



Focus on Africa

Focus on Africa

A Haverhill based charity seeking to make life a little better for those in need of support in Kisumu, Western Kenya

Progress at the Focus on Africa Harmony Clinic



Impressive gates

New gates have been installed at the site and painted. Whilst we were there the copingstones were put on the top of the wall to complete them and the walls will be painted once the cement has dried out. A temporary building has been erected to store materials and for a night watchman to stay. The original house on site has been demolished as the base was no longer viable and refurbishment not cost effective

Our Target this year

We have appointed a builder, agreed on the design of the building and have received council planning permission to build on our site. We have raised enough money to start the footings and with the money we intend to raise from our next two events: The May Ball and The Race Night, we expect to have the funds to build to ring beam (which is the top of all the walls) at which point a continuous concrete lintel is poured to lock the building together.

Then we need to raise the roof! Or actually the funding for it.

Can You Help

- Could you sponsor part of our building?
- Are you a Company that could assist us for part of the building?
- Donate money for rafters?
- Donate money for electrics?
- Donate money for the roof?
- Donate money for the windows?
- Donate money for the plumbing?
- Donate money for sanitary ware?



Jack's Journey to Nairobi

To obtain a certificate of Registration for the charity

Written by Jackson Mraga
Registered Nurse at Harmony Clinic

After having realised that most of the legal procedures could not take place adequately for the lack of the said certificate, FOA officials resolved that Jack had to go to Nairobi immediately to try to get it. Jack left Kajula where he lives at around 5pm ready to board an Easy Coach bus that had been booked for him earlier on that day. Jack left Kisumu at 9pm as scheduled for Nairobi. The night journey was safe and arrived in Nairobi at 4.56am. He had to wait for the offices of the Attorney General (Sheria House) to be opened to start the registration process.

We had help from Mr Vincent Ogutu working in the same Ministry Office of the Kisumu branch. He and Mr Francis Tabu working in the ministries headquarters Nairobi to help facilitate the process. The process of registering a society or

group like FOA in Kenya may take a long time maybe up to two months. Ours did take one day because Mr Vincent did help us by handing over the case to a colleague and a friend of his. The process in Nairobi did take the whole day but finally Jack obtained the certificate on the same day and subsequently travelled back to Kisumu by bus the following night. The headquarter office in Nairobi is like a beehive of activities serving all people across the nation with different or similar needs. The process was really tiresome in terms of Jack waiting to be served, given that Jack had missed his sleep the previous night. It needed perseverance and sacrifices in order to achieve it. Very early the following morning at around 6.10am Jack reported to the hotel to present the certificate to the FOA officials and was received by

Mr Chris Hearn who on the first sight noticed tired, sleepy and hungry Jack. Chris led Jack straight to the dining hall for breakfast and for the journey report. The rest of the team members joined Chris and Jack in the dining hall, everybody was sympathetic to Jack for the hard work and was equally happy to see the long awaited certificate, which had been a stumbling block in the way for achieving the FOA goals.

Everybody gave Jack a pat on the back for the successful struggle.



Bore Hole

The borehole on site was too shallow, so we had a “Well man”, Clement; deepen it by a further 12 feet. This would allow water to be extracted even in the dry season. Clement not only dug through soil and rocks; he also bricked the sides as he progressed downwards. In the picture top right, there is actually someone at the bottom of the well, digging! The left picture is the original hole and bottom right, the near completed borehole.



Cesspit

Once Clement, the Well man has completed extending the well he will start to dig the cesspit for the site. This is going to be in the region of 12 feet deep and 12 feet wide 12 feet long, and then it will be brick lined.

Mama N’Ginas Orphanage

Mama N’Ginas is an orphanage that is close to our hearts, it’s a government-supported orphanage that needs some additional help, which Focus on Africa provides. Mama NGina’s is where the police will bring babies and young children who have been abandoned.

This year we arranged for the dining hall to be repainted as it had been smoke damaged by the stove from the kitchen two years ago. As we were so busy with obtaining official paperwork for our site, we

arranged for local painters to come in and clean the paintwork and to repaint the walls leaving in place the much-loved murals that were there.

We also received a donation to replace some of the mattresses as some of the children were sleeping on the springs of their beds. Plus we purchased some mosquito nets, ensuring all the children were well protected from the mosquitos.





