



the longest journey begins with a single step

Welcome to our fourth Footsteps Newsletter. This quarter we have just returned from a trip to Kisumu to open our new school at Obingo and a new classroom at Kanyalwal. The community welcome was overwhelming and a stark reminder of how much effect we are able to have on the communities we work with. We are hoping that some of you might come and see all this for yourselves next year but read more of that below.

Suzanne



Connecting Communities to Water

You'd think that, being on the edge of a freshwater lake the size of Belgium, water wouldn't be an issue in Kenya. Sadly the water is too polluted to drink and contains salts that turn people's teeth dark brown. It can't even be used for irrigation as plants are unable to grow when watered with it.

After the 2009 Rakiki trip we connected Kanyalwal Primary School to a piped water connection at a cost of around £1,300. For an additional £400 we repaired an existing brick and cement water tank with a capacity of around 100,000 litres.

Although it was one of the lowest cost projects we have undertaken, it has turned out to be one of our highest impact projects.

We were delighted to hear that, with the new water supply and the water tank, the whole community was helped through the drought at the start of the year. Although water from the pipe was rationed to just one day a week, the tank could be filled with enough water to supply community needs every day.

In view of this success we have now decided to focus our future projects as much on the provision of water supplies as we do on education and medical needs.



Kanyalwal Water

LETTER OF THANKS from the KANYALWAL COMMUNITY

I am Albert Mitamita, a member of the Kanyalwal Community. I am writing this mail to you to express my deepest appreciation on behalf of my community for the wonderful job Footsteps has done in re-building our Local Primary school (Kanyalwal Pri. Sch). In doing so, your organisation has achieved what to us was 'Just a Dream'. For this we say 'THANK YOU' to each and everyone of you.

As we promised you during last years' handing over ceremony, we have embarked on an effort to improve academic standards at the school because this we feel will be the best way to realize the goals of being a healthy, educated and self-sustaining community.

We believe, come end of the year, the school shall be able to witness a significantly improved result in the National exams and send to High school more Boys and Girls. Your 'FOOTSTEPS SHALL FOREVER BE PRINTED IN OUR LIVES' and GOD will always reward you.

Please keep in touch as we work towards a better society by assisting those that are less endowed.

I look forward to see all of you great people once again in Kenya- Nyanza Region- Katito area.

Opening 6 classrooms

Suzanne and Tony have just returned from Kenya on a regular inspection visit of building projects and sponsored children where they had the delightful opportunity to officially open 6 new classrooms that have been built with the fundraising efforts of you, our supporters.

In our last newsletter we spoke of the horrors of Obingo School and here we were able to inaugurate 4 brand new, top quality classrooms. Now, in just over 3 months we've been able to give this school a new lease of life. This is not the end of our involvement with this school because it is far from in a good state, with 2 other classrooms incomplete, and 4 others in a bad state of disrepair. We have told the community that we will complete the 2 incomplete classrooms in the next phase and connect the school to a water supply.

Also, we were able to inaugurate (while painting work was still on-going!) two new classrooms at Kanyalwal Primary School. This brings to an end our building work at this school as there are now 10 decent classrooms and an administration room that are fit for working in. Together with the water connection, storage tank, garden and goal-posts and net-ball posts for the sports field, we can say that Kanyalwal is complete for us and move on to the next place.



Opening of Obingo School Classrooms



Obingo School - New Classrooms



Obingo School Flag

Next Projects

Our next projects are back at Magunga where we have committed to providing an admin block which will allow the existing administration area in a condemned and wobbly building to be finally demolished.

Next door in the Secondary School, where our sponsored children eventually go, we have also committed to building a new classroom to ease the tremendous overcrowding there.

Once this is done we start work on our exciting project to build a children's ward, nursing accommodation and a laboratory at the Katito Health Centre where we previously built an HIV centre.



Obingo School - Tree Planting

Rafiki 2011

Three months to go...

Plans for our volunteer programme for 2011 are well underway. We have 24 volunteers who will join the three trustees for 10 days at the end of July.

This year we will be including a number of woodwork projects in our programme with the help of Sean Smith, the DCT teacher at Rokeby School in Kingston. Sean will be going out to Kenya a couple of weeks before the main Rafiki trip and will be working with the schools to build a windmill in the Footsteps garden, see-saws and gokarts as well as smaller woodwork activities with the children during Rafiki week. This, together with tie-dye t-shirts, solar cooking (sun required!), class-room painting, gardening, sports and everything else, should ensure a lively and exhausting week for those brave enough to come with us!

Rafiki 2012

Cancelled

After a lot of discussion with our friends in Kenya and the UK we have decided to cancel the 2012 Rafiki programme. The Kenyan Government has recently implemented a new constitution which will hopefully have a positive impact on the rights and liberties of ordinary Kenyans but also calls for elections to be held in August 2012, around the same time that our 2012 Rafiki programme was scheduled to take place. Given the violence that followed the last elections in 2008 we cannot be entirely happy that the same thing would not occur again. Our first priority in these programmes is always the safety of our volunteers and so the next Rafiki programme is scheduled for 2013.



Rae School group photo



Kanyalwal Classrooms

Visit to Kenya in March 2012

Every time we visit our projects in Kenya we want to be able to share our experiences and the wonderful effects of the work with our sponsors and supporters in the UK but there is no better way to find out how much good you are doing than seeing it for yourself. Therefore, with the cancellation of Rafiki 2012 we would like to offer you the opportunity to come with us on a visit to Kenya in March 2012.

Taking advantage of the low season fares for flights that are available in March, and the fact that our trustees visit the area then as part of the normal schedule of inspection visits, we will be able to arrange a tour of all the schools and medical facilities at a reduced cost and in a 5 day programme including travelling from the UK.

If anyone is interested in such a visit, please get in contact with Suzanne@footstepsuk.org for more details. Everyone will be travelling independently and some of you may wish to combine 3 days based in Kisumu with a holiday with your family elsewhere in Kenya.