

UGAIRISH Project

Newsletter May 2016

Editor's Note:

Thank you for your continued support and donations over the past year. You have made a huge difference to the lives of some of the most needy communities in Southern Uganda.

This is our 7th annual UgaIrish Newsletter. In it you can find out more about our monthly support and on-going projects in Bbaale Landing site on Lake Victoria, and can read about the two volunteer trips in 2015 and the plans for this year's trip in June.

Siobhan Kinsella, Chairperson.

Updates:

Bbaale Landing Site

Bbaale Landing site is a remote fishing village on the shores of Lake Victoria which UgaIrish has been supporting since they first visited it in 2013. Since then the community have the benefit of clean drinking water, an eco sanitation block, twice monthly visits from a doctor and a nurse, a woman's co-operative and a kindergarten school.

The lives of the people have greatly improved - they have a more nutritious diet due to the women's vegetable gardens, the younger children have a routine to their day, the village is kept cleaner and tidier by the litter wardens and a number of the community have employment in the kindergarten school and eco toilet block.

Sponsored Children

As there is no free education in the area there is a great need for school sponsorships in the local schools both primary and secondary. However, due to the generosity of the friends of UgaIrish, thirty students are now being sponsored. There are also some very needy families who require monthly food parcels to help with their subsistence living. UgaIrish now have three such families being sponsored.

Children with Special Needs

Three children with special needs from the area are in schools in Kampala. Ddembe and Esther have severe and profound disabilities and are in full time care in Special Needs schools. Mercy, who has cerebral palsy, is doing very well in a special school for children with physical disabilities, also in Kampala and has moved up a class this term. These children are being sponsored by very generous families in Ireland.



Women's Co-operative

A very successful co-operative was set up in 2014 for the women living in Bbaale and the surrounding area. They were taught knitting by the volunteers and are



supplied with wool throughout the year. As a result these women, who learn very quickly, are now producing beautiful jumpers, scarves, bags etc. Some are for sale and others they keep to clothe their families.

A horticulture advisor visits the village regularly to teach the women how to grow vegetables. As there is only sand around the Landing Site, they have rented some land a small distance away where they are growing vegetables and maize. These

they sell or consume within their families. Any profits go to buying more seed or renting more land. In this way the vegetable project is becoming self-sustaining.

Little Angels Nursery School

In 2014 when the volunteers were working in the village it became obvious that there was a need for a kindergarten school – none of the little ones were going to school as the nearest one was too far (one and a half hours walk). So in January 2015 we paid some of the community to build a temporary 2-classroom school and in February 70 children were enrolled, with teachers funded by UgaIrish. This little nursery school is doing very well and since it started a kitchen and lunchroom have been added, a toilet installed, a playground and fencing put in and for the start of the new school year a third classroom was built. The community are very proud of their school and even had a graduation party for the children who were moving up into first class!!

Projects:

New Primary School

Due to the success of Little Angels Nursery School, UgaIrish see the need for a permanent primary school to be built in Bbaale Landing Site. However, the land on which this village is located is government owned and it would be unwise for UgaIrish to build a permanent structure there without permission. So it was arranged, in November 2015, for Austin and Siobhan to meet the Vice President of Uganda. It was a very fruitful meeting and His Excellency agreed to give us as much land as we needed for our school. All that we have to do now are the legalities and raise €150,000!



Sanitation for Girls

In Uganda there is a big problem with teenage girls missing school every month due to their periods. As a result they are out of school for at least 60 days in the year, they fall behind in their studies and eventually drop out of school. It is the hope of

Ugairish to encourage girls to stay in education for the good of themselves, their families and their community. One of the projects for the volunteers in June it to educate the young women, teaching them to make and use sanitary pads, and teach them how they can empower themselves.

House repairs and Kitchens

Many of the houses in the village are in need of repair as the very heavy rains this year have caused a lot of damage to the roofs and walls. It is hoped that the 2016 team will help with these repairs and also build small kitchens for some of the families who otherwise would be cooking inside their houses during the rainy season.

2015 Volunteer Trips:

There were two volunteer trips in 2015, one in March and the other in November. Two volunteers went out in March for ten days mainly to see the progress in the kindergarten school and encourage the teachers.

They were very impressed by what they saw – happy 3 and 4 year olds reciting the alphabet and counting to a hundred after only 6 weeks at school! Amazing.

They also had their first viewing of the vegetable gardens and helped the women plant cabbages.

As it was the rainy season some of their visits to the village had to be cancelled due to the condition of the roads. However, they managed to get uniforms designed, made and delivered to the school. One of the days they met some of the children returning home from school and managed to fit 17 of them into the car!

In November three more volunteers travelled out to Uganda and were delighted to see the progress being made in the village since the last visit. However, there was a problem with roaming pigs wandering through the classrooms in Little Angels Nursery School. As the walls are only made from papyrus matting the pigs were making holes in them. Also pigs carry fleas called jiggers which, when they adhere to people's feet, cause pain and infection. The team quickly set about finding a solution, and that was to build a fence around the school to keep the pigs out and the children in! A small toilet was also built within the compound as the eco toilet block is some distance from the school and the little ones were wandering off into the bushes. It was discovered that many of the children's feet had been infected by the jiggers and so a doctor spent a day removing them from their feet. Each child was given a pair of shoes and a new set of clothes. Imagine their parents surprise when they arrived home from school with a complete new outfit!



A young girl with a red bow in her hair, wearing a white and orange striped t-shirt and a purple skirt, is walking away from the camera on a dirt path. She is holding a yellow and red object in her hand. The background shows a grassy area and a large log on the ground.

2016 Volunteer Trip:

There will be 9 volunteers going out to Uganda at the end of June. Some of the group will be staying for 3 weeks while others will return after 2 weeks. A visit to a safari park is planned during their stay.

As the team consists mainly of teachers much of their time will be spent assisting the teachers in Little Angels Nursery School. Also a couple of them will be visiting the Special Needs Schools in Kampala and spending a few days supporting the teachers and helping with resources and teaching aids.

Roofing, house repairs and building kitchens will also be on the agenda for this year's team as well as helping the doctor and nurse in the clinic. There is always something for everyone no matter what your skills are.

Fundraising:

The volunteers are working hard organising fund-raising events which include the annual walk along the Barrow Track on 2nd May, a Gigantic Raffle, a Cabaret in Paulstown, the Laughter Lounge in Temple Bar, Coffee mornings, Cake sales etc.

You can see details of these events on our face book page or support them through PayPal via our website at ugairishproject.org.

Almost every penny raised by Ugairish goes directly to the projects mentioned above.

www.ugairishproject.org

Registered Charity:- RCN 20073831 (Revenue CHY 18988)

Chairperson:- Siobhán Kinsella Secretary:-Roísín Buckley, Treasurer:- Austin Kinsella, Fran Stilwell Committee:- Joan Thompson, Eric Stilwell