

December news 2015

In a few weeks' time it will be 10 years since my first arrival in Rwanda. Usually in December I have looked back at what we have achieved so far. At the risk of repeating myself with some of the details I apologise, but I am very aware and also very grateful to acknowledge the very many new sponsors and supporters we have gained over the last 18 months or so, many of whom are not aware of our beginnings and the stressful anxious times we had when we were struggling from one month to the next, not knowing if we would survive, so I will be repeating some things.

It was the meeting I had on Friday with the parents and students who we are now supporting in Secondary school which has given me an idea of what to write for December. Looking at them and remembering how we were all those years ago makes me realise just what we have achieved. I will put some facts and figures at the end of this newsletter but it is the emotions and the impact I wish to explore here.

This is how we were.



Very few of the children who are sitting here are actually still with us, but this is how I found this small project in 2006. Almost nothing at all to work with, no paid staff, no food programme.

This is part of what we represent in this community now.



I know that none of these students would be in secondary boarding school without this project. Some are orphans from the events of the genocide, others through HIV infection, others are extremely poor, all are exceptionally grateful for this opportunity and all are doing their absolute best in return.

We are bringing hope to this community. Hope from the students for a successful future, hope from the families, as in all families wherever they are, that their children will have a good future and that they will be able to take control of their lives and live with dignity. Hope from the staff because now they too can have the confidence to face the future with a good job, a regular salary and the knowledge that they are making a huge contribution to the lives of the children in their care and to their own families.

This week we admitted 70 new children into Nursery 1 and some in Nursery 2 This means that we will have educated almost 600 children by the end of this year. I think this is a huge achievement, not realised without a lot of sweat and tears!! I feel very proud of this.

One former parent came to tell us that her child who had been with us last year had come top in the entrance examination for a Primary school where she wanted him to go. That made us smile. Much more about the newbies in the next letter.

None of this is possible without the support, energy and commitment of the ever growing army of people who help us – fundraisers, volunteers, people who donate materials, Rotary Clubs in Cumbria, COAT in Cumbria, schools and Women's groups, U3A groups in Cumbria, the Glitter and Glue group, the 'fishes group' in Holland, the lunch club in France, my sister who supports me in every possible way, NPAC and the aunties who have helped in so many ways, not least by helping us to get tonnes of books, equipment, humanitarian aid brought out in their containers.

But special mention should be made of those kind and generous people who have made a long-term commitment to us by sponsoring individual children. None of those secondary folk would be in school without their personal family in the UK, Australia, Canada and the USA. Sponsorship gives us security, enabling us to plan because we know we have a guaranteed income

And so I say a huge thank you to each and every one. If I have missed anyone it is definitely not intentional. I am profoundly grateful for the generosity of support.

For flavours of just what we have achieved and the lives we have touched I recommend the following newsletters –

First of all, December 2009, especially the last page about the food programme

http://www.kinambaproject.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=26

Next, January 2012 about the building and how we have improved the facilities for the children –

http://www.kinambaproject.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57&Itemid=55

Thirdly, October 2012 which contains some things about some of our volunteers –

http://www.kinambaproject.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=63&Itemid=61

And finally January 2013 a lovely letter written by Richard to give another point of view –

http://www.kinambaproject.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=65&Itemid=63

Some facts and figures for 2015

Staff employed	13
Nursery students	140
Primary students	116
Secondary students	30
Food programme cost 2014/2015	£6,000
Children's lunches	12,856
Cups of porridge	33,293
Staff lunches	2016
Total expenditure 2014/2015	£36,500

And finally a few pictures which show, I think, why we are here. Some old ones and some new. I have posted more on our facebook page Kinamba Community Project



Wishing you all a Happy Prosperous, Peaceful and Healthy New Year. With ever grateful thanks. Meg