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Registered Charity No: 1101103

Dear Readers,

I wish I could report that Kenya is thriving – but I can't. The effects of the tragedy that befell Kenya in the early months of 2008 are still being felt today. Most of the displaced children who arrived unannounced at our schools are still with us and are likely to remain so. Local family and friends are rallying round but life is hard. The Coalition Government of Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga is finding it difficult to agree on how best to rule the country but they still manage to live extravagant lives themselves. Corruption Rules OK and to add to Kenya's woes we have been hit by one of the worst droughts for half a century. The President announced a national emergency saying that 10 million Kenyans were at starvation level. Food prices have risen sharply and other essential items such as building materials have, in some cases, doubled in price. As I type the news tells us the rains have started in earnest. It is 'the wrong sort of rain', of course, and flooding is causing problems in some areas.

All is not lost, however! The 'talk of the town' relates to the work of the Kariandusi School Trust. There is much joy and success to report in this newsletter. The charity, founded in late 2003, is now, just six years later, building the ninth primary school. The average number of pupils in our schools is 470. Each school is built in dressed stone, has a corrugated iron roof, verandahs, magnificent library and staffroom, concrete floors, glazed windows, gutters and downpipes and a huge rainwater tank.

Elementary, perhaps, but in the Kenya context our schools are some of the best in the Republic.

We are aware there are very many other factors that enable children to succeed in education apart from learning in a beautiful environment. We try to provide some of those add-ons. Kenyans are aware that education is the surest way out of poverty. KST currently pays half the salaries for 22 qualified teachers only providing the parents pay the other half. Our sister charity the Langalanga Scholarship Fund (see www.langalanga.org.uk) sends its secondary school leavers to act as assistant teachers and, together with the KST/Parent teachers, class sizes have been reduced in many cases from 80-90 pupils to 40-50. Teachers now have good-sized staffrooms with allocated lockers and desk space for all. There is no excuse now for poorly prepared lessons and sloppily marked exercise books!

We collect reading books for the libraries we build. Children's books (for ages 5-15) are always needed and, thanks to the hard work of a few, all gifts are boxed and transported by air to Kenya at no cost, and delivered to

our headquarters in Gilgil. Thousands of books have been distributed that way and now our schools have Reading as part of the schools' timetables.

There are so many I should thank for their support but space does not allow. To all who have helped I just ask you to know that your donations have 'hit the spot' and are highly valued by thousands in our corner of Kenya.

Sincerely,

Harry Vialou Clark



The dilapidated staffroom at Karunga where 17 teachers prepare lessons and mark books

Dr Judith Darmady unveils the plaque marking the handover at Ngeteti

1 BWANA KARANJA'S NEW SCHOOL

Last year I reported that work on Ngeteti Primary School started in March 2008. On 24 February 2009, a date that will live in the memory of the local community for years, the Guest of Honour, Dr Judith Darmady, handed over the completed school on behalf of KST. It was a delightful occasion attended by over a thousand people. The wonderful entertainment provided by the children was of a high order and was much appreciated by everyone. The Headmaster, Mr Karanja, was well pleased and so were we all.



The wonderfully colourful dancers enjoy entertaining the crowds



The magnificent new library at Ngeteti with space on its shelves for many more books



Some of the many people attending the handover ceremony at Ngeteti listen to the speeches of appreciation for the new school



2 FOOTBALL – “THE SOLDIERS’ GAME”

A most generous sponsor from Suffolk, England, sponsors a football tournament inspired by KST trustees. The PAC3000 tournament is organized annually on a league and knockout basis. There are now 19 teams involved. Finals Day is always a big crowd-puller and the standard of football is remarkably high. Every year we organize a ‘lucky dip’ for strips and balls donated by the British Army’s Football Club and they are transported by RAF exercise aircraft when space allows. The tournament is all great fun and gives mainly unemployed young men interest, excitement and hope.

3 NATHANIEL WOODARD'S NEW SCHOOL

Nathaniel Woodard was an uncompromising Victorian who devoted his life to providing magnificent schools for distressed gentlefolk's children. I was privileged to attend one of his, Ardingly College, but by 1953 almost none of us was 'distressed' nor necessarily had parents who were gentlefolk! Thanks to remarkable support from the Chairman of Governors, Headmaster and staff, Old Boys and current parents enough money has been raised to build Ndogo Primary School on a 'green field site'. In July this year eight lucky Ardinians and three staff members spent five wonderful days with us at Ndogo. The gifts they brought, the enthusiasm and energy they displayed and the 'bonding' with the deprived local children were truly amazing and mutually beneficial. Already the list is full for the July 2010 visit!

The project also includes the conversion of disused railway buildings built in 1903 into four staff houses. It is hoped that some staff members will now keep to school hours. We will see. It is a worth a try.

We hand over the school on 16 February 2010 when Graham Turner, a Governor of Ardingly, will be the Guest of Honour.



An exciting and rewarding visit for all concerned

The 'green field' site of Ndogo Primary School; the effects of drought all too visible!

4 SHAMBLES TRANSFORMED

Ngumo Primary School was a shambolic collection of tumbledown classrooms, all built to no overall plan, but dominating the skyline on a prominent feature overlooking the Great Rift Valley. Our challenge last year was to bring all buildings that were not condemned into an acceptable scheme. We have replaced the ugly rusted but shiny corrugated iron roof with green and the whole school will be a far more attractive place in which to learn.

We have constructed a zebra and goat-proof fence around the perimeter so grass will have a chance to replace the semi-desert conditions. This was paid for, largely, by funds left by Dragoman and Intrepid passengers who visited the school.

Thank you everyone

5 NEW WEBSITE

As forecast in last year's newsletter the new KST website was launched. New Year's Day 2009 was the day that the breathless world was waiting for. It really is a great improvement on the last one.

Have a look at

www.kariandusi.co.uk

Thank you Annie, Tony and Steve, to name but three.

6 ABUNDANT HELP FROM SUFFOLK

Help for what we do in Kenya comes from many places and people around the world but our friends in Suffolk are extraordinary. Fundraising events, some large, some small but all good fun bring in much needed funds. The sponsored walk, musicathon in Debenham Church, sale of Christmas cards and now hosted dinner parties keep the charity in the public eye. Money this year goes towards the total re-birth of **Karunga Primary School**, a dilapidated array of buildings where some 700 children gain their education. Thank you everyone.

Scenes from Karunga: note the desks provided by the emergency appeal



7 MORE HELP FOR KARUNGA

Just when I was beginning to wonder when we would reach our target to enable work to start at this school lightning struck! A very large and timely donation from the TTS Foundation was made in time to start major renovations during the long Christmas holidays. When the children return to school in January there will be much to wonder at. Thank you *very* much TTS.

Our friends from Madventurer, a Newcastle-based adventure holiday company, have again descended on a KST project, this time at Karunga. Young, enthusiastic men and women, usually school leavers, are half-way through building a new two-classroom block (see work underway in the photo below). Thank you, everyone! Look at their excellent website at www.madventurer.com.



8 TWINNING - A NEW VENTURE

The TTS Foundation has identified schools, both in England and Kenya, which are willing to try a 'twinning' arrangement. It is early days in the development of the idea but there is much potential for mutual understanding of each other's lives.

More news next year.

Patrons: Sheila Ravenscroft, Sarah Beeny.

Trustees: Colonel HE Vialou Clark, The Hon CHK Hopkinson, Ms SC Phelps, Peter Ellse
Mr NC Farthing, Mrs AM Owen, Mrs AJ Vialou Clark.