



Give a Child a Future



Summer 2009 Newsletter

Welcome to Vision Africa News!

Welcome to our bumper summer 2009 news update! In this newsletter I have provided an abridged summary of all the articles from our web site since the last newsletter (and there are a lot of them this quarter) as well as a few thoughts on some of the things that are concerning us at this time.

As always you can get the latest news in full, with pictures, from our website: www.vision-africa.org/news/

Concerns: Last quarter I mentioned the impact the economic downturn is having on our work, and this continues to be a serious worry. I won't dwell on it here, but in summary; giving is down, costs are up and there are more children than ever falling deeper into poverty and requiring our support. This means we have some really tough decisions to make about which projects we support and how to best deploy our resources. Please spread the word about the good work Vision Africa is doing because we really need more sponsors and more people out there raising funds for our work. Maybe you could help by running a small fundraising event? See our [fundraising page](#) for some ideas and resources.

Prayer Partners: As a Christian organisation we strongly believe in the power of prayer. For our supporters that share in this belief we would very much appreciate your prayers for Vision Africa. Rather than send prayer requests to everyone we have set up a separate mailing list for this purpose. If you would like to pray for Vision Africa, our staff, the children and our immediate needs, please visit our prayer partners page on the website: http://www.vision-africa.org/get_involved/prayer_partners.php and join the mailing list. We will just send occasional requests for prayer support and promise neither to bombard you, nor share your email address with anyone else. If you have trouble signing up just send an email to website@vision-africa.org and we will do the rest. Thanks!

AGM: I had a few folks asking me about attending our AGM this year. Well, this time we have decided not to do a public AGM to save a little money. Of course we still have business to conduct, but this will be kept to voting members only this year. I know some folks will be a little disappointed, but I will post our annual report on the web as soon as it is finalised to keep you all in the picture.

On the Web: Other than on our web site, here are a few other places you can read more about Vision Africa...

Facebook: Our facebook group is growing and we now have over 400 members. If you're a facebook user please invite all your friends to join our group as it's a great way for us to spread the word about Vision Africa. Over the past couple of months several of the girls from Seed of Hope have put short posts on our wall about their experience and gratitude to Vision Africa. Please take a moment to take a look and also invite those friends. You'll find us at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=35493762907>

Twitter: We've not really got going with this yet, but will be tweeting soon! For those of you who enjoy twitter you can follow us here: <http://twitter.com/VisionAfrica>

Optimist World: Vote for Vision Africa today! Please see the article towards the end of this newsletter to find out all about this, and please vote for us today so that we have a chance of winning a cash award. We need your vote by July 23rd - Thank you!

That's all from me for this quarter. Lots of news summarised for you below...

Kind regards,

Bob Dowty.
Chairman, Vision Africa.

Kindhearted Kids



If you're looking for inspiration for your fundraising or encouragement to part with a few coins, read on for stories of 2 little girls who are leading the way in generosity.

The first story that was brought to our attention was that of 10 year old Sally from a small fishing village in Scotland. Vision Africa is already supported by many people from this village including the local drama and sewing groups, the women's guild and the primary school. (See next article). Sally decided it was her turn to get involved and saved up £50 of her pocket money and birthday money and duly sent it to Vision Africa...

The second story that deserves some publicity is that of 10 year old Eve. Eve wanted to sponsor a child through Vision Africa but the £7 a month would use up all of her pocket money. Determined to do something, she decided to recruit her local village to help by collecting the loose change and coppers they wouldn't miss. The "Pennies Please" campaign has really taken off with shops and schools using labeled jars to collect all those pennies...

Read the full article here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=139>

Community Work



Crail is a village in the East Neuk of Fife, well known all over the world for its picturesque harbour. What is less well known is the generosity of its residents. Over the past three years, Vision Africa has benefited from funds donated by several individuals, groups, societies and businesses in the village.

Each Monday afternoon a group of ladies meet in the British Legion hall to enjoy sewing, knitting, tapestry and needlepoint over a cup of tea. Each week they make a collection for VA projects in Kandara, Kambiti or Kibera and so far their efforts have contributed to a cowshed, windows, the resettlement project and food. On Monday evenings the Brownies meet in the same hall and their contribution was raised through a sponsored silence! Bliss!

The Brownies learned about Vision Africa at school. Crail Primary School now has a beautiful display of pictures which remind the children of their Kenyan counterparts. The school has held fundraising events and the children can be heard greeting each other with 'Jambo!' One 10 year old girl saved birthday and pocket money for months to buy toys and mango saplings for Kambiti school.

