



St. Francis Family Helper Programme

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Dear.....,

As we are preparing to celebrate Christmas, which in the Christian tradition, means peace and love, we live in a world where there is a lot of war, conflict and lack of love, in our homes, in our organisations, in our countries and on our planet. As we write to you, our sponsors and friends, we want to offer a sincere wish that you can experience a time of peace and gratitude at this season. We certainly are grateful to you as you continue to support us in everything we do.

In Uganda we are also grateful that we do not have the Ebola virus, but we think of those countries which have been so badly affected—Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Perhaps in Europe and the USA many people think that Africa is just one big land mass and that whatever happens in one place is affecting everyone. Do not fear! We invite you to visit us and we can assure you there is no risk of this deadly disease. We have other problems like malaria, which still kills many of our children who are not being protected by mosquito nets or who, when sick, are often not brought in time to the hospital. Only education can lead people to the knowledge of how to care for our children.

Some people in this world make valuable and important contributions to society, yet these efforts remain invisible. We would like to *honour all those "invisible heroes" who have contributed generously and supported us since the start of this organisation some 30 years ago. Your act of charity has helped to transform the lives of many young children here in Uganda and for that we thank you very much.*

In a 1994 conference, the UN Secretary General said: "...when women and girls get the education they deserve, societies are more productive. When their rights are protected, societies are more just. And when they are empowered to determine their own future, societies become stronger." Thank you for being that special person who has helped to empower some of our girls in Uganda.

It is often said that the future of our world in regard to socio-economic and political development depends on the vision of wise leaders. We who work with the less advantaged families in our society, have experienced over and over again, that it is your ongoing support, in addition to our programme leadership that has brought about the above development for thousands of families in Uganda and further afield in some neighbouring countries. Thank you for accepting the invitation to support the education of disadvantaged children in Uganda. Thanks to all those individuals in Germany, the UK, Ireland and the USA who have been managing our funds in these countries. Alex Palmier, Peter Gehlen, Martin Grimely, Edmund Allen, Stephen Burke and Gail Wallace get special mention. Thanks for being there for us. It is gratifying to see our sponsored children receive the chance to grow in confidence, find joy and satisfaction in realising their dreams.



Child

Sponsorship Department:

This year, St. Francis is supporting 200 children (119 girls and 81 boys) at a cost of almost 60,000 EURO per annum. We have 63 children in primary school, 110 in secondary and 27 in tertiary institutions. Each day many children come to our office seeking for help. Almost all their stories are the same - loss of parents, poverty in the homes and violence against women and children.

During the holidays, our sponsored children come to the office to write letters to their sponsors, submit their reports, and then we mail these to individual sponsors. We have time to interact with the children and to hear about their experiences in schools and at home. We always feel happy when children show us



Michael Moran a sponsor with Kevina a staff member and Agatha one of our sponsored children.

very good reports and somehow disappointed when the school performance is low. However disadvantaged children often have so many problems at home that they cannot concentrate sufficiently in school. Counselling services offered by St. Francis Counsellor Training Institute help them to discuss their difficulties and sometimes to find solutions. Without this there would be more dropouts. We also offer psychosocial services to their guardians so that they might be more active in shaping the lives of the children in their care. This is very essential since the task of educating the young calls for collective effort.

Your words of encouragement that come through the letters you write mean a lot to the children. Some sponsors have visited their children in Uganda. We extend an open invitation to all of you to come and see for yourselves what life in Uganda is all about and how different it is to life in Northern countries. Some cannot visit so we try to keep you informed and give you adequate information about what is happening here at St. Francis. This year of 2014, we have had visits from Irish, English and German sponsors.

Kevina returns to work in St. Francis.

"I am Kevina Tumuhairwe, (photographed with Michael, opposite) a beneficiary of the sponsorship programme of St. Francis. I have finished high school, am attending weekend university classes and am working as a paid staff in the child sponsorship programme. What goes around comes around.

Reflecting on my life, I can say that I would not be where I am now if it were not for St. Francis. Many of us call this place home because it provided us with our education.

At the beginning of each new term all over the country, some children have a lot to worry about: where will I get school fees and needs? Where will I get transport for going back to school? And if am sick who will pay for my medication? Such are the questions asked by students but St. Francis always responds to these questions as positively as possible. The important thing with St. Francis is that children have the opportunity to get the education they long for.

One of the main motivations for me to come back was that I thought I could be able to share my experience and inspire the other children to work hard for a sustainable future. On behalf of all the children you have supported and those whom you are still supporting, I would like to say, "thank you very much".

Annika Rachor

"My name is Annika Rachor. I'm the new German volunteer in the Child Sponsorship Department of St. Francis until September 2015.



