

Today is Saturday January 4th. The place is quiet, anticipating the patter of small feet of the children who will start the new school year on Monday. Parents have been coming in to register their children, as always we have many more requests for places than we can accommodate, so some difficult choices have to be made. Our priority is to take children from the poorest families in the local area, who otherwise would not have a chance to go to school.

This has been a very good year for us. We have made great progress in so many areas. The building is now finished, releasing vital future funds for other things.

Time now for me to say thank you to so many people who make our project such a success. First of all the staff, most of them are pictured here.



This picture was taken yesterday when we were all in school cleaning and organising the classrooms for the new start. They have developed into a brilliant team, supporting each other and eager to learn new techniques and skills to improve the provision for the children. I love working with them.

Next I would like to offer very grateful thanks to all the volunteers who add so much to the work of the Rwandan staff, bringing new ideas and expertise to share. We have been lucky to find so many kind and generous people, who work with us for no pay and give so much.

We said a tearful farewell to John, who wrote the July news. My former work colleague Kath arrived to help with administration and teach some English. Soon Michal arrived on her second visit and she wrote about her experiences in the August news. Cindy and her family were also here in August, the film she made is the August news Part 2.



Heike also arrived in August, working with the Primary children mainly on science activities and helping out with the holiday clubs with Vincent in November and Johane in December. There will be much more about the December club in a news to come.



Wilma arrived in September to help out with the office work; there is always so much to do at this time of year, organising class lists and so on. This is her second year so the names and the language are not such a challenge.... Here she is showing a photograph to Francoise's daughter Megan. My friends Lynn and Chris arrived hauling bags of goods for us on their way to Uganda to see their daughter.

When the term had finished Penny and Carole did some workshops. The staff always look forward to the chance to try new ideas. Penny did some work on water play and Carole talked about using and making books with children. They both then did an art workshop, which everyone enjoyed. Children in Rwandan schools rarely do any art work and the teachers themselves have very little experience to draw upon.



These few hours spent together are treasured and the staff are very grateful. They very willingly give up their holidays for training, but also to help with the holiday schools.

As I write this I know that Andrew is on his way here and we will pick him up at the airport this evening. The children are waiting for him and the football team is busy this afternoon looking for a match so that they can show him how much they have improved since he left them in December last year.

More information on volunteering with us can be found on our website www.kinambaproject.org.uk

None of this could happen without the support of people around the world who support us in so many different ways. The search for funding for the continuation of the project is a never-ending task. About a quarter of our children are directly supported by sponsors. This is a very important area for us as it will guarantee our sustainability. The photographs below show the children writing letters to their sponsors at the end of the school year, and some who have received gifts.



All of the sponsored children have a very hard life, living in impoverished circumstances and I know that without the project they would most probably not be in school at all. They are profoundly grateful to you for helping them and they work very hard to achieve good results in Primary school. Now they have hope and can imagine a better future.

We have a large number of children needing support. For more information please visit our website www.kinambaproject.org.uk

There is also a small army of people now who raise money for us in different ways. I am particularly grateful to the school children in South Cumbria in several primary schools. They raise money for us by holding non-uniform days, making a collection at their Harvest Service, Carol Services, Easter Fairs etc. They have also donated exercise books, reading books, pencil sharpeners, all manner of things which we use here. They have also donated toothbrushes and toothpaste which have been loaded onto the container with many other things and which is due in Kigali very shortly. The children are always fascinated by the stories I tell them about life here for children who are just like them, have the same dreams and hopes, but who do not have the life-chances of the children in Britain.



I am also very grateful to my friends, some of whom I have known for more years than I care to mention. Some are giving talks to groups in different parts of the UK, others have arranged coffee mornings, sales and cookery demonstrations, others are selling the crafts I bring back from the project to raise money for the food programme, others have been very busy collecting and donating essential school materials and humanitarian items to be sent out in the container. Each and everyone of you is important to me and to everyone here and I am grateful for your time, energy and support.



We have had a number of individual donations for specific things for example, to buy fish and more vegetables for the mid-day meal. For this and other donations, we say thank you very much indeed.

Our support group in the U.S.A have now set up their non-profit organization to raise money for us also.



Huge thanks too to Claude and Emmanuel, our joiner/anything maker and painter who have been here during the last six weeks, getting us organized and smartened up for the new start. We are ready!

And finally a personal thank you to my wonderful sister – logistic, practical, emotional and any other support you care to mention, I could not do what I do without you xxx

I leave you with my favourite photograph for this year.



Many many thanks indeed to everyone, we need you and we are grateful to you.

Meg