have grown in confidence and are now producing beads in great variety of styles. We sell very many of these in the UK.

As in all organisations there are hidden aspects. There are several very fond friendships amongst the staff, who work together very well both in and out of school, for example at Francoise's wedding when all the staff helped with the cooking and the organisation of the day.



Judith and Francoise are great friends; in these pictures they are first enjoying a quiet moment with the children, and then harvesting some bananas from the tree in our very small garden at the side of the school.

Essential cleaning is undertaken when the children are not there - time for a good laugh and a gossip together. During school-time we are encouraging the children to help with the lunchtime washing up, with the help of Francoise, our remarkable cook.



We wish to say thank you very much to Tammy who left us in March after working with us for a whole year. She has been a great help in the office, compiling school information and managing the accounts (no simple task) We are very grateful indeed. She has made many good friends and her farewell was a great tribute to her and her work. Here she is with some of the sewing group – queen for the day, and opening her gift from the staff



And finally, a picture of a young lady dancing for Tammy. She is not yet in school but she comes with her mother to the basket-making group. I hope she has a great future with us.



Sitting here on June 5th, the anniversary of the crowning of Queen Elizabeth, with thoughts of all the tradition and stability our nation has enjoyed over time, I think there can be no greater contrast between the two countries where I now spend most of my time. But the hopes and dreams of the people of the project are no different from ours.

One step at a time we are beginning to help the people of our project to realise some of those dreams. I thank you most sincerely on their behalf.

Wishing you all peace and love, security and happiness.

Meg