

# Changarawe Nursery School Project

## Autumn Newsletter 2002

Dear Friends,

I returned at the beginning of October from another visit to the Zawadi School in Changarawe Tanzania. (Zawadi means "gift"). This time I took my mother with me and we had wonderful trip. My mother was almost overwhelmed by the warmth of her reception, thrilled to see the village and school she had heard so much about and in particular to meet Felistas Kalomo. They got on together like a house on fire and we had a lot of fun.

I was delighted with all that I found on my return. The 'new' school has now been running for three years and is full to bursting with 60 pupils. The most exciting thing for me, however is that the income generating projects that we discussed and planned a year ago are now up and running and beginning to work well. I have no doubt that barring natural disaster, they will be producing enough money by September 2003 to fully pay for the running costs of the school. (2000 pounds per annum.)

Felistas has worked incredibly hard during the last 12 months putting our ideas into practice. I don't know how she has done it alongside a full-time job. She works in the field of health education and agriculture partly for a charity, and mainly for the Ministry of Agriculture. She is currently teaching village women how to preserve produce long-term -ie sun-drying tomatoes- for use when they are out of season.

An excellent committee of 10 people has now been formed with Felistas as chief executive and it is subdivided into 5 areas of responsibility. These are Education, Environment, Orphans, Income-generating and Finance. I attended a committee meeting and met all the key members. They are very good people, not all local, so are therefore able to be dispassionate.

Because of on-going difficulties from parents of our pupils who could afford to pay the minimal 50p a month fee but won't, it was decided, with my approval, to concentrate from now on entirely on educating the children who are truly in need. These are children who have lost one or both parents to illness and are totally dependent on others, or the genuinely destitute families of whom there are far too many in the village. There is absolutely no welfare system in Tanzania.

The Orphans Committee is run by Father Raphael Kigonga, a Catholic priest who runs a secondary school in Changarawe. He is assisted by Mrs Astrida Katalyeba who is the headmistress of the secondary school my daughter Eleanor taught in in 1997. They are not only keeping an eye on the needy children while they are at Zawadi School but plan to continue to monitor their welfare throughout their education. They hope to be able to give extra financial help if it is necessary to ensure they continue to attend school.

The Environment Committee is also run by Father Kigonga and is responsible for the new tree nursery in the school grounds, which we hope will be the most profitable of the income generating projects. 1000 lemon seedlings at a time are grown and onto them are grafted (or 'budded') oranges which will be ready for sale after 8 months. They are also cultivating trees which can be pruned for fuel and ornamental trees to improve the environment. After years of deforestation the government has now started a tree planting scheme so this is very apt. The tree nursery has been financed by The Besom Foundation, a charity based in Clapham who donated 650 pounds to help with the income generating projects. This money has also financed the market garden and expansion of the poultry unit, both of which are managed by Felistas. The well in the school grounds was robbed of all its water again this year, but not as we thought by the neighbours but by the caretaker, Simon, who was selling it! He has now been replaced by Kenneth who I hope will be more trustworthy. He is working hard in the market garden growing crops of mchicha (spinach) tomatoes and peppers in large raised beds. This is for sale in the village.

The poultry unit is going well and chickens are ready for sale every 8 weeks. Felistas has been working hard in Morogoro to find regular buyers for 250 birds and while I was there the hotel we were staying in and a nearby restaurant both agreed to take some, so I can now add 'chicken seller' to my c.v.! Thanks to The Besom Foundation the unit is to be doubled in size to produce eggs as well. The local main egg producer in Changarawe and Mzumbe is no longer in business so this should fill a gap in the market.

One other project was discussed at the committee meeting; the commencement of a 'soft loan' scheme for women to enable them to start their own small businesses. This has long been an aim of Felistas and now that the project is on a firm footing with a good committee, it was felt it could start. It is to be run by Mrs Consolata Mdalangwila who is head of the Finance committee and project treasurer. She was a bank manager until her bank was privatised, and receives a small sum for her work. Consolata and Felistas will select the beneficiaries and monitor their businesses closely. They will be given a loan of 20 – 30 pounds which should be enough to start a small business; ie making bread or chapattis for sale or raising a few livestock. The loans will be for around 2 months, repayable weekly with a small amount of interest once business has started. Most of these women will be widows who desperately need help to support their children.

As for the English side of the project, I am now beginning the final phase of my total involvement in the school. I took with me enough money for funding the school until September 2003 and it will start being self-supporting from then on. I also took 1100 pounds to buy a computer to help with managing the school and all the projects. All the committee members will have access to it and it will be a tremendous help with communications too. I am hoping to raise enough money in the next 12 months to set up an endowment fund which will give a small trickle of income every quarter. At present I have 4500 pounds in the fund and hope to raise another 8000 at least. If I manage to raise more then some will be put aside for emergencies. This money will all be in a charitable trust which is being set up now.

#### **FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES.**

1. I am planning a large, fun and not too expensive party in early June to which I hope as many of you as possible will come with friends. I am planning to bring Felistas here for the party so that you can all finally meet her and she can see all of you who have made it possible. Details in the new year.
2. I have started using Clapham Physio as an art gallery and the 3<sup>rd</sup> exhibition is now on until Christmas. We are showing delightful watercolour paintings by Judy Copestake which are all for sale and 30% goes to the project. Do come to the Practice and see them Monday to Saturday Between 10am and 1.0pm. There are also small goods from Tanzania which make nice presents. The address is 38 North Street, SW4 0HD.
3. The jam and chutney making continues all year (flavours according to season!) and is also for sale at Clapham Physio. All this money goes into the project.
4. I continue to be stunned by the unexpected generosity of people and organisations who give money out of the blue, most recently 150pounds from St Paul's Church, Rectory Grove and 453.70 pounds from Balliol College, Oxford. I am happy to talk to groups, school etc and show the films we have made, so if you are interested do ask me.

So once again I must thank you all for your continuing interest and support. The benefits this project is bringing to Changarawe are really tangible now and thanks to everyone will continue. It remains for me to send Greetings from Felistas and the people of Changarawe and wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

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