

FEBRUARY 2002

# BEGA KWA BEGA

This **NEWS LETTER** comes with bits and pieces from Uganda, Scotland, High Wycombe, the States and London.

Ssagala, David (Manager of Bega kwa Bega) sent us this e-mail describing some of his activities before Christmas 2001:

*"I went around the villages of Kakiri and Kisubi giving out Christmas gifts to different orphan families. I gave out a bag of rice, meat, sugar, cooking oil and a loaf of bread to each of the 19 families that were visited. They were very happy and grateful for the gift as most of them had by the time of my visit no meat or other foodstuffs that usually people look to for Christmas. There is one orphan's family I visited in Kakiri sub-county in a village called Kikugi. The provider for this family is the oldest son who is about 17-18 years old. He was not around by the time of my visit as he was looking around for robbers who had stolen his mattress the previous night as he was having dinner with the family. Both his parents died of AIDS. I visited this family around 5pm and found the little orphans peeling matoke that was not yet ready to eat. They had not got anything else to be cooked for Christmas. I wish you could see how happy these little ones were when they received the bag. Their house is about to collapse down on them any time as it is in a very bad state. The older son is a farmer who only earns about \$800 a year. He cannot work very far from the house as he has to take care of one of the sisters who is deformed and helpless. He has to take her in and out of the house on a daily basis. Thank you for all you are doing to help the needy orphans."*



Ssagala David

Ssagala also sent details of a health programme, which took place in October 2001. There were four visits from a health worker in that month to one area, each visit lasting 10 hours. From the reports, twice the health worker had not planned to stay quite so long, but work was held up by electricity cuts (very frequent) and by heavy rain. An average of 150 came to the clinics on each visit, 85 children, 45 women and 20 men. 33 were referred to hospital. Anti-malarial, antibiotics and de-worming tablets were distributed. At every visit the health worker recommends continuing health education, thereby helping parents recognise symptoms and teaching them the use of local herbs, which would lead to a reduction in disease and infections. Her final remark was that Bega kwa Bega should have its own health worker.

Here are some details of 22 projects begun in 1999 in the village of Kisubi. By far the most popular is the rearing of pigs for sale. 16 women were given help in building a sty, and with the purchase of a piglet. These were reared for sale, and with the proceeds, other piglets were bought. In the latter half of last year each business produced around 20 piglets, the profits being used for the upbringing of orphaned relatives. Two of these businesses did not do well as their animals were found to

have swine fever. Cows are not so popular, as milk is relatively cheap and there is a gamble in that there is no certainty that heifers will be produced. Two of the women take cooked foods into Kampala to sell. A midwife was given help in buying instruments but her business produces a low income as her patients are so poor. A local primary school was given help in improving the building that resulted in 8% more children applying for places.

**High Wycombe:** Last May, two Ugandan nursery school teachers were invited over by the Head of a private nursery school using the Church premises. They worked in the school in the mornings, and spent the afternoons in seminars on Child-Care. They stayed with local families; Zawedde Alice Ntege with Cathy and her two daughters, and Babirye Petronilla with Maria and her two sons. This gave them an experience of being part of an English family. They were involved in family activities in the evenings; swimming, theatre, rigger (!) and invitations out. There was a Barn dance one evening to raise money for them to take back to Uganda. Two weekends were spent in London sightseeing. Martina came down one weekend and took them round Westminster Abbey and Cathedral, taking in Buckingham Palace which was the one place they wished to see. They took a tourist bus round London, and were taken for a walk through the City and the Tower. This they were interested in and wanted photographs of themselves with Tower Bridge in the background. It is difficult for them to take in the ages of different buildings, or to differentiate between styles of architecture. They could not understand my enthusiasm for the Tower and the Abbey and my being dismissive of Buckingham Palace. The dinosaurs at the Natural History Museum were also a revelation.



On her return, Petronilla wrote: *“I have started two classes. I bought 16 iron sheets, two trips of sand, two thousand and five hundred bricks, nails and cement. By the end of this month the building will be finished. The parents liked my going to training in England and they are bringing more children, but I have nowhere to put them.*

Many people are now involved in sponsoring orphans through school. The teachers send the name of the child and some details of their circumstances, and hopefully at the end of a school year sponsors receive a picture drawn by the child and a short report of how they are progressing. Nursery School has to be paid for. Primary Schools are supposedly free, but parents are always asked for donations towards building work and uniforms and lunches must be paid for. Apart from sponsorship, money has been collected and over £1,000 has been sent out to help with building and teaching materials.

The Treasurer and his wife, are now working on an Application and Trust Document required for Charity status of Bega kwa Bega in this country. This will enable applications for grants to be made to Charities interested in funding projects in Africa, and Uganda in particular.

**Scotland:** Since the last visit from volunteers to Uganda, Angelina, who collected up and took out 7 knitting machines together with wool, has been flooded with fan mail, asking her to return and teach the women other patterns and skills. According to the Founder of Bega kwa Bega, this is by far the most successful of all the projects started by volunteers. Not only are the women able to make a profit from their work, but their products are preferred to both shop and other home knitted goods because Angelina is an excellent teacher, insisting on a high standard of finish. Some 30 machines have now been donated from interested people. In that part of Scotland, women had been able to make a living from their machines, but for many years the price of wool has been high and knitted garments comparatively cheap, so these machines are no longer used. We have been looking for a means to send these machines out cheaply. A local postman has come to the rescue. He spends his weekends collecting goods to despatch to needy places throughout the world, and will pack and send out the machines and the wool. Martina and Angelina plan to go out in May, going back to Kisubi and Kakiri for a week's tuition, then on to Hoima, Mityana and Bwanda, which are outside Bega kwa Bega's district, to start knitting projects there.

There is a new Bore Hole to be sunk in the village of Magogo, North West of Kampala. £1,000 has been donated by the people of Wishaw, and the new well is to be called the Wishaw Well. There has been no specific fund raising, but people have been giving their pennies and more, quite spontaneously. This sum has been added to by a local Trust Fund to the tune of around £5,000. This is the sixth hole to be sunk with money from this Trust. There are over 2,000 people who will benefit from the Wishaw Well, which will be sunk near a clinic in Magogo.

**London:** Last Autumn Jane came over to London, after having first been refused a visa, to follow courses in cake decorating. Jane had cooked for the volunteers who had gone out to Uganda and was rightly praised for her skills. She wished to extend these skills in order to set up a business in Kampala. Decorated cakes are popular in Uganda and because she learned methods unknown at home, we are hoping her business will have every success.



**USA:** A "Board" has been set up in the States so that those making efforts to continue to support Bega kwa Bega now that Conche is working and living in Uganda, can support each other and have an organisation that can be registered as a Charity. There are 8 members, including Conche's ex-husband who is Treasurer, her eldest son, and 4 Ugandans now living in the States. We are in contact with them, in particular with the secretary, Pat Gill, who was visited last year by Jill and Pete Stephens (from Merseyside) who had been in Uganda with Pat, and Martina (paid for by 'air miles')

**BEGA kwa BEGA**

February 2002 and beyond . . .

