

After 10 years with the project, I think that Primary Day is a good indicator of how we are doing. Students who started out with us are now well into secondary school. Primary day used to be a day when the sponsored children gathered to write their annual letter to a sponsor, having finished the school year and received their school report. Now we have very many sponsored students 137 in all and we have written the letters as class groups before our celebration day.

And it is a celebration, for students to show what they know, for teachers to see what they are achieving and for parents to understand what our project actually adds to the education they receive in state school.



One event the children like the most is the lunch an important start to the day. A plateful of food prepared by Francoise is a big treat. She cannot do it alone so all staff are in early preparing it all, time for a gossip and a joke or two and the feast is prepared. The children eat before parents and visitors start to arrive. Beans, meat, mixed vegetables, fried potatoes, rice – delicious.



After eating we sit in our class groups around the central area of the terrace all ready and waiting.



Then the parents and visitors begin to arrive and we wait patiently for the dancers to begin the proceedings. The dancers have progressed from a small group to a large number of children. Our troupe is well known in the area and regularly dances at an International school. Last year the troupe was invited to dance at a large meeting celebrating education in the district. They are also asked to perform at weddings, which is a great tribute to Eric, our dance teacher and the dedication of the children who spend many hours practising.

Epiphanie is in charge of proceedings, she welcomes everyone and off we go. My heart swells with pride when watching our dancers, having been with them every step of their journey to this point and I know the parents love watching them.



Then, group by group the children made their presentations, sometimes something specially prepared, sometimes to show what they do here with us.

The remarkable Leontine, our fiery and inspirational music teacher, always helps the children put on a good show. She is especially interested in drumming. We have made her a permanent member of staff supported financially by <http://www.kinderwuerde.de/en/> and next year she is going to teach a drumming class in addition to the class work. Thank you very much to Dignity for Children for your support for this and other creative work which adds such an important dimension to our work, we are very grateful.



We watched an endearing play by Primary 1 where some children found a child on the street and took her to Meg Foundation. They told her it was very bad to sit around doing nothing. 'I' was very serious sitting behind a desk when they brought the child to see if there was a place and all agreed it was very important to go to school.



We then did something which we had not done before – now we had something special to show to our visitors. The children will have gone home no doubt talking about what they were doing in school – dancing, playing rugby, playing cricket – dancing everyone could understand, but rugby and cricket?

Setting up as a TV studio, complete with interpreter for the deaf, P3 and P4 presented a sports programme, celebrating our activities during the year, thanking the teachers and coaches for their help and guidance. They gave a small demonstration of cricket and rugby and the rugby coach was interviewed



The glittering array of winners' trophies and awards for player of the tournament were proudly presented. The parents were very appreciative.



We also said a big thank you to our dance teacher who has helped the children reach a high standard, always with a great sense of humour and lots of laughter. I love to watch the Sunday practices, even if I do not always appreciate the drumming



And finally, some words of thanks. A very important part of Rwandan culture is for people who wish to have their say. I was the grateful recipient of gracious words of thanks but also of lovely gifts. It is always a bitter sweet time as some of those children, who started in Nursery 1 and have now reached Primary 6 eight years later, are leaving us today. The fortunate ones with sponsors or who can afford to, will go on to secondary school. But it is a sweet time when some of the older ones are present to give advice to the younger ones setting out on another stage of their journey showing what they can look forward to as they progress through secondary school.



This was a very special day in so many ways, a true celebration of the hard work of everyone and the progress we have made together, building on hope and looking to the future where perhaps for many there was no real chance to take control and do something about their futures. Now it feels possible and the sense of community is so strong. I am very proud of everyone and of everything we have achieved together so far.



We enjoyed our day together, I hope you enjoyed reading about it. I say again, we can do nothing without your support so I close with my very grateful thanks on behalf of us all.

Wishing you all you could wish for yourselves during 2018. Meg

