

The Richmond Charitable Trust

March 2018

Dear friends,

Much has happened since we sent out our first Newsletter last December.

HT

We reported last time that a wonderful friend and colleague, HT, would be going to Rwanda to help our partners there develop their Business Planning. HT had time to spare between stints working for DeafChildWorldwide in India. He left for Kigali on a 2-month assignment in early December and got straight to work. Our partner is Friends of Handicap in Rwanda (FHR) which runs as its main programme Umutara School for Deaf Children (UDC). HT also spent some days in Kampala with our partners, Signhealth Uganda, discussing their plans for the coming year. Unfortunately, HT, on his return, was unable to make it to the debrief with the trustees as he was trapped by heavy snow in North Yorkshire. However, the reports he had produced were so good that we were able to go ahead without him and finalise our plans for 2018-19. Rod subsequently met up with HT in Leeds and he was thankfully able to support our decisions. We owe HT an enormous debt of gratitude for the fantastic work he undertook for us, for very little reward.

Rwanda

HT and the team worked amazingly hard and produced 2 Business Plans, one for FHR, the other for the school. Copies of these plans are available on request, particularly if anyone knows of any source of grant support for the developments.

We decided that we would support developments at the school, most notably the building of a Vocational Training Centre there. Vocational Training is already taking place but in accommodation that does not meet the Rwandan Government's standards for registration. We foresee being to help with this project in early 2019. The most pressing need is

for help with food and staff salaries. Unlike many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Rwandan Government provides very little in the way of support to special schools, even though it has none of its own. Finding money to give the pupils a good diet, and paying the teachers at competitive rates, and on time, is a continual challenge. It also deflects time and energy away from putting development plans into effect. So for 2018 we have set ourselves a target of around £20,000 to:

- Ensure that every child has a healthy diet every day
- Pay for teachers' salaries to be increased to the point where good teachers are no longer lost because of inadequate pay
- Expand the pre-school class. Early Childhood Learning is essential for deaf children to acquire language
- Bring back the 30+ children whose parents cannot afford school fees and who could no longer be supported when a Dutch charity cut its grant; and
- Begin the process of reintroducing the Secondary Department which had to be closed for the same reasons.

Uganda

HT reported that, though the team at SignHealth Uganda is somewhat reduced as a result of the termination of the grant from its original parent charity in the UK, thanks to the work of Signal, DeafChildWorldwide and other UK grant-makers, the organisation is continuing to make progress in becoming fully independent and in carrying out the major projects for which it has received funding. The only area of need this year is the Early Childhood Education project, originally established in conjunction with Signhealth UK. We have therefore decided to continue to support this work during the next 12 months. The Ugandan Government has stated that it will fund pre-school education in the foreseeable future, but we do not know when this might be, and as so often we believe that special education will be the last to benefit.

Prince's story

Prince was born in 2004. When he was only 8 years old he became ill and after a long time in

the hospital he recovered but then his parents realised that he could not hear anymore.

Both of Prince's parents were born with physical disabilities. They themselves were raised in a school for children with special needs



in Rwanda known as HVP Gatagara where they met in the Vocational Training Department and got married. They have two children, one girl and one boy (Prince).

The father mends broken phones in the village, but this kind of activity is only enough to provide for basic food for the family

The parents heard about the Umutara School for Deaf Children but did not think he would be accepted as they had no money for fees. Realising his potential for learning, Eleanie Kamana, the Principal, decided to accept him without payment. Prince immediately began to learn sign language and to lip read as an alternative means of communication and learning. He is also being taught speech. This year, Prince is in Primary 6 where he is being prepared by his teachers for the national exam that will be taken in October.

Spontaneous Crowdfunding

Richmond has just led a crowdfunding exercise of which we were totally unaware, until it happened!

As you know, this is a fairly new fundraising idea - contacting friends and colleagues by email and asking them to donate to a good cause and to spread the word to others. HT returned from Rwanda with the news that the Government had announced that it was closing or suspending the work of churches which did not meet new standards of hygiene and other provision.

These standards are higher than those in the UK, since they include the provision of toilets, and I am sure that many readers will know of churches here which do not provide this. As a result, hundreds of churches have been closed across the country including more than 700 in the capital, Kigali. FHR's director, Dominique, is a Baptist Minister, and his church was similarly threatened. He and his flock found that they needed to find more than £3000 to do the necessary works. They managed to raise £700 themselves, a sterling effort given the levels of income in Rwanda, and needed therefore to find another £2500. When we were informed of this, our stakeholders went to work unbidden and this sum arrived in our bank account within a week.



For further information about any aspect of our work, do get in touch.

31 Sutton Road Shrewsbury Shropshire SY2 6DL

T: 01743 358998 M: 07984 662165

E: rod.clark@uwclub.net

Charity No: 262962