

Upendo News February 2005

Hi. I wanted to update you all on Upendo as it seems so much has happened since I wrote in August.

Milestones achieved are:

- Obtained £1500 from the Mercury Phoenix Trust for running an HIV awareness and education workshop for the women running the project and their guardians. This is being run at the end of March.
- Painted the inside of the hall, and a big name on the outside, and moved into it. Now the kids have proper tables, chairs and teaching materials hung up around the walls. It is now fully functional as a classroom and play area.
- Drew up architects plans for a proper classroom block with kitchen, daytime sleeping room, office, store and toilets. We are seeking funds for this at the moment. The total cost is £20,000. All donations welcome.
- Obtained sponsorship for 13 out of the 16 orphans. This means that we can now expand the group supported to 25. 4 more were taken on at the beginning of this year.
- Conducted an outreach programme to provide counselling and occasional support for 14 more orphans. These ones are next on the list for full support by the project.
- Went on a pre-Christmas outing to a Nature park and then the beach for a picnic.
- Made 150 Christmas cards. These were sold locally for fund-raising.
- Funded an extra nursery teacher for this year to help the two voluntary retired ladies who currently teach.
- Re-fitted all the children with school uniforms and shoes.
- Started a Saturday feeding programme to supplement the week-day one. Many of the children do not get a proper meal at home during the weekend.
- Improved the quality of a shelter for two of the orphans who were sleeping under a tree.
- Re-connected water to the church grounds. Now the ladies don't have to buy water from their neighbours to cook.
- Made an offer on the plot next door to the church so that we can site our new building there.
- When I left, we had spent £2700 and raised £5500. There is enough to cover the costs until the end of 2005. With continued sponsorship (£250 per year), we will have about half the amount required for 2006. So if you hear of someone who would like to sponsor a child, please get in touch.
- I will be returning to Kilifi in late 2005 and will continue to ensure that the programme continues to develop with the funds you have given.

The above sounds like just a check-list of achievements. But my personal experience of all this is that the kids definitely look healthier, happier and cared-for than just 6 months ago. Your support is making an enormous difference to each child. I wish I could convey here the reality of that. On behalf of the Upendo Methodist Women's Group, Kilifi, Kenya (who do all the actual work), thank you so much.

Margaret Mackinnon, February 28, 2005

Some before and after shots.....

