

the longest journey begins with a single step

It takes a village to raise a child

The longer we work on this amazing project that is Footsteps, the more important it feels to be focused; focused in terms of geographical scope as well as in terms of vision and expectation. We have such an impact within the communities in which we are working, that people know us and come and say hello when they see us in the streets. We have had the opportunity to see for ourselves what's happening in these communities and we have come to believe that to build a school, dig a well, supply malaria nets or drugs, and then leave, is not enough; Kenya has plenty of crumbling schools and jobless young people, disused and broken windmills, and malaria nets being exchanged for other goods in the market place. This realisation has had a major impact on our approach to community development. At Footsteps we want to provide an holistic programme of support linking the provision of education and healthcare with the opportunity to work and re-invest in the future of the community. This may limit us to a smaller area of Kenya but we can make an enormous difference to the communities where we work.

***Child Sponsorship***

Take our sponsorship programme for instance. Our original thinking had been to sponsor children through primary school which in Kenya is completed at age 15 or 16. However, when you see a child develop over time, suddenly they aren't just a name on a piece of paper, they become 'real' people with potential and a future ahead of them; yet the only thing that they have had to rely on is the regular support that a Footsteps Sponsor provides.

See this against the situation in Kenya which has huge levels of youth unemployment. There are no investment banks willing to give credits to these young people to start small businesses and in any case there'd be no assets to secure such loans against.

So what is a child to do at the end of his or her primary schooling?

With these issues in mind our sponsorship programme has changed over time to reflect the needs of the community; now children who achieve more than 50% in their final primary exams and so have an offer of a place in Secondary school, will be able to accept that place with the support of the Footsteps Programme.

But it's not finished there; the same question arises at the end of Secondary school. It's not as if suddenly, you reach the age of 18 and a wide range of job opportunities opens up.

For example, this year, two young men, Nicholas and Tyson, have finished Secondary school with good grades and a desire to work in community development. During our visit to Kenya in July we spoke to Nicholas and Tyson about their experience on the sponsorship programme. Both are charming young men and it is clear from talking to them that Footsteps has transformed their lives and prospects. However, if Footsteps pulls out now then their futures are uncertain, whereas three years of higher education should give them the final push they need to make it on their own two feet and give something back to their community. If the Footsteps sponsorship programme can help them become productive members of their society then they will repay our investment many times over. Now, that's a sponsorship programme worth supporting!

So, if you sponsor a child through Footsteps, we would like you to bear in mind that at the end of their primary education we will be approaching you to discuss with you how you feel about continued sponsorship. If you don't yet sponsor a child but would like to, then we'd love to hear from you, there are always children waiting to find a sponsor. Between us we can find a way to turn a child into a productive human being.



Magunga Secondary School

In July we were able to open a new classroom at Magunga Secondary School.



We had expected that Secondary School education would be provided by other resources but we found in Magunga this was not the case.

In March 2010 we made a brief courtesy call to this school which is right next to the Primary School we've been supporting for years. Our sponsored children will go here once they've completed their primary education so we thought we'd take a look.

What we found shocked us. Eighty or ninety students, all hefty teenagers, stuffed into a classroom designed for 40, and others learning under trees.



With this many people in a room the desks literally come up to the blackboard and the poor teacher is pinned in with no way out! And don't even mention the heat generated by so many bodies in a small space when it's 35 degrees outside...

The headmaster almost begged us for support and we decided that it was right for us to support a school that would, after all, be home for many of our sponsored children.

Inauguration day, the 24th of July, was full of entertainment with children from all four years giving presentations: musical, drama and poetry. Each was more entertaining than the last, and with a recurring theme: don't leave us, can't you see we need more support!

Very kindly, with great humour, yet with great earnestness they explained the need for a dormitory to allow the girls to board. Rape is common as teenage girls go to and from school, and with education starting early and finishing late; going home in the twilight is not safe.

We agreed to consider seriously the proposal. We'll keep you informed about progress.

Water projects transforming communities

Since our last bulletin we've done two more water projects, one at Obingo Primary School



where we connected the school via a 10km pipeline, and one at Rae Primary School on the opposite end of the scale where we had to dig a trench of about 100m!

Money for the Rae project was donated by the ED Charitable trust and the boys at Tilly's House, St Edward's School, Oxford, and we were happy to turn on the tap for the first time during our 2011 Rafiki Programme.



We are now looking at how we can scale up our water projects and also tap into other sources of funding. Water is a crucial part of the many of the UN's Millennium Development Goals and so with the help of one of our Rafiki Volunteers and child sponsors, semi-retired lawyer Jane Da Vall, we are looking at how to tap into aid money around the world. We've seen for ourselves how aid money is wasted and literally poured into holes in the ground. We know we can do better.

Our initial idea is to see how to transform the local water company. At the moment it has decrepit infrastructure, bad service levels, and terrible revenue collection rates. None of this is insurmountable and we believe that by applying the experience we've gained over the years, it might just be possible to put the bits of the jigsaw puzzle together and create a water system that serves not just a small community around a primary school, but can serve a community of 100,000 users.

Watch this space...

March 2012 visit to Kenya

Many of our fundraisers spend hours helping us organise events but have yet to see for themselves how their support transforms communities.