Read more about Crail here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=140>

Great Swim



On Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September over 5,000 swimmers will take to the water to swim a mile. This may sound challenging enough to some...but add to that the fact that the mile will be in the chilly waters of Lake Windermere and that challenge sounds a lot tougher! The Great North Swim was launched last year and was an instant hit, being voted 5th in the top 100 open water swims.

In 2009, many charities will benefit from the swim as people use it as a fundraising challenge. Vision Africa is one of those which will benefit thanks to a very brave young man called Philip Ross. Philip has set a target of £1,609 to be raised – that's £1 for every metre in a mile. If you would like to sponsor him and help him achieve his target please visit his [Justgiving page](#).

Read more on the web here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=143>

Seed of Hope Football



At the end of Seed of Hope sports day in July 2008, a football match took place that was the start of something new and exciting for the Nairobi centre. Every girl in the school took to the field as a coach and an official from Vision Africa's Kibera Mpira Mtaani refereed and watched to see how the girls played.

Regardless of shape, size or ability every girl participated and the energy levels were high. It was decided that the coach, Joseph, would start training the girls twice a week in their lunch hour and bring together a team that could start to play matches against outside teams.

The enthusiasm of the girls has been inspiring and, supported by teacher Maureen, they have now played two friendly matches and are competing in Mpira Mtaani's John Packard Family Cup tournament. The team has to borrow strips from another team and not all girls have trainers, never mind football boots, but when they get on the pitch they play their hearts out and enjoy the game.

Check out the web for reports from two first years on their experience of the very first game. You can view the full article here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=141>

Seed of Hope Success Stories



Over the past few months we have brought you updates on Seed of Hope Graduations and sports events. Now, we would like to give you the stories of 2 of our graduates who have used their Seed of Hope training to become successful businesswomen.

"My name is Rosebella Auma. I completed primary school in 2002 and my parents had no money to pay my secondary school fees. I heard of seed of hope from a friend and when I went for the interview I was enrolled.

During my two years at seed of hope I learned most of the things that I know now; dressmaking, life skills, and I am still using them. Training at seed of hope was very tough but after graduation I realized that it was all worthwhile. I graduated in 2004. They helped me with a machine, fabrics, an iron box and other dressmaking items. I started operating from my brother's house in Kibera (slum) in 2005 January, as rent was very high. In July of the same year I rented a stall and started operating there using the name Joy vision designs..." *(abridged)*

"My name is Naomi Mucogo. I am 20 years old. I completed primary school in 2003 and even though I performed well in my final exams, my parents could not afford to pay for my secondary school education. I now realized that my dream of becoming a doctor was very far away from becoming true.

A friend of my family told me about this place where young girls were being trained in different skills and upon completion they were assisted to start small businesses so they could be self sufficient and self reliant. I therefore joined Seed of Hope in 2004. In the beginning life at Seed of Hope was very hard because I was very shy but in the end, I had a lot of confidence and I had learned so much. The environment at Seed of Hope was very good with loving teachers and we were provided for everything we needed. We were taught different skills, which are, dressmaking skills, craft skills and business skills. We were also taught life skills, which have really helped me in my interaction with the world in, and outside Seed of Hope... *(abridged)*

I would like to encourage the girls at seed of hope to work very hard because I have succeeded from my experience at Seed of Hope. I can now fully support my family and myself financially. Besides dressmaking skills, the biggest skill that I learned from Seed of Hope was self-belief and ability to communicate with people.

I am grateful to Seed of Hope for everything they have given me."

Read all about Rosebella and Naomi here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=142>

crafted



2009 sees the start of a new venture for Vision Africa. "Crafted" is an enterprise which will allow us to build on the skills and talents of Seed of Hope graduates and students as well as some of the older children from other projects. Crafted will provide an outlet for handmade products made by children and young adults who have benefited from a Vision Africa project. As well as the individuals gaining income for their work, Vision Africa will receive the profits from sales to allow us to continue assisting disadvantaged children in Kenya.

Over the past year or so, we have been trialing some products and selling them at events such as craft fairs and Christmas Bazaars. To date, the focus has been mainly on jewelry with the addition of Christmas cards over the festive period. The products and the concept have been warmly received and after some months of product development and production of stock, we have now launched our first range of Crafted jewelry in the UK and Kenya.

