

MEG FOUNDATION
SCHOOL



A brief interview with Meg Fletcher founder of "The Meg Foundation - Kinamba Project"

What is the Meg foundation about? Meg Foundation is about giving some of the poorest people in the Kinamba area of Kigali a chance for education and training which they would not otherwise be able to access.

How did it start? It started because I met some people who were trying to help some street children and I joined in.

Why Rwanda? / What brought you here? I came to Rwanda in 2006 after retiring from working in education in the UK for 38 years to work as a volunteer for two years.

Where do the children come from, did you pick them from the street or did they come to you? The children come from the local area. In the beginning local leaders recommended people to come, but now we are well known in the area and people come asking for places. We take the poorest and neediest as a priority and the teachers and local leaders help us to identify them. There are always more requests for places than we can accommodate.



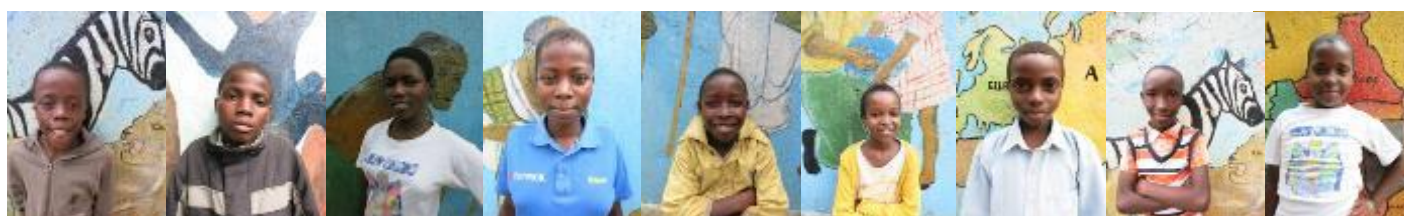
Were there times you wanted to pack it all in and return home to the UK? In the beginning it was very difficult, not knowing if we could find enough money to continue but I have never thought I should stop, just lived on hope that enough people would support us to continue. What we are doing is helping people, giving them hope; we could not abandon that idea.

How many children did you have when you started and how many are in the programme now? There were 28 children when I first became involved. There are now 180 children in the nursery, we sponsor 113 Primary children, 6 children will go to secondary school this year and we sponsor 6 others in secondary school and currently one at university.

In addition to our work for the children we have organised an extensive programme of teaching and training for the adults in the area

The Biggest challenge isThe biggest challenge we face is sustainable funding, especially as our older children who have been with us for 6 years are starting to progress to secondary school. We rely on sponsorship for our sustainable income; anyone who is interested in sponsoring a child should contact us at info@kinambaproject.org.uk

We also have many ideas to improve what we offer, especially to the women's groups, to train them in income-generation activities "Everything" takes money.



To date, what is your most memorable experience?

It would be impossible to choose one memorable moment, but some of the things which give me the greatest pleasure would be to see the football team win a game, to watch the dancing team, to listen to the children speaking English so well, but most of all to know, from the things people say, just how big an impact this project is having in the community which we try to serve.

There is much more information on all our projects on our website www.kinambaproject.org.uk



With special thanks to the following people and organisations:



A BIG thank you to ACLE (www.acle.org), who helped with supplies, photo copied worksheets etc. To the ACLE office staff and tutors from summer 2013, many thanks in helping to raise 790 Euros donated to the Kinamba project by purchasing one of these hand made elephants and giraffes. There are many more on sale 😊



Heike from Germany. Thank you very much for your help, it was great working with you.

To the Kinamba Community, Staff at Meg Foundation and especially the children who make the holiday programme, thank you yet again for your hospitality!

To Meg, a thank you isn't enough, for all your hard work, dedication and effort put in over the years, enriching and changing many many lives for the better.

Once again, if you have any fund raising ideas, activities for the children, suggestions or contacts, please do pass them on.

If you're interested in sponsoring a child at Meg Foundation or making a donation please visit the website or contact Meg directly on info@kinambaproject.org.uk likewise if you are interested in volunteering at the Kinamba Project. Please feel free to forward on the email address to any interested parties. We welcome you to join the "Kinamba Community Project" group on Facebook.



The Kinamba Community Project & Meg Foundation, Welcomes you!

This years' school holiday programme
was brought to you by Heike and Vincent
with over 100 active, fun loving, lively
children, and eager to learn,
participating!!

