



**A Biannual Newsletter**

**Issue no 2 by Annabel Kerr**

**Welcome to our Second Newsletter**

Over the last year the Bansang Educational Appeal (BEA) has been very busy raising money to sponsor the poorer students in Bansang, improving resources within the schools and involving more schools within Essex and linking them to schools in and around Bansang.

BEA raised over £9000 with the help of local schools, our own fundraising events such as the Three Peaks Challenge, coffee mornings, car boot sales and summer fetes. The appeal has loaded and sent a forty foot container of school furniture and educational equipment that arrived safely this week. Fundraising has supported the development of an IT block for students in Bansang where there is a good electricity supply, building works

at Mabali Kuta school and a facelift for the Bansang Upper Basic School and staff room.

74 students are being sponsored this current academic year. Based on need some are being provided with basic school materials and uniform, others with all stationery and lunch. I have spent time in both October and February visiting all the schools supported by BEA, meeting head teachers, chatting with students and checking on their progress.

I have been very pleased with the progress we have made in the last year and which has culminated in us achieving charitable status. Thank you for all your support.

# Recent Visits

I visited Bansang in October 2010 and February 2011 spending time at all 5 schools that are linked with schools in Essex. At the beginning of both trips I had a meeting with senior staff of all schools to discuss projects, progress and ensure transparency between all the schools involved with BEA.

In October I spent time meeting the students selected for sponsorship for the academic year 2010-2011, both those continuing under BEA sponsorship and new students selected by the schools. Unfortunately some students had not performed well in the previous year, those who did not have any extenuating circumstances were withdrawn from sponsorship and other promising students took their place. This is helping to maintain competition.

I ensured all the students had the stationery equipment they required and had an interesting trip to the local market haggling over shoes and school bags. I quickly delegated this task to my 'Gambian daughter' Sunkaru, who can get a far better price than a westerner in the marketplace!

Mabali Kuta school is linked to and supported by Gt Totham Primary School. Both schools are fundraising and exchanging ideas on this. The money raised is being used to build staff accommodation and a wall around the school.



Bansang Upper Basic School has been in need of our support for some time. On my recent visit BEA purchased paint to give the school a facelift and has upgraded the staff room. Teachers morale was very low so hopefully this will help.



Bansang Senior Secondary School has still not been connected to the local grid and so is without electricity. This has made IT teaching virtually impossible. BEA has supplied funds to set up a classroom within Bansang where IT classes can take place throughout the day.



## PROGRESS SO FAR

*BEA is now in our third year of existence and have progressed from 30 to 49 to currently 74 students being sponsored. This is thanks to the support we receive from you. Each time I visit Bansang I chat with students to check on their progress and if they are receiving the support they require. They are keen to communicate with their sponsors over in the UK.*

*As a new initiative instigated by Gt Totham School all primary schools involved with BEA have been given a sum of 2000 Dalasis to commence their own fundraising. Schools have been enthusiastic about this and keen to help themselves. One school has got its 2 mothers' clubs in competition with each other making soaps and other local products to sell. Another school got a famous national musician to come and perform one evening. This kind of support is really appreciated by the schools as it empowers them and the local community to help themselves.*

*Out of our 74 sponsored students 53 are sponsored directly by individuals and schools. We are still looking for more individual support as the cost of keeping children in school is a burden many uneducated families cannot afford. Even with support it can be difficult to keep girls in school as we have recently found out after a stepfather withdrew his daughter for her to get married. This problem will be erased with time but I am talking to schools to find out how we can help in the meantime.*

*In the current economic situation supporting BEA may seem like the last thing you can do but without help like yours many of the children we support would not be able to complete an education that we take for granted. We are grateful for your support.*

*Thank you for taking the time to read this.*

*Annabel Kerr*

*If you feel you can help in any way please ring (07521 055926) or email me [annabel@bansangeducationalappeal.org](mailto:annabel@bansangeducationalappeal.org). Alternatively check out our website [www.bansangeducationalappeal.org](http://www.bansangeducationalappeal.org)*

## Three Peaks Challenge

On 24<sup>th</sup> July at 3.45 pm 6 intrepid explorers (or 6 people with several screws loose) set out at the bottom of Ben Nevis to climb the highest peaks in each of Scotland, England and Wales within 24 hours. We set off well enough but our challenge was hampered by poor weather. Each summit was completed in cloud, wind and rain. We finished Scafell Pike 3 hours late after some unexpected scree scrambling. Over £2000 was raised for BEA despite taking 29 hours to complete the challenge and in retrospect we had enjoyed the experience, so much so that Jemma is tackling it again this year.



*Starting Ben Nevis*

## Car Boot Sale

In June last year 3 trustees and one long suffering husband went to the Boreham Sunday morning car boot sale. It was an early start as we were advised to get there by 7am. Luckily though it was such a glorious day we would have suffered from heat exhaustion if we had been any later. We had fun with our bargains and look forward to raising more money for BEA this way



*Jemma at the Car Boot Sale*

## Container

Having been offered a large number of school tables and chairs for Bansang from Hilldene Primary School in Romford we arranged a forty foot container to take these and other items to Bansang in March this year. The Plume schools did a marvelous last minute appeal and we were able

to send 20 computers, 2 bicycles, printers, sports equipment, uniforms, books and IT software. These have arrived safely and will be distributed once the summer term starts after Easter.



*Our container loading team*

*Success after 200 tables, 400 chairs, 30 computers plus books shoes, clothes and sports equipment safely loaded*

## Hurst Green Fete

In September 2010 we ran a stall at the village fete in Hurst Green. We had a great time face painting as well as selling our large variety of cupcakes, jams and chutneys. A great day was had by all and £200 was raised for BEA.



*Isabelle guarding our jams and cupcakes at the fete*

## Upcoming Events

We are planning to hold several events in the next few months:

1. a quiz night in Wickham Bishops
2. a concert in Maldon involving all the link schools.
3. a stall at the St Bartholomew's summer fete in Wickham Bishops.

The details will be on our website. We look forward to seeing you and having your support.