



Friends of Children in Uganda Scotland (FOCUS) 2009/10 Annual report

FOCUS was registered as a charity in Scotland (SC040564) in June 2009. Its principal purpose is to raise funds to assist community-based projects in Uganda that support orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS and their extended families. These projects work to maximise the children's life chances and educational opportunities through provision of a nutritious pre-school breakfast, after-school clubs and basic health care.

The main community-based charity in Uganda that we support is the Namagongo Fund for Special Children (NFSC) just outside Kampala (www.nfschildren.org). NFSC runs seven breakfast feeding centres, after-school clubs, and basic medical care to children affected by HIV/AIDS and their extended family carers. NFSC's work enables children that have lost one or both of their parents to remain in their community rather than being sent to orphanages. This increases the capacity of their extended families, mainly their grandmothers, to care for these children. Provision of breakfast on school days means that the children do not go to school hungry, thereby increasing their concentration and ability to learn. The cost of feeding one child breakfast is approximately £44 per year.

We had a very successful first year of operation, raising £15,769, exceeding our target of £10,000. Fundraising activities included a charity dinner (which raised over £8,000), one-off gifts, recruiting regular donors, student fundraising at Craigroyston Community High School and collections at Quaker Meetings in Edinburgh.



In the financial year ending in March 2010 we sent £8,453 to NFSC to cover the full costs of the two breakfast feeding centres that FOCUS has adopted (Centre D at Bulindo and Centre E at Kiwologoma) which feed around 200 children every school day. Prior to setting up FOCUS, two of our founding trustees supported these two centres since they were set up in 2005, and since then we have sent in excess of £40,000. The remainder of the funds raised in 2009/10 will be held in reserve for future payments to NFSC to ensure the future sustainability of the breakfast feeding centres.

In addition to raising funds to send to Uganda, our secondary purpose is to facilitate communication channels and relationships between people in Scotland and Uganda. We have a partnership with Muirhouse Youth Development Group (MYDG), a charity in north Edinburgh that supports children and young people from one of Scotland's most deprived communities. This has created the opportunity for Harry Munro, a trainee youth worker, to have volunteer placements in Uganda initially lasting six months at NFSC, Mildmay Children's Hospital and Bridging A Gap Community Project, working in the breakfast centres and after-school clubs. With leather footballs (donated to us by another charity Alive and Kicking www.aliveandkicking.org.uk), Harry helped to set up regular football sessions in the after-school clubs, and he also helped to distribute over 100 teddies (knitted and donated by Edinburgh Quakers www.teddiesfortragedies.org.uk) to children in Mildmay hospital and at the NFSC clinic.

Harry's work in Uganda resulted in his former school, Craigryston Community High, adopting FOCUS as its school charity for three years. Pupils have been engaged in various fundraising activities and awareness raising events and raised almost £700. MYDG has been successful in gaining a Royal Youth Commonwealth Exchange Fund grant to send twelve young people and three staff from Muirhouse to Uganda in October 2010 (with a planned reciprocal visit from Ugandans in 2011). One of MYDG's former youth workers was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship to build on Harry's development of football sessions, by organising coaching sessions and a tournament between the NFSC breakfast centres in the run up to the 2010 World Cup in June 2010. We will report on these activities next year.



FOCUS is entirely directed by volunteers so **every** penny donated is spent on supporting orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda in pre-school breakfast clubs and after-school programmes.

In conclusion, our first operating year has been very successful. This could not have been achieved without the generosity of our donors and supporters, including the staff and pupils at Craigryston Community High School, Bella M'Briana restaurant (now Locanda De Gusti), Alive and Kicking, Edinburgh Quakers, Charlotte McClintock (our volunteer website developer) and our volunteer Board of Trustees.

Mark Bitel, Chairperson, FOCUS

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