



ADVANTAGE AFRICA
SUPPORTING INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE

Advantage Africa News

Issue Nine, October 2007



Disabled people meet in Kisayani, Kenya. Advantage Africa supports the group's education and rehabilitation services.

Introducing our Five Year Appeal

I recently visited an old workhouse in Southwell, Nottinghamshire that had been restored by the National Trust. I had heard of workhouses before but didn't really know much about them. While there, I learned that workhouses were a mainstay of a social welfare system for the 'destitute' that uneasily combined care and deterrence. Back in the 1800s, the prevailing view was that that people were poor, unemployed, disabled, mentally ill or orphaned because of their own negligence or laziness and could be 'reformed' by hard work and instruction. Even deserted wives and their children were deemed 'morally defective' and objects of stigma and correction rather than support. As I left the bleak building, I wondered how anyone ever thought it a good idea to put disadvantaged people into institutions where they were deprived of dignity and love. But I also felt incredibly fortunate, as this history lesson had included some parting displays showing how society has prospered and the social support provided by government and voluntary organisations has changed beyond recognition.

The level of poverty experienced by the Victorian poor is still commonplace for millions of people in Africa today. And the people once interned in workhouses are the same people, albeit in another continent and time, reached by Advantage Africa. People who are poor, but also stigmatised because of disability, HIV/AIDS, bereavement or marital breakdown. The reality in Africa is that disabled people are routinely excluded from school, jobs and community life; orphans frequently lack adequate nutrition or healthcare; bereaved men and women face fear and suspicion about AIDS; widows are often robbed of their home, land and possessions by their inlaws and left with no means of caring for their children.

Advantage Africa was founded in 2002 to support the work of inspirational people who are determined to overcome this poverty, vulnerability and stigma. In the appeal that accompanies this newsletter, we celebrate some of their achievements over the last five years and share with you the challenge before us of sustaining and building on them.

By the end of 2007, we urgently need at least fifty people to commit to supporting our work with a regular monthly donation so that we can continue to help change the lives of people like David, Patrick, Evelyn and Ella described in our appeal. Please take a few minutes to read their stories, and consider whether you can support Advantage Africa in this way.

Thank you for being part of our partnership of inspirational people making a difference.

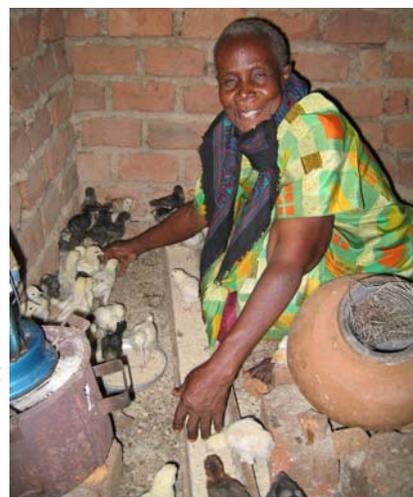
Andrew Betts, Director

P.S. If you would like some more copies of the appeal for your friends and family, please call Teleri on 01234 711005.

Africa News Update

We have supported the **Single Parents Association of Uganda (SPAU)** to train **300 single parents** in poultry keeping, construct chicken houses and provide chicks and feed. **Zack Lwanga** recently told us about one field visit: 'We went to *Gobero, Katiti, Gala-Nalya and Nampungwe villages at the weekend where our combined efforts brought smiles to the faces of 47 single parents and their 285 dependants. There was great jubilation when they received their poultry.*

Our support of SPAU, which also recently enabled single parents in other locations to establish a bakery, receive training in HIV issues and hold a day of HIV counselling and testing, now reaches over **3,000 people**. SPAU's primary school at Bombo is nearing completion and a nursery school attended by **30 children**, for which we have provided equipment and a salary for the teacher **Jacqueline Nakyne**, is being run within it. The foster home run by the tireless SPAU group leader **Betty Kizito** in Muzinda now accommodates **23 orphaned children**.



Poultry rearing provides a lasting source of income

In Obambo, Kenya, we have supported the **Community Action Group** to build a new nursery school attended by **60 young children**, many of them orphans. The orphans' nutrition programme there, under the leadership of **Jack and Selline Okoth and Andrew Otieno** continues to provide a further **60 children** with a square meal each day, for many of them their only source of food.

Mulwa Kamba reports that **The Rescue Team for HIV/AIDS** held a football tournament attended by **900 young people** in Kalulini, Kenya that interspersed matches with lively debates on HIV, drugs and relationships. The tournament was one of many sporting activities the Team have used this year to communicate with people vulnerable to HIV infection.

In April, **Andrew Betts** visited a slum for internally displaced people in Jinja, Uganda. He writes: 'I especially remember sixteen year old Beth. Made vulnerable by a speech impediment, she was raped at thirteen and now cares for her (resultant) son, two sisters, brother, (none of whom attend school) and her widowed and mentally ill mother. They all live in a shack made out of flattened oil drums, and unlike the other children I met that day, Beth and her siblings wore no smiles.' Advantage Africa has resolved to work with a team of inspirational people from the **Masese Co-Educational School** whose Headmaster **Charles Opoya** has started an outreach programme among the child-headed households, including Beth's, living in the slum.

Following a visit to Kenya by Advantage Africa trustee **Rob Aley**, a programme has started to help some of the older pupils attending the unit for disabled children at Mitaboni to graduate, undertake vocational training and start farming enterprises in their home communities. Within the primary school at nearby Thinu, Advantage Africa is supporting **Lesa Musyoki and the Ngelani Rural Development Centre** to construct another unit for **40 disabled children** based on the successful model forged at Mitaboni.

And in the UK...

Jacinta Sweeney has joined us as Programme Officer. Jacinta brings a wealth of development experience with Voluntary Service Overseas in Cameroon, Ethiopia, the UK and Canada to the role and is currently on a five-week visit to our partners in East Africa. Her flight was provided free by **British Airways**, with a pledge of two others this year.

Our Christmas cards, including two new designs, are now available and our Christmas Gift Wrapping Service in Milton Keynes starts in December. **We need 100 volunteers** to reach our £8,000 target so if you live nearby, please contact Teleri about giving some of your time to help. Tuition is provided and it's great fun too!

Sally Easton, one of our 2006 gift wrappers, is swimming the equivalent of the English Channel for Advantage Africa. Find out more and sponsor her on www.justgiving.com/sallyeaston.

Staff from Andrews Estate Agents have contributed £20,000 to Advantage Africa through sponsored runs, boot sales and community events. Five of them will be visiting Kenya in October to visit some of the projects they helped to fund.



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Advantage Africa supports the ideas and work of inspirational people in Africa to overcome poverty and disadvantage. We work in close partnership with determined individuals and community groups, supporting their ideas and plans so that disadvantaged people can improve their lives. This particularly includes people who, alongside poverty, face prejudice and stigma as a result of disability or HIV/AIDS. Advantage Africa provides encouragement, resources, advice and training as well as links to other sources of knowledge, skills and funds.

Charity Number: 1092719 **Company Number:** 4388034

Staff: Andrew Betts, Teleri Jardine, Jacinta Sweeney **Trustees:** Rob Aley, Kenneth Barham OBE, Jane Betts, Alison Griffith, Chris Harvey, David Saint, Paul Winnan. **Patron:** Martyn Joseph

Address: Advantage Africa, 26a Market Place, Olney, Buckinghamshire, MK46 4BA.

Tel: 01234 711005 **Fax:** 01234 711006 **Website:** www.advantageafrica.org **E-mail:** information@advantageafrica.org