Lots of happy ladies



The Bra Swopshop!

Ladies from the Lioness Group in Saffron Walden and ladies from Bury St Edmunds donated all their unwanted bras to be taken to Kenya to be reused.



When I go to Kenya I always take my granddaughters outgrown clothes and always find a needy place to pass them on. I also take my unwanted bras' and quickly realised I can only pass them on to ladies of a similar size to me. So last year I mentioned this to a couple of friends, one of whom is a Lioness and she very kindly put the message out to other Lioness's. The outcome was I collected a huge bag of various sizes of bras.

I explained to Pamela at the Simon Newbury School that I would like her to get together the ladies of the local village with the teachers. Pamela very kindly organised a meeting of the ladies one early evening after school. I went into the hall seeing very puzzled looks on the ladies faces not knowing quite what to expect.

I asked all the ladies if they understood English, which they all did. I told them that I had a large quantity of bras for them to sort through and find some that fitted them.

I explained that I would like a group picture at the end with them holding their bras to take back to England to show the ladies who had kindly donated them.

Bras are a luxury item in Kenya, not all of the ladies can afford to buy them, so many have none or just one pair.

I emptied the bag out on a large table and the ladies slowly moved forward and started to go through them.

Within minutes it was like an English coffee morning with laughter and chatter with ladies trying on the bras over their clothes [which is the normal way of buying clothes from a street market] finding bras that would fit them and also finding bras for their friends. On finding bras to fit they then came over and asked me to take their pictures of what they had found and were wearing.

All the ladies were able to find at least two bras to fit and some lucky ladies found themselves three pairs. By the time we finished they were all laughing and talking to each other.

It was really lovely to make so many ladies happy as well as seeing so many unwanted bras from England finding a home in Kenya. Surely the ultimate in international recycling!

Our thanks go to the kind people who donated additional money for us to spend whilst we were away this year. Chris Piper, Stuart Greenwood, Maureen Hearn, Tim Newman, Mike Monks, Saffron Walden Lions club and Saffron Walden U3A. It was all used to make a big difference.



Jack and Gill Nursery School

It was good to visit The Jack and Gill Nursery School. All the children and staff were pleased to see us and sang songs to greet us. It was good that the school is doing well and did not need our help this year. It was also good to see teacher Ben who had the nasty road accident last year just before we left.

He has fully recovered and has new false teeth to replace the teeth he lost in the accident. He was very grateful that we were able to raise the money via Just Giving to pay for his hospital treatment and new false teeth.

This is Margaret, a grandmother who lives in a village near Kakamega. Her cow called Lampard, which we funded, died which left a big gap in the village as she used to give the excess milk to the local orphans. We managed to raise the money using Just Giving last year to purchase a new cow, which has made such a difference to her and the local orphans.

This is Grandma Margaret's house. We gave her the money last year to replace some of the tin sheets on her roof as the rain was coming in and she would get wet while she was in bed.



This year's team

Gill Martin, our lovely waiter Kenneth, Paula Taylor, Brian and Mike Boltwood, Chris Hearn and John Martin.

So much of our time this year was resolving administrative issues which involved many hours waiting in offices. This was necessary to enable us to move our project forward, so thank you for the patience shown by the other members of the group.



All costs for the trip for the team including airfares and accommodation are borne by the individuals

Working side by side with our neighbours

The entrance to our site opens onto a wide path, big enough for a lorry access to deliver building materials but where the path meets the main road it narrows and has a sharp bend making access with a lorry impossible. The land next to ours is owned by the Catholic Church and the leader of the church very kindly offered to move their fence to widen the narrow part and cut the corner completely thus giving us full access. We were very grateful that a solution was found and we wanted to offer something in return. We knew the congregation at the church were saving to install electric fans which they had already bought, so we decided to pay for the electricians to fit the fans for the next Sunday service.





From top left, our land; middle, Julius our builder with Brian our Chairman; Right the office in Kisumu to start the process of getting our charity registered; Lower right, filing at the post office; middle, three girls at Mama N'Ginas and left the demolished house.



From bottom left, our PO Box, essential in Kenya; middle, breakfast porridge; right cuddly toys for the babies at Mama N'Ginas and older children getting lollypops.