After my A' Level, I always wanted to do volunteer work in Africa. I liked meeting people from other cultures, especially from Africa since my younger sister

has her roots in Nigeria. After searching for social projects in Africa at the homepage "Weltwärts.de", I found the Organisation "EIRENE". This Organisation has many partner-organisations all over the world, for example in Europe, South America and Africa. I read through all the profiles of partner organisations of EIRENE in Uganda and found St. Francis. The services carried out by St. Francis was the most appealing to me and I therefore applied to do my volunteer work in the Child Sponsorship Department of the organisation.

After getting a visa to come to Uganda, I flew with 7 other volunteers from Germany to Uganda on the 4th August 2014. After a brief orientation for 10 days in Mbarara, I went to Kampala for a short language course (learning the basics of Runyakore). During this period, I stayed with a family that originally came from Mbarara. At the end of the language course, I returned to Mbarara to begin work in earnest

So far, I have enjoyed working at St. Francis Family Helper Programme. It is very interesting to see how the children live and how a Ugandan school is organised. Since I am here, we visited some homes of children who dropped out of school. I also had the privilege of accompanying Kevina, the outreach officer to pay the school fees of children supported by St. Francis. Such trips offered me the opportunity to see a lot of the surrounding area of Mbarara district and I have come to realise what a beautiful country Uganda is.

I'm very glad to be part of St. Francis organisation for one year! I appreciate the work all these people are doing to help some of the underprivileged children of Uganda, and I will do my best to help in this work with all my heart. As I speak and write German I can assist in correspondence with Peter Gehlen and other German donors."

Christine Ntibarutaye

"I am Christine, from Burundi, a religious sister of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. After working in Burundi for many years, I was appointed to Uganda. Currently I am attached to St. Francis Family Helper Programme. The first thing that touched me was the warm welcome I was accorded when I arrived here. Since I came, I have accompanied students of the Counselling Psychology programme to visit the Psychiatric Ward at Mbarara University Teaching Hospital to interact with the patients. While at the hospital, my biggest challenge was the language barrier since I don't speak Runyakore. My knowledge

of French however, came in handy when a translator was needed. I have now begun taking lessons in the local language.



Since I am in process of getting to know the various works of St. Francis, I also had the opportunity to visit the homes and schools of some children sponsored by St. Francis. It took us a whole day to visit ten schools due to long distance and bad roads.

I have also had the opportunity of visiting Northern Uganda with the Psychosocial Team who went there to market the training programme in personal and group transformation and psychosocial facilitation skills. It was interesting to meet people who are eager to learn new skills pertaining to personal and social development. I would like to thank Mary Moran and the staff of St Francis for giving me this opportunity to learn and be part of this organisation."

Tailoring School



Graduate modelling her own design

As the population of Uganda grows year after year the challenge of getting employment for the youth increases. This is a problem that cuts across all educational divides. Considering that we graduate between twenty and twenty five trainees each year, with these challenges before us, we have always to think of ways in which we can help our trainees to use their

acquired skills to better their lives. When we followed up and interviewed our past students who are self employed, we realized that we had not given them enough marketing skills to enable them operate in a competitive world of business.

The first step we took was to involve the parents and guardians of our students so that they could become more involved, not only in the education of their children but in future employment possibilities.

Entrepreneurship skills were given to our students equipping them with knowledge in marketing both their skills and their products. They were reminded to look at and understand the demands of customers, to carry out a cost calculation, on the cost of production and hoped for profit.

Another step was to make exposure visits to busy commercial places. One memorable trip our students took was to the Nytil Textile Factory at Jinja, which is a seven hour coach trip from here and which Uganda claims to be the source of the Nile river.



While at Jinja, the staff and students also had the opportunity to visit Nile river waterfalls. At the end of a long and tiring day, one of the students remarked "the trip was worth the cost we paid. I have learnt and seen a lot of things that I will use when I start my own business." It is hoped that these trips will build their self confidence and encourage the young graduates to continue doing the same even when they are on their own. We thank and appreciate all who supported us financially this year this including Philomena Molony from Ireland.

Counselling Department

Leadership for sustainable change

In July 2014 the St Francis Family Helper Programme hosted in collaboration with UMUNC a two-week workshop on personal, social and organisational transformation led by Dr. Vernice Solimar, of JFK University, California. Participants were from very different backgrounds and positions within their respective organisations ranging from our own psychosocial facilitators, to our Bachelor students, to accountants to Franciscan priests. Participants



Staff members of Uganda Martyrs University and St. Francis at the end of a workshop in a group photo with Vernice(Rsquatting)

explored their levels of commitment to both personal and professional goals, identifying in themselves the

gaps between the goals they say they want to achieve and the reality of how they live their lives. Our Bachelor students recently presented their personal projects via webcam to Vernice, located in California, on the progress of their projects. It was a real pleasure for all in attendance to experience dedicated time to self-work and an evaluation of their commitment to education in Uganda as well as to their personal goals.