Kigali, Rwanda, November 20 13

www.kinambaproject.org.uk

A registered U.K. charity

(Pictures are of Primary 1)



Rwanda – Meg Foundation, November 2013

The past four weeks have flown by. I can't believe how quickly they've gone. My stay here at the Meg foundation has been nothing but fantastic. It's great to see the children looking so well and healthy. The majority of the children come from poverty stricken families with parents who are unemployed; there is no social welfare in the country as we have in ours. Few have running water in their houses and some still with no electricity; they have access to a communal wash room and toilet pit. Houses are basic in structure, usually consisting of two rooms and a cooking area where meals are prepared on a coal cooker. Thanks to the Meg foundation the children can attend school, have access to games and puzzles, story books, arts and craft activities, homework club and a meal.

My body is defiantly in hibernation mode with the short days here. Come 6.30 p.m. its night time and as soon as 9 p.m. hits I am ready for bed sometimes even at 7 p.m I could quite easily sleep. Old age approaching I guess.

These seven children (hopefully) will be the first children from Meg Foundation to be graduating from Primary school with six of them moving onto Secondary and one starting trade school to become a carpenter. Their ages range from 12 to 20 years. They will receive their examination results in January and will then be allocated to a High school somewhere in the country. Each child must take with them a mattress, bed linen, cutlery, mop and bucket for cleaning the school on weekends along with their own personal belongings and school material. They will only return home two to three times during the school year. Their weekends will be spent cleaning the school, washing their clothes and studying.



A stay in Kigali without the power and or water going off is unheard of; however, there have been vast improvements since my first visit here six years ago with not even a handful of evenings having to wash using a cup and bucket of water and one evening eating by candle light☺. There has also been little rain this November compared to last years' daily down pours. I'm surprised I had such a mosquito problem. I'm not sure where they were all coming from. Houdini Mosquitoes they were, somehow magically appearing in my net between 2 – 3 am each morning. There is nothing worse than been woken daily by an annoying high pitch buzz in your ear. One morning I was woken by a mosquito only to also discover a mighty ugly 3 inch cockroach crawling up the inside of my mosquito net. This was followed by a 45 minute chase around the room trying to capture the thing to throw outside into the garden. Where there is one there are more? Luckily there was only the one (that I know of.....)



Uno Wednesday down at the local was still a hit and great fun for some of the older children and Meg Foundation staff, a nice way to relax and unwind away from the office. Dinner invitations and to visit people's homes were plentiful. I'll need at least six months here next time to be able to fit everyone in.



I managed to hit the local gym a few nights a week an experience in its self. There I was 3 times a week having no idea how to use the 1970's equipment that was obviously donated and had seen better days. However it did the job and I was a sweaty mess after a session on the bike, treadmill and step machine with a few sit ups and hand weight exercises thrown in for good measure.

On two of the weekends I treated myself and a few of my P6 helpers to lunch at a great outdoor café/restaurant in town called Karibu where local Rwandan dishes are served buffet style. For 3000 Rwandan Francs (about 6 USD) I was able to get this plate.



The Meg Foundation family extended with the arrival of Epiphany's son Bruno here in the pictures below (4 months old), Claude the welder and handy man had a baby daughter last week and soon to be mum Felicity who was married last November is expecting her first child in January. Everyone thought I was slightly mental putting my hands on Felicity's stomach and chatting to the baby, an entirely new concept for all here.



(Pictures are of Primary 2)



Some conversations had.....

Student "Vincent, what's that?"

Me "This, it's the Kettle."

Student "What's it used for?"

Me "To make the water hot for my tea and porridge."



Student "Vincent, what's that?"

Me "It's a toaster."

Student "What's a toaster?"

Me "You place bread in here and it cooks the bread. The toaster turns the bread into toast. Have you never had cheese on toast before?"

Student "No."

Me "Well then, take a seat....."



Student "Vincent, what is this?"

Me "It's the hot water system."

Student "How does it work?"

Me "You plug it in and it turns the water hot."

Student "How do you get the hot water out?"

Me "Inside the house there are hot and cold water taps....."



Rwandan friend "Vincent, can you see the sky in your country?"

Me "What do you mean?"

Rwandan friend "Well with all the buildings in your country I wasn't sure if you can see the sky. Is it the same colour, blue and white?"



Me "Oh wow look, storms coming"

Rwandan friend "No, it's just night time coming"

Me "Ahh , no they're rain clouds **Boom.....**"

School holiday programme

The weekly programme was similar to that of previous years with Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays been learning activity days. Activities were chosen to practise and help improve the children's reading, writing, listening and communication skills. These activities included: drama, arts and crafts, watching movies, group activity work such as writing short stories, songs and puppet shows and then presenting them to the rest of the class.

