

DOLEN FFERMIO ANNUAL REPORT: November 2009-10

Another bumper year to report on. We are growing and evolving, both here and in Uganda, but we shall never become too big and we shall always maintain and greatly value our local roots in both countries. Fuller details of the reports have been circulated periodically in newsletters and interim updates throughout the year and, as always, are available on our website or as paper copies on request.

1 Goat Improvement Project:

After the disappointment of not being able to import pedigree stock from South Africa due to a Rift Valley Fever outbreak there, Lorna, Richard and Gideon set out in April on a search for improved goats in West Uganda, reaching nearly as far as the Congo border. On private and government farms they saw a selection of goats from purebred Boer goats which had been bred from imported stock from South Africa to healthy crossbred animals. Richard is now living in Uganda and for the last 6 months he has been trying to further the ties made in April but the promised source of government goats has proved disappointing. However, with very generous funding now in place there are several private farmers who are willing to provide the continuous supply of animals we need for the success of our projects. Richard hopes that there will be positive news for the AGM in his Chairman's Report.

2 Kumi Orphan Project:

Last year's appeal was not as successful as the year before, mainly because of the difficult economic conditions, we believe. This year's appeal has just been launched and we are making a special plea for support in view of the fears and uncertainties which are affecting us all at the moment. Because of reduced funding the project has not extended beyond the present 8 communities. Miriam Maraka is now managing the project on her own, though she has help with the accounts and the training courses for the orphans. Dan Ocom, who leads the training, is going to play an increased role in helping Miriam to monitor the project by attending the quarterly review meetings with her. He and Miriam are developing wider community training initiatives on improving hygiene, setting up organic kitchen gardens and the installation of fuel-efficient stoves. These initiatives not only benefit families but also provide better conditions for the livestock gifts. Vaccination of all chickens in the area, which always takes place before gifts are handed over, also benefits the whole community. Miriam's latest report is too long to reproduce here but is on our website or as a paper copy on request.

3 Awareness Raising:

Our second objective is that of awareness raising and in December 2009 we held two very successful conferences to consider "The Real Cost of Food". They both took place at Llanfyllin High School, the first for students and the second for the whole community. The Welsh Assembly Government's Gold Star programme kindly sponsored the events and paid for Dr Jolly Kabirizi, a Ugandan agricultural academic, to come over to take part. We have also attended 2 agricultural shows (Llanfyllin and Llanfair Caereinion). We have given many talks (some with film) to a number of local groups and primary schools. Information is disseminated through our literature, newsletters, periodic updates, and, in particular, our website, thanks to volunteer member, Derek Ward, to whom we are enormously grateful. We have gained a lot of press coverage and we are grateful to all our local newspapers, English and Welsh, for their unswerving support.

4 Gold Star Award:

The Gold Star Award is a UN initiative, which has been adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government, and is designed to recognise the work of charities like ours which are striving to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. After a gruelling application process, with an interview in Cardiff, we were thrilled to be awarded the Youth Gold Star for our work on the Kumi Orphan Project, the School Exchange Partnership and the Photo Diary Project. There was no funding attached to the Award but the Welsh Assembly Government paid for Emmanuel Maraka to come over to receive the Award with us on behalf of all our Ugandan partners, which was a huge bonus. 20 members were invited to the ceremony in the Senedd on St David's Day.

5 Visits to Uganda:

These are important to support the work undertaken by our Ugandan colleagues and monitor the use of funds donated. It is also very valuable to meet Ugandan colleagues face to face to discuss developments, make future plans, identify problems, find out what help is needed and give advice where appropriate. This is especially useful to overcome the difficulties of communicating with them between the two countries. We must emphasise that ALL trips are either self-funded or met from grants. The main purpose for each trip is given

below though the opportunity is taken to cover whatever is appropriate from the above list and to meet as many people as possible.

April 2010: Lorna Brown and Richard Jones (trustees), accompanied by member Lydia Homer – to identify sources of improved goats in Uganda.

June 2010: Barbara Maycock (trustee) accompanied by 4 members of staff from Llanfyllin High School, and two friends, to visit the partnership schools in Kamuli, to attend the ceremony when their Gold Star plaque was handed over, to install the internet on last year's donated computers and to work with Ugandan colleagues on the application for the next phase of funding from the Global Schools Partnership. Val Talbot and Richard Jones (trustees) accompanied by a teacher from Newtown High School and a member of staff from the Gold Star programme to set up links with Kumi schools and to attend 4 ceremonies in 5 of the 8 communities to hand over the Kumi Gold Star plaque. Val was also there to monitor the Orphan Project, support Miriam's work and discuss future plans.

September 2010: Carole Ashurst (member) – exploring specific projects with hospitals in Kumi and Kamuli.

October 2010: Cordelia Weedon (member) on a second return visit of the photo-diary project funded by the Gold Star programme, accompanied by Eileen Roberts, who is exploring music links with schools in Kumi

6 School Links:

Barbara Maycock was successful in securing funding for the next phase of the Global Schools Partnership between Llanfyllin and Kamuli. This is a 3-year curriculum project and will involve an exchange of staff and, hopefully, students. Barbara retired this summer but we are delighted that her replacement, Peter Jessop, is very keen to continue the links and is already making plans for the visits. We are also hoping to help the establishment of links between schools in Newtown and Kumi. Following a visit to Newtown High School by Emmanuel in March and the visit to Kumi of a Newtown teacher, the school has already raised £1,000 to provide a fence around Mukongoro High School which will enable them to set up agricultural projects.

7 Photo Diary Project:

Over the past year Cordelia Weedon has been extremely busy here in the UK following up her successful visit to Uganda in October 2009, where the pupils of Mukongoro High School and Kumi Township Primary School produced vivid and very personal photodiaries which she has mounted and placed in folders for displays and exhibitions in a number of places. She has also worked in Penygloddfa Primary School and Llanfair Caereinion High School and is returning to Kumi in October, with Eileen Roberts.

8 Community links:

We are proud that the new Mayor of Llanfyllin, Councillor Ian Jones, has nominated us as one of his chosen charities for his term of office. We are making moves to establish health links and links between local councils, farming and environmental groups, in our two countries.

9 Fundraising:

Funds are raised for the Kumi Orphan Project mainly through the gift catalogue at Christmas and throughout the year. Funds for both the Orphan and the Goat Projects have come from the annual plant sale, the second sponsored bike ride the whole length of Wales, a family sponsored walk to the top of Snowdon and back, the London Marathon, a Folk Music Concert in Llansilin, the Trefonen Hill Walk Weekend, together with Christmas Eve carols, the Mayor's Service and a coffee evening in Llanfyllin. We are immensely grateful to all those who have organised these events, taken part in them and contributed, and also to the large number of churches, chapels and schools which made collections last year. Gift Aid is providing a big boost to funds. Following the success of our Christmas cards last year, we shall be offering them for sale again, though the aim is more to spread the word than to raise funds. We are also very pleased to report that a number of people have set up standing orders, which enables us to plan ahead and make regular commitments.

10 Expenses:

Everyone working for Dolen Ffermio in the UK does so on a voluntary basis and we keep our expenses to the absolute minimum – in 2009 they were just 4.4% of total income, a figure which compares very favourably with small charities like ours and considerably less than the bigger charities. This includes the printing of the Christmas catalogue and the high cost of postage, which are our biggest outlays. Membership fees go a long way to covering all expenses. ALL trips to and from Uganda are completely self-funded or met by grants.