

UGAIRISH project

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2
WINTER 2010/2011

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Thank you for your continued support and donations over the past year. They made a huge difference to the people of Kamuzinda Village and surrounding areas, and are also vital in achieving our aim, which is to help make the farm school and children's village self sustaining.

In this, the second issue of our newsletter, you can find out more about our monthly support for the village, our annual volunteer trip that took place during the summer of 2010 and also read about some of the people who we have come in contact with in Uganda.



EVENTS

Volunteer Trip 2011

A volunteer trip for June 2011 is already planned and preparations are underway. 22 people are booked in, and we had our first team meeting in October 2010.

It's great to be able to get the team together so far in advance of the trip, because it means more time to prepare, to fundraise and get to know everyone in the group.

Fundraising

We have a number of fundraising events coming up including bag-packing and the ever-popular Barrow River Walk. A new event this year is a Golf Classic, to be held in late May at Carlow Golf Club. 38 teams of 4; cost €150 per team. Contact us at www.ugairishproject.org for more info.

VOLUNTEER TRIP 2010

Over the course of one month this past summer, 15 volunteers in total travelled to Kamuzinda Children's Village in the Masaka district of Southern Uganda. They had a very successful trip during which many projects were carried out to completion.



Some of the 2010 team of volunteers

The advance team got the water harvesting started and also new latrines for the primary school. Teaching the high school students to play hurling was a cultural and sporting highlight. Other work in the schools included making posters, buying supplies, teaching different classes and bat-proofing the Kindergarten!

A concrete mixer purchased in the capital, Kampala, sped up the work greatly and by the end of the visit the team had succeeded in renovating one of the children's homes. This entailed knocking down walls, moving doorways, reconstructing steps, making a channel to divert rain water, painting the interior and, with the help of a local builder, putting on a new roof and gutters.



Work in progress on the back of Kukubarra House, the oldest house in the village

Other projects that were completed included:

- Teaching the farm students woodwork and how to make the nesting boxes for the chicken project.
- Eye testing in the schools and providing glasses where necessary.
- Building a latrine (toilet) in the bush for an elderly woman.
- Purchasing and installing a new water pump.
- The team participated in two feeding programmes, bringing food, clothes and supplies to needy families in the bush.
- Apollo's (the farm manager) new buda buda (motor bike) will help him get around the village more quickly and to travel into Masaka for supplies. It will also be used to deliver the eggs to the orphans dormitories and market.
- Ssemanda (the builder) completed the primary school latrines and put up gutters and water tanks on all the farm school buildings and on one of the dormitories.



Water harvesting tank on one of the Farm School buildings



Joseph the latrine digger, emerging from the new pit dug for the elderly lady in the bush



The hut over the pit latrine nears completion. It took the team a morning to complete



One of the families helped during the feeding program

How Far Does Your Money Go?

96 page copy book: **17c**

Hamper of one month's food and essentials for one family: **€8**

Bag of cement: **€8**

25kg bag of rice: **€17**

25kg bag of sugar: **€21**

Pit latrine for an elderly lady in the bush: **€100**

Provide clean water for one orphanage home, thanks to rainwater harvesting: **€275**

WHEN WE'RE NOT THERE

UgaIrish Project maintains its support of Kamuzinda Village right throughout the year. This is made possible by our close relationship with the farm manager, Apollo Saku. His trustworthy, accountable and transparent approach allows confidence in what needs to be done from this side of the Equator.

Monthly transfers to the Farm School support farm supplies (seeds, sprays, vaccinations, veterinary expenses and equipment), school materials, and teacher and labourer salaries.

This winter 2000 chicks were nurtured, fed (they eat loads!) and vaccinated for the first (non-laying) 5 months of life. Excitingly, December saw the start of the eggs, sales of which will be reinvested into the ongoing development of the farm, as well as being a vital and rare source of protein for the villagers.

Including €150 extra in our December transfer allowed Christmas 2010 to be described as “the best Christmas in 10 years”. A cow and two pigs from the farm, plus all the trimmings €150 could buy, brought smiling faces all round.



During the autumn a broken 'bore-hole' (which supplies water for the primary and secondary schools, six of the orphans' homes and much of the surrounding community) had the potential to cause great hardship. Thankfully a mere €70 from Ireland allowed the repairs to go ahead without holding up supply for too long.

PROGRESS



The Farm School in 2006: Emmanuel House in the background



2010. Note the planted fields, and the outbuildings surrounding the House

There has been amazing progress at the Farm School since it began in 2006. Back then there was only a small vegetable patch, a few banana trees, some goats and Apollo with a vision. With the help of monthly donations, annual volunteer visits with injections of money, encouragement and belief from UgaIrish and many other charities and volunteers, Apollo has managed to turn the whole thing around. At present the farm is supplying eggs, maize flour, milk and vegetables to the orphans in the village. Without this food they would be starving.

With lots of help, the whole thing has been turned around. Without this food, they would be starving.

