



A Biannual Newsletter

Issue no 3 by Annabel Kerr

Welcome to our fourth Newsletter

Bansang Educational Appeal has over the last year continued its support of students and schools in Bansang. We are sponsoring 63 students this year across three secondary level schools in and around Bansang. As well as sponsoring students we have started building the church nursery school, continued funding the renovation of Bansang Upper Basic library and provided much needed stationery to an isolated school and the nursery.

Several more Essex schools have asked for a link school. Six primary, junior and infant schools are linked to lower basic and nursery schools and another is waiting for a link. Outside of work I enjoy visiting these schools, talking to classes and taking assemblies. The enthusiasm and inquisitiveness of the children always amazes me. The exchange of letters and pictures is a pleasure for children both here and in Bansang.

The money each school raises is used to fund projects in its link school. This has encompassed building, farming and resources depending on the school needs.

Over the last financial year BEA has raised £7500 with the help of local schools, fundraising events and your generous donations. Coming up soon on 11th May is our Spring Coffee Morning in Wickham Bishops Church Hall. Later this year we will be having a stall at the Wickham Bishops church fayre, our quiz night in the autumn as well as attending car boot sales across the county.

As we now have so many generous sponsors all extra funds raised can go to projects and sending containers of equipment. If you would like to sponsor a child through their education or are interested in forming a link for a school please contact me.

Recent Visits

Since our last newsletter I have been to Bansang twice, October 2012 and February 2013, just before the heat got unbearable! I only had 10 days in October so spent it all in Bansang. I spent time collecting reports and chatting to our students at Sololo, Bansang Upper Basic and Bansang Senior Secondary School, visiting all linked schools except one (a lack of four-wheel drive made the most distant school inaccessible) and being 'postlady' with letters to and from the schools. I handed over money after seeing progress on the library at the BUBS and gave the initial installment to start the church nursery school building, Agape. It was hectic trying to get around to see everyone and everything.

This February I had more time in Bansang and was able to spend longer in each school as well as visiting even the distant ones. As with previous visits there were transport issues, a national fuel crisis being the main one. Thankfully everyone did what they could to keep me mobile!



Jabou, the headteacher at Daru lower Basic School with the product of her farming initiative

In Daru lower basic school, Jabou the head teacher was proud to show me the school farm where they grew maize and beans last year, some of which supplement school supplies from the World Food Programme, some to replant this coming wet season and some to sell to provide some income to the school for everyday needs.

When Jabou was appointed to the school two and a half years ago she found no cash or bank account for running the school.

Jahanka basic cycle school, linked with Powers Hall junior school asked for everyday school materials. As the school is some distance from the main road, transport to and from the school isn't easy. The head teacher walks for 3 hours to reach the main road when he has to travel anywhere. For this reason it is difficult for children to get the materials they need.



Materials stored in my Bansang bedroom waiting for distribution

I enjoyed visiting a stationery store direct from landing at the airport, buying materials to take to Bansang for Jahanka and Agape schools.



Sponsored students at Bansang Upper Basic School

Agape nursery school has been meeting in the church building and a temporary classroom since I was living in Bansang in 2006. Each week the church is divided down the middle so classes can meet on either side.



With regular donations from St Bartholomew's church and funds raised by the Galleywood Infant school (linked with Agape) building work has commenced on this. In October the work of brick making began.



Labourers on the hard work of making bricks

Another organisation, Empower is also helping with this. From what I have heard the building of 3 classrooms, an office and store is now up to the roofing level.



Progress up to my visit in February

Renovation of the Bansang upper basic school library started last year. It had become very run down during the previous administration, but with the appointment of a voluntary librarian things have improved. Firstly, the dusty floor was tiled as this has been a major issues in keeping the books in good condition.



The library as was

Now the roof has been removed and the height of the building increased to allow more air circulation. The building work is coming on slowly as I like to see the progress before each new stage.



The flooring completed



Roof removed ready for raising the sides

Sololo basic cycle school linked with Ingatestone and Fryerning junior school last October. They have been exchanging letters since this time. The junior school has also been fundraising and the money will be used towards re-roofing two classrooms. BEA is also sponsoring 13 children at this school in grades 7-9.