Psychotrauma Pan African conference July 2014

St Francis Counsellor Training Institute had the opportunity to make three presentations at the recent 7th Annual Pan African Psychotrauma Conference funded by the Stephen K. Alderman Foundation and hosted by Mbarara University of Science and Technology. The Bachelor students and the psychosocial team leader Winnie Obbo and her team presented a workshop on the uses of SandTray WorldPlay, our Assistant Registrar Beata Birungi presented a hour long exploration of childhood trauma and our resident research and child psychology consultant Dr. Felicity Butterly presented her experiences of working in child trauma in the Congo. The CTI has recently been contacted by a publishing company in Germany to discuss the potential of publishing some of their work as SandTray professionals as a direct result of the conference attendance.

In the last year our counselling and psychosocial team has moved far afield in their marketing and training. They visited Northern and Eastern Uganda which is 2 days journey, some of it on bad roads, to meet with interested groups and to do some distant planning for

trainings in the months and years ahead. In one diocese the Bishop requested that we give a few weeks of training to the priests in his diocese. This was really a testimony of his trust and hopefully we shall meet that trust with adequate and appropriate responses through the training we give.

As well as moving to Northern Uganda the team also travelled to Tanzania and to Ethiopia for training. We have more students away from our campus than on the campus. This is a purely financial deal!. It is cheaper for 4 trainers to travel and train in a venue 400 miles or more away than for students to come here and be trained on site. The advantages of being away from home for training are many but people cannot afford the costs of training, travel, food and lodgings.

It looks as if this may be our model for sometime—us moving out rather than students moving in.

New Building

We still call it our New Building but the construction has been going on since June 2011



Archbishop Paul Bakyenga breaks ground and plants first mango tree

We are very happy to announce to you that the official opening and blessing of the building will take place on Friday,

February 20th, 2015, at 10 am. The only invited guest so far is the Archbishop of Mbarara, Paul Bakyenga, who will be the official presiding celebrant.

We shall not have finished everything by then but the builders from Armagh will come for the last time to help us in February 2015 and we want them to be present at the opening as they have been present with their skills for the last five years. This is the 3rd

and last construction project for St. Francis in which they will participate. Dear Friends, we thank you with all our hearts as we thank all the wonderful, generous people who have so graciously assisted us since we started.

Brendan Beirne has returned to Ireland, having done a great work for us for a number of years. He brought the building from the foundation to stage of putting in door and window frames. Plumbing and Electrical wiring had also been completed. Brendan is now a big man in Dublin city, putting a new face on some apartment blocks there, + building his own house. Brendan has been succeeded by Paul Donnelly, from Armagh, and Paul has far exceeded our hopes and expectations in his commitment, experience and willingness to learn, to supervise and to negotiate purchases at a fair price. We were blessed to have not only one good supervisor but two. Thanks Brendan and Paul

This is where we are today in December 2014. We would love to engrave the name of each individual and group who helped us to get this far. We owe a big debt to the Catholics of Germany, who donated money through a number of dioceses. We thank the archdiocese of Paderborn who not only gave us a wonderful donation in 2012, but who graced us with a visit from Bishop Matthias König and a number of his parishioners from Paderborn. Bishop Matthias we loved the time you so generously gave us, we loved your visit and we count ourselves so lucky to have two priests from your Archdiocese on our Board of Governors—Fr. John Tappesser and Fr. Ferdinand Tillmann.



Bishop Matthias, second from left, with his friends visiting our tailoring school.

These two missionaries have assisted St. Francis Family Helper Programme in many ways over the years of its existence.

Kindermissionswerk of Germany has also supported us very wonderfully and we hope and pray that the three Kings will fill up your hearts with many blessings for all that you do for others.

In February at our opening and entry ceremony we shall give more mention to the individuals, families and groups from many countries of the world, whose names are encoded in the billions of grains of sand which have come together in this lovely school.



This is the building as it looks today, December 18, 2014



We still need ceilings, plumbing fittings, painting, terrazzo flooring, outside works.



Vernice Solimar plants another mango tree on the compound of the new building.



Congratulations Sinead and Anthony! You plan to get married in February as we plan our opening. Thanks for your great contributions—both of you.

Dear Friends

Once more from the staff of St. Francis we wish you a

A very Happy Christmas and many gifts and blessings in the new Year of 2015.