

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2018

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Seasonal greetings to all SGG partners, supporters and friends wherever you may be. Carole and I hope that for all of you the Christmas festival is a time of happiness and refreshment within your families and communities. We hope also that next year brings peace, progress and prosperity to all our project partners, and that our many supporters continue to help “Make Poverty History”.

My own SGG activities in 2018 have focused particularly on Rotary projects. In the 2017-8 Rotary year the R.I. President Ian Riseley invited all Rotarians worldwide to plant at least one tree. This was an excellent opportunity to introduce Rotarians to the multiple benefits of tree-planting in tropical locations, and this year Carole and

I have spoken to 31 Rotary clubs on this theme. The net result of all this effort over the last twenty months is that by 30th April this year SGG had recorded the planting of 41,475 seedlings in Kenya and Tanzania with donations coming mainly from 44 Rotary clubs. Many more thousands of trees have been planted since April, but as yet we have not been able to record details. All we know is that our tree-planting partners in East Africa hope SGG can continue to support their agroforestry projects. This SGG-Rotary activity has engaged so many donors and tree-planters that we have issued a separate report to cover this topic. You can have the pleasure of a double newsletter on this occasion!



Here is just one example of Rotary and SGG working together. The Rotary Club of Newcastle-Gosforth donated £900 to provide the guardians of 400 orphans/vulnerable children with a banana stem & 4 other seedlings to plant in the household shamba.

On 26th March 55 banana stems & 220 seedlings were distributed to guardians at Siguli Orphans Centre. Here [see main photo] is one satisfied smiling guardian with her clutch of seedlings. Towards the end of the distribution of these 275 plants, it was clear that there were a few ‘spare’ seedlings. This lady came and tentatively asked if she could have an extra tree. She was granted her request, and was so grateful [see lower photo] to receive this gift costing 8p. It was such a happy, satisfying day for SGG. In total this Gosforth project enabled the planting of 3,629 trees for the benefit of about 800 people.

As Rotary clubs typically have at least 10 members, this SGG-Rotary project suggests that in 2018 we have several hundred ‘supporters’ as well as thousands of others who benefit from tree-planting. From this year onwards SGG does not really know how many supporters & friends we have.



Tree-planting may have dominated my schedule this year, but I would like to use this newsletter to focus on other projects. In particular, I wish to illustrate how the support for orphans & vulnerable children [OVCs] in Busia County has slowly become more 'sustainable' in the decade when this project has been operational.

Support for orphans in Busia



When SGG support for OVCs started in 2007, our initial focus was on a weekly feeding programme at the cost of £1/per month/per child for 500 OVCs. Thus, the total cost was £500 per month and £6,000 per year for this programme. SGG has never managed to raise sufficient funds to pay for this initial strategy, so in 2009 the emphasis shifted towards microfinancial support [called 'table-banking' by participants] with the hope

that better farming methods and increased income for the guardians would enable them to better feed OVCs under their care without direct intervention from SGG.

This approach has been much more successful in that most of the current 8 participating groups feed their OVCs for 5-6 months out of their own pockets, while SGG continues to pay for 6 months of the year.

The Siritanyi group, based near Nambale, is a good example of a successful OVC group. You can see that the children are bright-eyed, well fed and also well clothed [above left]. SGG has contributed to the feeding of these children, but the real bases of success are the cohesion & business skills of this small group [main picture]. On 3rd May they contributed Ksh 48,000/- [about £350] towards table-banking while SGG added a further Ksh 20,000/- [about £150].

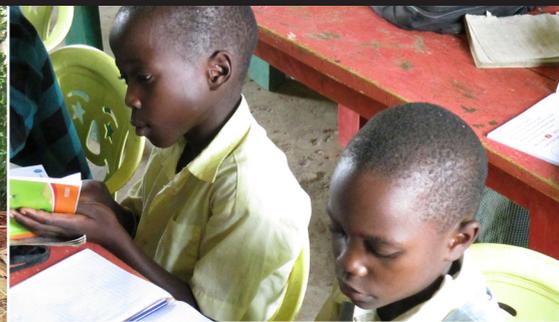
These funds were divided equally among 12 participants, each using the money to develop a small business enterprise. Those activities included cereal/groundnut/fish-trading, constructing a fence for a vegetable garden, and growing groundnuts. By 12th October Siritanyi members reported profits of Ksh38,000/- [about £280] for the group after 5 months of commercial activity. I would like to thank Tabitha Othieno and Anne Fundia for establishing and maintaining Siritanyi with a decade of voluntary activity. Thanks from SGG.