Children at Sololo after receiving letters from their link school



Classrooms to be re-roofed at Sololo basic cycle school

The money raised by Powers Hall junior school bought many materials for the school, The principal, Mr Fofana was thrilled to receive basic items such as pens, pencils, glue and exercise books for his students. He proudly took me around his school which was very clean and tidy even though they obviously lacked resources.



A Jahanka school classroom

I also visited a new school during my February visit, Sukuta lower basic school, as Feering primary school was looking for a link school. This school is also very remote being accessed by a four-wheel drive along sandy roads for 15 km. The village is composed of traditional buildings only and there is no shop locally that villages can access. The school were delighted to welcome me and they look forward to developing links and benefitting from BEA support.



The nursery class with their teacher

PROGRESS SO FAR

Each time I visit Bansang I am humbled by the appreciation I receive on behalf of everyone who contributes to our success. The news of what we are doing to help children in and around Bansang is spreading. I am frequently asked when our sponsorship will spread to teachers, other institutions and other parts of the country! Some of our students in grade 11 and 12 are in their fifth year of sponsorship, the continuity and monitoring of students seems to be a first for any sponsorship in Bansang. We hope the continuity continues!

I am grateful for the support I have from you all. I do feel privileged to be the person who sees what a difference the charity is making (I am happy to take any volunteers along with me also!). Due to my work commitments it isn't always easy to find time to do everything I would like to for BEA, but with the good working relationships we have developed with schools and the community in Bansang no penny is wasted. We will continue to work on individual projects with schools and to ship needed items.

All of our 63 sponsored students are sponsored directly and between my two visits this school year I have brought back letters of appreciation to all sponsors. We are still only sponsoring a small proportion of children at secondary level and do wish to expand our coverage to include Jahanka basic cycle school next year. We continue to look for individual sponsors. If you know anyone interested please put them in touch with me. Students do appreciate the financial support they get, but they also like hearing from sponsors directly. I am often asked how individual sponsors are and most of the time I can answer, but if you have time they would love to hear from you, so that you are more than just a name, even a photo will mean a lot to them.

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.

Alternatively check out our website www.bansangeducationalappeal.org

Quiz Night

Last October we held our 2nd quiz night kindly arranged by Peter Ward in Wickham Bishops. Like our first quiz this was well attended like our first event and the church hall was packed. There were some topical olympic rounds and some more obscure ones. A successful, enjoyable evening was had by all and over £600 was raised for BEA.

Windsor Half Marathon

The same weekend as the quiz night saw Jemma, George and I heading over to Windsor with lots of family support to take part in the half marathon through Windsor Great Park. We had been training for 4 months in preparation for this. 6000 people took part. George and Jemma finished in admirable time, I meanwhile just finished! We had great support and raised over £1000 for BEA.



Finished at last

Car Boot Sale

We continue to attend 2 or 3 car boot sales a year with items donated by friends and family. These are early starts on a Sunday but are enjoyable nevertheless, though we have been lucky with weather so far!

Link Schools

The head teacher of Melbourne Park Primary school transferred to Ingatestone and Fryerning Junior School and asked for a link for his new school. Meanwhile Melbourne Park Primary continues its link with Daru Lower Basic School, as does Great Totham Primary with Mabali Kuta Lower Basic Schools. Gt Totham

hopes to host a visiting teacher from Mabali this term to help develop their links. Feering Primary school has linked with Sukuta Lower Basic School, thanks to our trustee, Jemma Flynn who transferred from Gt Totham last September.



Galleywood infant school astounded me with their fundraising efforts

The Plume School continues to support BEA and one class are raising money to keep supporting the student, Yero Camera, whom they sponsor.



The Plume lower school assembly

St Barts Church Fete

Last June BEA had a stall at the St Bartholomew's Open Gardens. This year we will have another at the Rectory Fayre where children will be able to hook a duck and play our card tombola.

Upcoming Events

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

- 1, Coffee Morning at the church hall in Wickham Bishops on 11th May
- 2, Stall at the St Bartholomew's Church Fayre on 8th June, 10 am
- 3, Quiz night in the autumn

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