As we have suspended the Rafiki 2012 programme due to uncertainty over the Kenyan elections scheduled for August, we have decided to organise a special trip for our supporters and those interested in supporting us.

We plan to take a group out on Wednesday 14 March, 2012, returning on Monday 19 March, 2012. Our current estimate shows that we can do an all inclusive price of £750 given current flight costs.

If you're interested in coming along and seeing for yourself where your support goes then please contact suzanne@footstepsuk.org

Laptop appeal

We'd like to appeal for two laptops to support our project managers in Kenya. Monica and Rashid are doing an increasing amount of administration as the project widens and rather than spend fundraising money on equipment, we'd like to ask for a donation of a couple of laptops.

Ideally they would be in good working order, running Windows Vista or a more recent operating system. We'd clear them of old data and put on basic applications they need.

Does your company regularly replace laptops? Did you just treat yourself or someone in your family to a new ipad to replace a slower laptop? If so, then please get in contact with us.

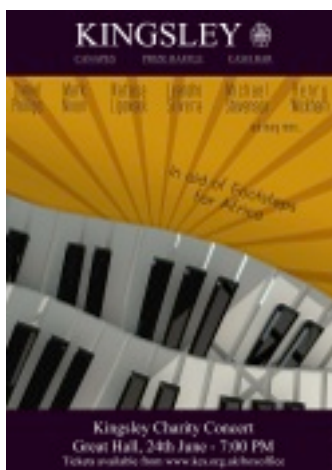
A trustee visit will take place before the end of 2011 and two laptops will easily fit in the luggage.

Please contact tony@footstepsuk.org

Musical evening at Kings College, Wimbledon

This year, on the 24th of June, Kingsley House of King's College School Wimbledon hosted a charity concert in support of Footsteps for Africa UK. Utilising both the talent of the Music School staff and alumni of the school, the evening was truly a night to remember; the audience were treated not only to music of outstanding quality and variety but also the brilliant hosting of Eliot Watkins, an interval with canapés, and the opportunity to participate in an auction. Sincere thanks should go to Mark Nixon and Daniel Philips of King's College Music School, who helped to make the evening such a success, along with the Kingsley house students who organised the event. Overall, the concert raised just under £2000 for Footsteps, and was an immensely enjoyable evening for both performers and audience members alike. Overall Kingsley House boys have been able to raise more than £3800 from events held during the year.

By Edd Rarity



Rae Primary – Our Next Project

Monica Aluoch, our project manager in Kenya, is also a teacher. When we first met Monica she was a deputy head, at Rae Mixed Primary. Then she became Head at Kanyalwal Primary, and now has been re-located to another school in the Rae community, Rae Primary.

Sometimes it feels as if she is being moved around deliberately by the Education Department because of her relationship with us, as each school she is assigned to is more desperate than the last - until we rebuild it!!

So, a new challenge faces us and our fundraising committee this year to help out Monica once again. Rae Primary is in desperate need. Built decades ago from mud and sticks and rendered with plaster, the school kept a reasonable condition, surrounded as it was by trees that protected it from the harsher rains that regularly hit the region.

Right next door is a secondary school that has seen a massive development programme taking place including an electricity connection which required the felling of many of the protecting trees.

Suddenly Rae Primary is starting to look its age.

Gaping holes in the walls and around the doors and buffeting by storms has left the classrooms condemned. Four hundred or so children are struggling to learn in this pathetic environment and we know we can help.

For us this would be a huge project, because it requires in the order of £75,000 of building work. However, we are committed to building classrooms for Monica's staff to teach in and this is one of our major fundraising projects for the next 12 months.



Big Thanks to Lara

In March, 10-year-old Lara Taylor from Widcombe Junior School in Oxford raised an amazing £92 by selling cakes and ice-cream at her school and donated the money to Footsteps. Many thanks Lara; those cakes must have been very good...

Future Events

November 13, 2011 – Dinner at the Lighthouse in Wimbledon in aid of Rae Primary School

November 25, 2011 – Year 7 & 8 'Jingle Mingle' Disco Putney Leisure Centre

February 3, 2012 - Quiz Night, Rokeby School, Kingston

March 14 to 19, 2012 – Visit to Footsteps Schools in Kenya

If you are interested in supporting any of these events please contact suzanne@footstepsuk.org

Rafiki 2011

On 23 July this year we took 24 volunteers to Kenya to work with the children at Rae and Wenwa primary schools. The trip was a tremendous success thanks to an enthusiastic and hard working group who developed a strong link with the children at the school.



During the trip we visited our recently built Health Centre and saw the site where the new Children's Ward will be built later this year.

We were also able to work with the children at Rae primary which will be the next school project we take on. During the Rafiki programme we set up a new garden at the school and one of the volunteers, Sean Smith, a design and technology teacher from Rokeby School, built a gazebo in the middle with the help of local children and their families.



On the final Friday we held a sports event that was attended by teams from all six of the schools we have so far helped. It was an exhausting and exhilarating event which ended with the biggest rain storm experienced in the area this year just as we were singing our goodbye serenade to the watching Africans. Could this be linked...?



Thanks to all the volunteers who made this trip so special and have taken us one step forward in achieving our goals.