Over time, it is anticipated that Crafted will expand its range of products and involve more of our projects. For the moment though, we're looking for support, feedback and CUSTOMERS!!! For more information about this enterprise or if you would like to support it or get involved, please use our [contact form](#) and select "Crafted" as the recipient.

Read more about crafted here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=145>

Technology!



Do the words "charity" and "fundraising" make you shiver at the thought of all the effort? With Vision Africa, you don't even have to leave your computer to help out or to find out all the information you need about us. In order to reach out to as many people as possible and to provide simple ways of fundraising, Vision Africa is trying to make the most of technology.

Check out <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/visionafrica> for information on how shopping online with companies like Play.com, ToysRus, ELC, Marks and Spencer, Amazon, PCWorld, HMV, Next, Tesco and Boots can raise money for Vision Africa.

By changing your browser to <http://visionafrica.easysearch.org.uk/> you can raise money every time you do a search on the internet. It's an alternative to Google and gives the best results from Yahoo!, Windows MSN Live Search and Ask.com in one simple search.

Read more here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=144>

JP Family Cup Finals 2009



The 2009 John Packard Family Cup football tournament was hailed as a great success by the Kibera Mpira Mtaani (Kibera Village Football) committee, coaches, referees and players. The tournament was launched on 28th of March with a friendly match between the British High Commission Cheetahs and a combined Kibera Mpira Mtaani U17 team where the final score was 4-4.

In total, 136 teams participated in this year's 8 week tournament with an estimated 2,500 children taking part. The teams were divided into 5 categories:

U10 Boys and girls - 28 teams

U12 Boys and girls - 40 teams

U14 Boys - 26 teams

U16 Boys - 26 teams

Girls - 16 teams (including a team from Nairobi Seed of Hope Centre!)

The finals day on 9th May was a very colorful affair. For the first time, the event was played in one of the interior football pitches in Kibera known as Undugu Grounds. The crowds were entertained with lots of music, drama and dancing and refreshments were provided for all the finalist teams. Guests for the day included Noah from Alive and Kicking who spoke to each of the finalist teams about HIV/AIDS before each match. Also in attendance was some of the Banda School staff led by teacher Anisa, Mayer from DSTV (Digital Satellite Television) and the local chief and elders from Kibera... *(abridged)*

There are many costs involved in running a tournament...especially one which runs for a month over school holidays. In practical terms there are the pitches to hire, referees to pay, first aid kits to stock, balls to be bought for the matches etc. On top of that, one of the great things about our tournaments is the quality of the awards to the teams and deserving individuals. From bibs and cones to boots and balls, these practical awards benefit the players and teams while the trophies and cash awards add to the attraction of participating in an Mpira Mtaani tournament.

We really need a sponsor who would be willing to fund a tournament or series of tournaments, but we realise that in the current economic climate this may not be a realistic ambition. However, if we can get a group of individuals/companies/teams to each sponsor an item in the list above, we can still ensure that the tournaments take place and the youth of Kibera can compete for the John Packard Family Cup and the Manchester for Kibera tournaments.

If you are able to make a contribution towards Kibera Mpira Mtaani's great work, please use our [contact form](#) to get in touch.

Read the full article here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=146>

My Time With Vision Africa - by Jenny Button



I have just spent six weeks volunteering with Vision Africa, and I have had a very eye opening and fantastic experience. I spent half of my time living and volunteering in Nairobi, and the other half at various Vision Africa projects in more rural areas of Kenya.

When I first arrived in Nairobi I was overwhelmed with how different life is here in Kenya compared to home, especially as this was my first time to travel to Africa. But I soon settled in, and once I got stuck into my schedule of classroom assisting and teaching at the VA projects in Nairobi, I began to adjust to the Kenyan way of life. I spent time at Lutheran School in Kibera, St. Johns school in Riruta, Seed of Hope and the Kibera Mpira Mataani Football Office. Each of these projects taught me so much about education in Kenya and daily life for those who have very little.

The rest of my time was spent staying at Kandara Children's Home, Riandu Children's Home and Kambiti Boarding School for SEN pupils. It was refreshing to get out of Nairobi and discover how beautiful and diverse Kenya is. Each of these places gave me completely different experiences and memories that I will cherish. We did allsorts: crafts and games with the children at Kambiti, a Talent Show at Riandu, and even harvesting potatoes and helping in the Abandoned Baby Unit at Kandara Children's Home.