This year I had Heike from Germany helping. Heike is in Rwanda with her boyfriend who is doing an internship with a law firm. They arrived in September and before returning to Germany in March 2014 they will travel around East Africa for two months. Heike will continue the school holiday programme during December along with another volunteer who will be making giant puppets with the P5 and 6 students.

We also had the seven P6 students helping us with translating to the younger children and of course participating in activities. Never too old to finger paint or play dress up relays..... along with Meg Foundation staff who took turns coming in.

The Meg foundation football team, has come a long way since last year with thanks to Andrew who volunteered last December and coached the boys. His club in the UK donated the football gear which I am sure lifted the teams' morale. This year I had the pleasure of witnessing two straight wins, 3 – 1 and 2 – 0. Andrew will be back at the Meg Foundation / Kinamba project next year for nine months. Here we are (Primary 4 & 5) supporting the team during their second straight WIN. The pitch isn't the best, an odd rectangle shape with knee high grass growing in one corner.

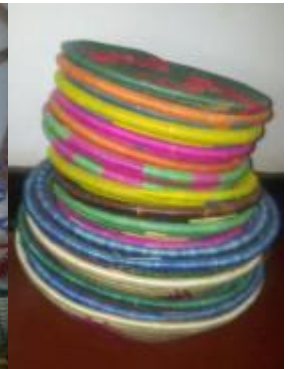


(Pictures of Primary 3)



The Women's Co-op

The foundation raises money through child sponsorship, individual donations and the sales from the women's craft group for example; necklaces, baskets, aprons, dolls, pencil cases, wallets, laptop bags, Ipad and shopping bags.

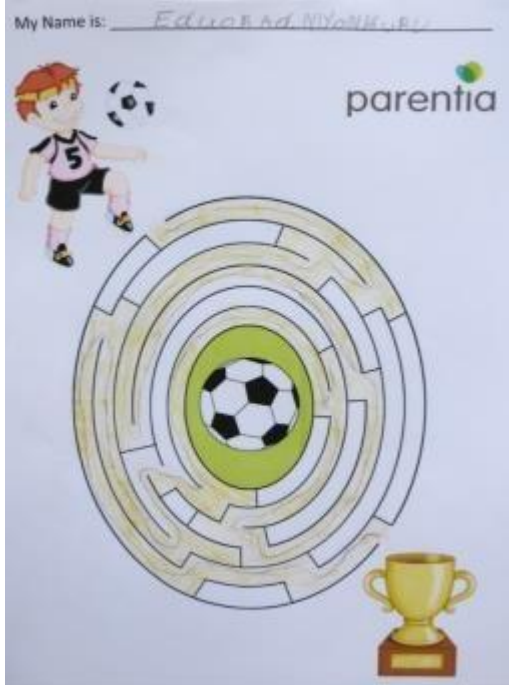
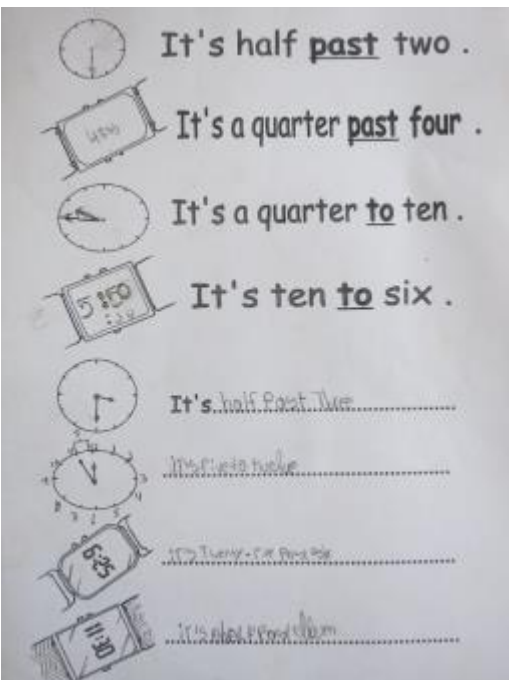
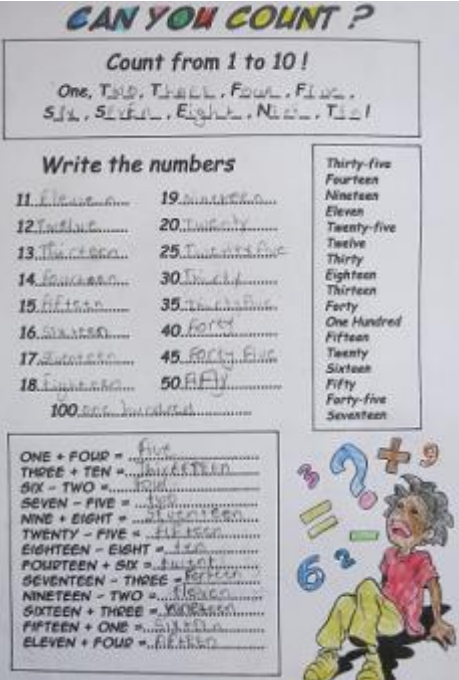