Over the past two years, pigs have been increasing and multiplying and Apollo is almost at the stage of being able to supply a sausage factory in Kampala with 15 pigs a week. As well as this a huge chicken house has been built, which will house up to 5000 chickens. The first 2000 have been purchased by a lady from the UK and now UgaIrish are funding the feeds, vaccines and supplies necessary. It is hoped, now that they have started laying, that the farm will move closer to sustaining itself.

This will mean that not only will the farm needs be increasingly met but also the educational, healthcare and residential requirements of the village – thus moving towards Kamuzinda Children's Village becoming self sustaining and independent.

It was in the little village of Bukunda that Teresa and Anne, two of the Ugalrish volunteers, made a heartbreaking discovery. In a dark and dirty shed behind the main street, they discovered a vulnerable little girl who presented with physical disabilities and was barely clad. She lay in her own soil; the conditions of her environment were appalling. She had no speech, no mobility in her legs and was clearly neglected. Anne and Teresa were distraught, inconsolable and horrified by what they saw. With the help of Apollo Saku, the Project-Director, they investigated Esther's situation and instantly set about helping her. Esther is thirteen years old, one of eleven children and her mother worked hard to make ends meet, but even she could not prevent the extra abuse Esther sustained, of repeated rape.

Esther



Teresa and Anne took Esther to the local clinic and the doctor confirmed she presented with Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, neurological problems along with the other underlying problems she had endured. With the help of Apollo they assigned themselves to taking the appropriate steps, and a letter of release was signed by Esther's mother, the local district chairperson. Under the guidance of the local pastor they enrolled Esther into the Opening Doors Special School in Kampala.

Teresa and Anne have pledged to pay for Esther's fees for the rest of her life and have a contract in place. Apollo and the school administrator keep them updated. They will receive term updates and reports. Recent photos and correspondence received

has shown that Esther is responding well to her new environment and making great progress.



Ddembe is an 11 year old boy with physical and intellectual disability. He was found locked in a shed in 2008 by Ugalrish volunteers who were doing the feeding programme in the bush. He, like Esther, has been placed in a special needs school in Kampala (sponsored by an Irish family) and is making excellent progress in all areas.

Outside Kamuzinda village the country side is lush with pineapple and banana plantations. However, dotted among these plantations are the all too typical mud huts inhabited mainly by poor and destitute people. Among such people was an elderly widow who had lost all her children to HIV/AIDS. She was trying to eke out a living whilst looking after her 5 grandchildren and living in a hut that was about to fall down. The community were in the process of making bricks to build her a new house which hopefully would be built before the rainy season.



We discovered that she had to walk 200 yards to a neighbouring house to use their pit latrine (toilet), as hers was full to capacity. In rural areas in Uganda the locals use 30 to 40 foot deep pits for their toilet: when full they dig another. However, this woman was without the resources to build a new pit latrine. Therefore our team hired Joseph, the latrine digger, and organised the materials to build a hut over the pit. It took the lads a few hours to build and the result was one happy woman.

It only took €100 and a couple of hours for the lads to build a hut over the new pit and the result was one happy woman.

Josephine

Meanwhile we discovered that her granddaughter, aged 15 had been raped while out getting water from a nearby well and was 5 months pregnant. The poor woman was beside herself with worry; how would they manage with another mouth to feed; being pregnant meant that little Josephine couldn't attend school. Fortunately Apollo was able to arrange for her to stay at the Farm School in Kamuzinda and attend the school in the village. Josephine arrived at the farm just before we left and we have subsequently heard that she delivered a fine healthy boy at the end of October. A local girl is currently helping to look after the baby so Josephine can return to school.



Paul

Many orphans and destitute children live in the communities around Kamuzinda, some more unfortunate than others. Paul is one of the unfortunate ones – at birth he was rejected by his mother and given to his grandmother to mind. She was unable to cope with the baby and kept begging her daughter to take him back. One day in a fit of rage the daughter threw baby Paul at her mother and disappeared. As a result of the fall Paul's back was damaged and it is unsure whether he will ever be able to walk.

Paul was pretty much abandoned and left on his own to eat the dirt on the ground. When he was found he was at the point of starvation and badly dehydrated. He was terrified of people, especially women, and it has taken him a long time to trust anyone. He was



brought to the clinic in Kamuzinda and at first it was thought he was only 5 or 6 months old. However, it was later discovered that he was 18 months. A widow, who lives across the road from the clinic, is being paid to mind him and he is getting milk and eggs daily from the farm.

These are just a few of the stories that have involved Ugalrish volunteers and which keep the focus of the charity on both the needs of the village and the surrounding bush community.

Our aim for Kamuzinda Farm School, right from the beginning,

THE FUTURE

was to make it sustainable and self-sufficient. With the arrival of the chickens and the extension of the pig sties, an income will be generated once these projects gain momentum in the coming months, and we will be even closer to achieving this goal.

Other projects we want to focus on this year include an extra classroom and new computer room for the farm school, electrification of the farm school as well as a continued emphasis on providing water from rainwater harvesting systems.

Charity Number: CHY 18988

Chairperson: Siobhán Kinsella **Secretary:** Eric Stilwell **Treasurer:** Fran Stilwell

Committee: Jonathan Jacob, Paddy Grant, Róisín Buckley, Joan Thompson