

JOSEPH ODEKE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND NEWSLETTER NO 3



Kate Brookman and Will Stone, two university students from Keith, have recently returned from a three month stint in Africa, spending nearly six weeks in the village of Katakwi, working with the villagers and generally immersing themselves in their culture and life.

They can't speak more highly of their experiences in the area and the welcoming nature of the villagers who couldn't do enough for them and were extremely excited by their presence.

Whilst there, the duo had three main projects they achieved.

As they were staying at a school with Jacinta, the headmistress, repairs and improvements to educational services were high on their list.

The first job was to repair three blackboards at Amusia school. The job was an enormous challenge, much bigger than they anticipated as the former blackboards were very rough cement walls full of holes and divots. The filling of the holes was difficult, but Kate and Will eventually achieved a reasonably smooth surface and coated it with the blackboard paint they had brought with them from Australia.

Whilst there, they also filled huge holes in the floor with cement and encouraged the locals to help them with this job.

Probably the most exciting achievement for Will and Kate, as well as the community, was the creation of a bright and colourful alphabet mural at Katakwi school. The headmistress estimated that enrolments at the school would increase due to the mural partly because of the colour and the educational benefits as well as the attention generated from having white people working at the school.

Kate and Will also spearheaded a project to make mud bricks and construct a kitchen for Joseph's uncle. 350 bricks were used with Kate and Will making 211 themselves. It was a much bigger project than they had imagined, having to bash down termite mounds, collect water in drums, mix the mud for the bricks and mix molasses sand and water to make the mortar as well as collecting timber for the roof.

The tractors came in useful to flatten the termite mounds, cutting down a substantial amount of time.

Kate also spent a week in the Katakwi district Hospital in the maternity ward performing post natal duties as well as a couple of deliveries and AIDS testing. It was clear to see how desperate the hospital is for new hospital beds and medical equipment so the supplies that will be sent in the next container will greatly benefit the hospital.



Kate and Will realise that their experience was quite a unique one for travellers to Africa.



“We couldn’t have fully understood Africa without Katakwi – the real Africa. The rest of our trip was very touristy. We were able to completely immerse ourselves in village life and meet people who weren’t taking advantage of tourists,” Kate explained.



Kate and Will could clearly see that the equipment that has already been sent has not only generated much excitement and hope, but is also meeting their agricultural needs at a very practical level. The continuation of people going over to keep up the education in the use of the machinery is still crucial and it is important that the next container arrives in time for the growing season.

Where to from here.....

The contents for the next container are well under way with most of the wish list having been donated or acquired from the district and further a field.

An enormous amount of clothing and household items have been packed and stored and we are no longer taking clothing due to the huge generosity of the community.

At this stage, we still have repairs to one of the tractors taking place and some maintenance and painting being organised on some of the second hand equipment.

Keith School students are preparing to paint a number of black boards we have been given. One thing that the schools do need is shelving for books.

That leaves only money to be raised with approximately \$14,000 needed to send this next container.

So, the committee have a very busy time ahead, sourcing funds and fundraising as well as assembling machinery and implements.

The most important aspect of the programme is for us to keep up the visits to continue the fantastic work that Keith and Windy did with the machinery so we need some one looking for a great experience to go to Katakwi when the next container arrives.