The following pages are full of photos capturing some of the children’s hard work as well as the fun and exciting times had here over the past month at the Meg Foundation, Kinamba project. I hope you enjoy looking over them.

Primary 1 and 2 learning to write their name, writing practice, the verb “to be”, learning colours, numbers and parts of the body.



Primary 3 learning the verb “to be”, opposites, articles, telling the time, practicing maths, writing and making puppets.



Primary 4 and 5 revising articles, the verb “to be” – building on vocab, ordinal numbers, learning dates and managing appointments and revising maths. They also participated in some drama activities /puppet plays.



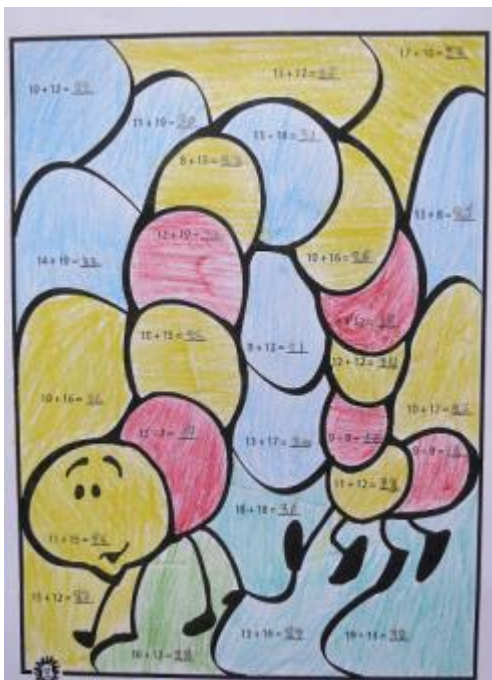
ORDINAL NUMBERS
DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 st first	2 nd Jennifer's birthday	3 rd third	4 th fourth
5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th Jane's birthday	9 th	10 th	11 th eleven
12 th	13 th thirteenth	14 th	15 th	16 th	17 th	18 th
19 th	20 th	21 st	22 nd	23 rd Tom's birthday	24 th	25 th Christmas
26 th	27 th Doris's Appointment	28 th twenty eighth	29 th	30 th	31 st New Year's Eve	

When is Jane's birthday? Jane's birthday is on the 8th of December.
 When is Tom's birthday? Tom's birthday is on the 23rd of December.
 When is the doctor's appointment? the doctor's appointment is on the 27th of December.
 When is Christmas? Christmas is on the 25th of December.
 When is New Year's Eve? New Year's Eve is on the 31st of December.
 When is Jennifer's birthday? Jennifer's birthday is on the 2nd of December.

Write these ordinal numbers in the correct place on the calendar.

third, first, fourth, eleventh, thirteenth, twenty-eighth.



Movie Wednesdays. This year primary 1 and 2 watched Snow Flake, Hotel Transylvania, Toy Story and Madagascar 2 while Primary 3, 4 and 5 watched Monsters University, Oz the great and powerful, Jack the giant slayer and Rise of the guardians



Everybody's favorite - Sports Friday.



The Meg Foundation dance team put on a special goodbye performance for me today wearing traditional costumes. It was great to see them in action. I hope to be able to put the footage taken of them dancing onto youtube/facebook for you to see soon.



Primary 1 moving into Primary 2 next year (seven absent).



Primary 2 moving into Primary 3 next year (four absent).



Primary 3 moving into Primary 4 next year (three absent).



Primary 4 moving into Primary 5 next year (one absent).



Primary 5 moving into Primary 6 next year (two absent).



Some of the Meg Foundation Staff



All the best,

Vincent ☺