Other OVC groups have tried to make themselves more self-reliant in a variety of ways. Upendo have table-banked on a few occasions so that each member could have poultry for sale in December when there is high market demand and price. In November 2017 they tried something different: they received from table-banking Ksh 21,000/- so that the 20 members could be given 1 piglet each to rear. Upendo women expected the pigs to be worth about Ksh 4,000/- within 6 months. In November 2018 the group reported a sales profit of Ksh 85,500/- from pig-rearing, much of which was used to offset the educational costs of the OVCs in their care. Both Mukwano and Upendo groups have started to appreciate from previous projects how tree-planting can not only improve the

on-farm environment but also provide a significant supplementary income. In October coordinator Macbeth Odero recorded that these two groups had planted 893 trees additional to those recorded under the Treedom project. Those 24 farmers would greatly appreciate a small payment/donation for their work.

Lonely Orphans is another OVC group who have taken a more sustainable path in recent years. A few years ago they were forced to ensure that some of their volunteer staff were qualified teachers. As a result of this Judith Khamaya was sent for two years training. She was unable to pay for her training fees so she leased a plot of land to the Lonely Orphans management who then table-banked with SGG to pay for this training.

Lonely Orphans now have a plot where they can produce vegetables, partly for sale but mainly for consumption by the OVCs in their care. Judith Khamaya [main picture below] is now teaching at Lonely Orphans centre, but how does she manage as a volunteer without a regular salary? She has used a small part of her land for brick-making, but this year started a tree nursery – a much more sustainable project to allow her to have a permanent income of her own, which enables her to continue as a volunteer at Lonely Orphans. Now all such voluntary staff are encouraged to have a similar income generation scheme of their own. In November the group table banked so that each member of the group could own a dairy goat.



While some OVC groups are moving away from over-reliance on SGG, others are still very much in need of outside help – especially if there is a specific building to maintain. Previously, SGG's main spending at Siguli Orphans Centre has been on the feeding programme and table-banking. Yet this is a poor community centre where many more facilities are required if children are to

receive a good education. In addition to the usual funding provided by SGG, Siguli Centre has received a significant donation from Berwick Rotary Club which was used to install a water harvesting system [above bottom right]. Other donors have helped improve the educational experience at Siguli by providing reading resources and also some basic play equipment [see above

right]. The same situation applies to Gladys' Children's Home. They have received 6 bunk beds this year from SGG, but there are still only 10 bunk beds in the boys' dormitory where there are now 32 occupants. Luckily, a high proportion of the OVC boys resident there are still young and small.



Matayos demonstration plot

It would not be good to complete this newsletter without reference to the Matayos Demonstration Plot, which has flourished recently under the management of the Madei group. These farmers have been trying various new vegetable crops, one of which is this local variety of onions [see top left]. They have been selling this at the local market for Ksh50/- a bunch. In this one single raised bed there are more than 100 bunches, so the anticipated income in more

than Ksh 5,000/- for a single bed of vegetables. Within the plot there are more than 20 such beds, so the Plot is becoming very profitable as well as providing nutritious vegetables for OVCs in the FOCUSA & Lonely Orphans groups.

Madei Chairman Joshua Wabwire estimated that between 20th October & 18th November sales for the whole plot [see left] were Ksh6300/- [about £45].

In 2018 there have been two other major improvements here. Landowner Mohamed Wandera has added another piece of land where members have started producing sukumawiki seedlings for sale. The other improvement is that in October a pump was finally installed, so that water can be stored above ground and used for crop irrigation throughout the dry season when vegetable prices at the local market are higher. Thus, farm income should increase

The year ahead

I would also like to give some brief consideration to future prospects here. Of great importance to SGG is the continued interest in tree-planting for both poverty alleviation and climate change mitigation throughout

East Africa. At present it seems that SGG tree-planting is likely to extend far beyond our initial core area of Kilimanjaro, but there are decisions to be made and agreements put in place before this will happen. Next

year will probably also see the end of SGG's five year support for the Matayos Demonstration Plot when we expect to install a drip irrigation system. Thus, we are now looking for a suitable new horticultural project.

Thank you for your support

All this activity has meant that Carole and I have had a very full year – but a rewarding one. Yet as the year comes to a close, we are also aware that our African projects are largely dependent on the funds and resources which you donate to SGG and which we can then transfer to our less prosperous partners. May I thank you for all the support you have given to Sustainable Global Gardens this year, and may I wish you all the peace of Christmas and prosperity in the coming year. Thank you.

Have a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

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