

CHANGARAWA PROJECT
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Spring Newsletter 2003

Dear Friends,

I hope this year is going to be the year when I hand over the funding of the Zawadi School to Felistas Kalomo and her excellent committee. I will be going to Changarawe again in October for the official transfer. Although I will no longer be constantly raising money after this time, I will always be in the background and hope to continue visiting the village and people I have grown to love.

The income generating projects we started in the Autumn of 2001 are beginning to get established and are producing regular money. The annual running cost of the school is around £2000 with no extra allowance made for repairs etc.

*The tree nursery is potentially the biggest earner, producing 1000 orange trees every 8 months selling at around £1 each. In addition 'cut-and-come-again' trees and ornamental trees are also being cultivated and will sell at about 30pence each.

*The poultry unit has expanded to 500 chickens ready for sale every 2 months and there are plans afoot to increase it to 1000 capacity, with 250 birds ready every month.

*The market garden is producing a regular mchicha (spinach) crop which earns about 50pence every month.

Another very good development is that the school building is being used for sex education seminars for the teenagers in the village. In a recent letter, Felistas told me that this is the *only* time these young people have ever been taught in depth anything about questions of morality, forming long-term relationships, the dangers of casual sex, contraception and most importantly the causes of and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Many of the children attending Zawadi School have lost one or both parents to this terrible disease. In addition, the opening of a university college in the next village, Mzumbe, has resulted in a huge increase of single mothers in Changarawe. This is a result of students from all over Africa forming very casual short-term relationships with village girls who think it gives them kudos to have a foreign boyfriend. These seminars are therefore incredibly important and have been well received by the young people attending.

At Christmas I allocated £250 from the fund to help start the long-planned 'soft loan' scheme for women in Changarawe to enable them to start their own small businesses. I felt that this was a justifiable expense from the school fund, as producing extra income for the family will also help their children to attend school. They will be able to afford necessary expenses such as uniform and books. The members of the committee have all put some of their own money into the scheme. Several women have already started projects including 4 who are working together to produce tie-and-dye fabrics.

Another sum I allocated last September was £100 for a bicycle wheelchair for the eldest son of one of the poorest families in the village who is a paraplegic. With the wheelchair which is being specially made locally, he will be able to earn money making and selling bricks. By contributing to the family income in this way he will be helping to support his numerous younger siblings and ensure they are educated.

We are also giving £30 per annum to 2 ex-Zawadi School children who are now at primary school. This means that their families can buy them shoes, books etc. This money is administered by Felistas.

There is now a real need for transport to help with the income-generating projects. The village is 20km from town and all the chickens have to be taken in for sale and fertilizer, manure, bedding and feed have to be carried back to the village for the garden and the chicks. This is a difficult problem. Supply of transport to developing countries has always been a controversial issue and there is an image in many peoples' minds of smart white 4-wheel drive vehicles painted with the logo of a charity or NGO being driven around by well dressed people not appearing to do very much. However in my view, having travelled between Morogoro and Changarawe by local bus many times, in this case, the need is genuine. We don't have the resources in the fund to provide a vehicle and I would be extremely grateful for ideas and feedback as to how to address this.

My plan to help the school towards a steady long-term future is to raise a substantial sum as an endowment fund which will be able to produce a small quarterly sum as back-up in case of disaster striking the various projects. This will be a charitable trust.

To this end my fund-raising activities are continuing – **please note the following!!!**

- 1) The biggest party I have ever planned is to take place on June 5th so please put the date in your diary. It will be a supper with music-hall style cabaret, details nearer the time. Would anyone be prepared to help me either on the day, or in the preparation, or possibly by sponsoring the venue, wine or food? All offers extremely gratefully received!
- 2) Robert Watkinson is running in the London Marathon in April in aid of The Changarawe Project and needs sponsoring.....Please, please pledge your support by returning the form enclosed with this letter. He is a wonderful young man who spent nearly 2 years in Tanzania and loves the country. He and his family have been constant supporters of the project and he is doing this alongside his finals at Oxford.
- 3) The jam and chutney making continues and there is always something seasonal for sale at Clapham Physio (38 North Street, SW4). A small pot of home-made jam is a nice alternative to chocolates as a party gift and helps the project as well.
- 4) The most exciting thing is that immigration permitting, Felistas Kalomo will be coming here for the party! She will be staying with us in London for 2 weeks and as well as attending the party wants the opportunity to meet as many people as possible to thank you all for your continuing interest over so many years. I am also arranging at her request, visits to other kindergarten schools and projects and she wants to talk to other groups involved with HIV/AIDS particularly regarding children. All suggestions and help welcome.

She is such a vibrant and delightful person, I can't wait for you all to meet her.

I will be sending out details of the party on June 5th and booking forms nearer the time. Please reserve the date and bring your friends to what I hope will be an excellent evening.

With good wishes to you all and many, many thanks as ever from myself, Felistas, the children of Zawadi School and the villagers of Changarawe, Morogoro, Tanzania.

Carolyn Walford