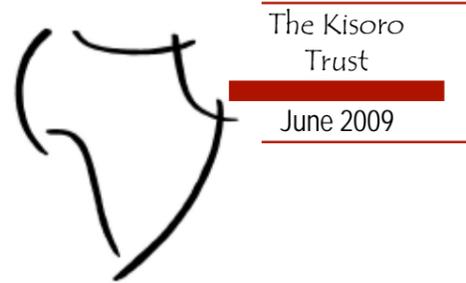


Kisoro Newsletter



Update from Uganda

There are still a great many challenges facing the people of Kisoro, and the school for deaf children in particular. The conflict in Congo continues to generate many orphans and refugees. This puts up the cost of food as well as increasing the poverty in the area. Part of the school's response to this need has been to increase their use of volunteers from organisations such as VSO, Peace Corps and others. Many of these volunteers give not only their time, but also generous financial support to the school and to other projects in the local area.

The school continues to receive visitors from far and wide. Recently, the deaf children received a visit from the Commission for Education from the Ugandan Government's Ministry of Education and Sports in Kampala. They also welcomed Rev Ursula Simpson from the UK. Ursula's husband, Rev Roger Simpson, is former minister of St Paul's & St George's Church, Edinburgh, where the Kisoro Trust first started, back in 1999.

As reported in the previous newsletter, the deaf children are now located within Kisoro Demonstration Primary School, which is a school for children with a range of additional support needs – and includes a large number of blind pupils. At the beginning of the academic year, the deaf pupils were issued with their new uniforms, and appeared to be delighted with them!



Although there is less space here than within the mainstream Kisoro Primary School, there are some benefits to this move. Staff whose remit now includes working with four deafblind children have been able to receive advice and support, and have also accessed training from SENSE International. The deafblind children now have some effective communication, but there remains a higher than ideal pupil-teacher ratio, and a limited range of educational materials for these four children. The Ugandan staff are aware of these problems, and are seeking to improve the situation.

Over the years, school staff have facilitated regular sign language training for parents of deaf children. During a recent visit from the Uganda National Institute for the Deaf (UNAD - www.unadug.net/) it was suggested that this outreach work should be developed further. Kisoro staff responded with enthusiasm and have not only increased the provision of sign language tuition for parents, but are working with UNAD so that anyone in the local community can have free sign language classes. UNAD's involvement with this project is a positive step, as the organisation provides a high quality of sign language, as well as allowing people to see older deaf role models. This will make it easier for deaf children to access local resources, and increase opportunities for pupils once they graduate.



Other news

- One teacher for the deaf children has successfully completed a diploma in Special Needs Education. Two more teachers have embarked on a diploma course, and another is undertaking a Bachelors Degree in Education at Kyambogo University.
- The Uganda National Association of the Blind organised a workshop in Kisoro for parents of the deafblind children, to help them to manage and handle their children. Teachers of the deaf and blind children also attended.
- The first cohort of deaf children who completed primary 7 are doing well and are now in their second year of secondary school.
- The deaf children who did not get a chance to go to secondary school have been encouraged to participate in vocational skills training. Two girls have completed a one year course in knitting and are now making sweaters to enable them to become self reliant.
- The children continue to receive spiritual and moral guidance from the Director, who is an ordained church minister.
- Perhaps the ultimate achievement of this project is that people in the Kisoro area and surrounding communities now appreciate that deaf children are just like any other children, and they are no longer hidden away, but are able to fully integrate with the rest of the community.

Did you know that you can find out more about Kisoro on the web? As well as the Kisoro Trust website www.kisoro.org which is dedicated to the deaf school and UK fundraising efforts to support this project, you can also go to www.pet-uganda.org to find out about the deaf school and about the many other projects which have blossomed in Kisoro over recent years, supporting other disadvantaged children.



Traders in Kisoro's busy market

Thank You!



As always, the children in Kisoro are very appreciative of the support they receive from donors here in the UK, and sent this special 'thank you' message to all of you. Please do continue to support this project, and if you able to make an additional donation, then simply complete the gift form below. Thank you!

To Make a Donation

I would like to make a donation to the Kisoro Trust. I enclose a cheque for £.....

Please send me a standing order form.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Tel:

Email:

If you are a UK taxpayer, you can increase the value of your gift by nearly a third, at no extra cost to yourself, by completing the Gift Aid Declaration below:

Please treat as Gift Aid Donations all donations made by me to the Kisoro Trust from 6th April 2001. I understand that I must pay sufficient tax each year to cover the amount to be reclaimed.

Signed:.....

The Kisoro Trust

Recognised Scottish Charity No. SC 029384

91 Restalrig Avenue, Edinburgh, EH7 6PN, Tel: 0131 661 1930

www.kisoro.org