I cannot believe how quickly these six weeks have passed. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with Vision Africa, and have so many memories that I will take with me. The experience has taught me a lot about life and culture in Kenya, and also about myself. I will miss all of the children and staff and am eager to go home and tell everyone all about Vision Africa! I want to say Thank you especially to Debs, Kirsty and Vincent for helping me settle in, looking after me and being great company. You have all taught me a lot!

Read Jenny's full article here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=147>

St. Andrews Baby Unit



The St. Andrews Baby Unit, situated in Kandara Children's Home, has now been open for 18 months. Set up to cater for babies and small children, the unit has proved to be a valuable asset to the local community and is now well established.

2009 has seen the unit welcome four new babies ranging from 4 hours old to about 1 year. Some of these have been abandoned, some orphaned and some rescued from situations of neglect. Each case is taken to the local Children's Officer who has to approve admission to the unit after a number of checks have been done. Although the circumstances under which children are brought to the home are usually sad, we hope that they face brighter futures once they are in the care of the housemothers who staff the unit.

Proving just what a great job the unit is doing, the first half of the year has seen the babies developing well. All of the little ones who arrived last summer are now able to sit up on their own. Grace, the first baby to be brought to the unit, is now walking, laughing and starting to try and talk. This is inspiring little Jacob to crawl about chasing her!!

Unfortunately, as well as the highs, the St. Andrews Baby Unit has experienced lows this year. In June, one of the youngest little boys contracted pneumonia and died at the age of just 2 months. The same virus which caused his pneumonia led to the deaths of 5 other young babies in the local village. Despite being given medical attention, they were not strong enough to survive. Thanks to a generous donor, 3 heaters have now been bought to keep the baby unit warm overnight as we enter the cold season in Kenya. Vision Africa is also seeking funding for a nurse to do weekly check-ups on all the babies in the St. Andrews unit - at a cost of less than £5 a week, this seems like a worthwhile investment for us to make.

The baby unit is funded through the sponsorship of cots and additional donations which are required to allow us to provide the best care possible for these young babies. If you would like to support the St. Andrews Baby Unit, please use the [contact form](#) to get in touch.

The full article can be found here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=148>

Income Generating Projects



Over the course of 2008 and the first half of 2009 Riandu and Kandara Children's Homes have established their own income generating projects. Using the skills and knowledge of the local area they have started up small enterprises to subsidise the sponsorship income they receive from Vision Africa. At Riandu they established "Home Farm" which includes the breeding of chickens, keeping goats and cows for milk and breeding pigs for sale. At Kandara, in addition to livestock, they have established a bakery which produces cakes that are sold in the local

community. Both of these homes are working hard to ensure their enterprises are successful but require further investments to take them to the next level.

These models are now being rolled out to other Vision Africa projects. Due to the current economic crisis and changes in funding, all 4 Seed of Hope Centres have had to cut back on their feeding programmes. To generate funds, each centre is looking to establish a number of income generating projects ranging from bee-keeping to growing and selling napier grass (used to feed cows). Where the land is fertile it is also hoped that the centres can cultivate their shamba (garden for growing crops) and start to grow foodstuffs that they can sell or consume.

The teachers, parents and children themselves often have the knowledge and skills required to make these income generating projects work. All they need is the initial capital to get them off the ground. For some projects, such as the drought resistant crops, a small donation of just £50 could buy seeds, cuttings and fertilizer to get them started. Around £50-100 can buy enough chickens to start a breeding program and £100 can buy a pig. For bigger projects like a bakery £600 can buy a wood burning oven and baking tins.

If you, your church, your school, your company or organisation is able to help with a donation towards one of these projects you would be offering "dignity, opportunity and hope" to disadvantaged children in Kenya. Please use our [contact form](#) to get in touch for more details.

Read the full article here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=149>

A Seed Has Blossomed



In June 2009 Maureen Mwende became the administrator of Vision Africa's new enterprise called "Crafted". Here, in her own words, is the path that led her to this role.

"My name is Maureen Mwende Kyalo. I am twenty one years old; I come from Eastern province in Machakos district. I would like to share with u a short essay about myself.

I come from a poor family background whereby my father used to work as a carpenter and my mother as a house wife. Both my parents were in Nairobi as I stayed with my grandmother in the rural area. Life was very difficult as me and my brother had to help my grandmother in the shamba every morning before going to school.

After completing my primary education in the year 2003, I didn't have any hope for the future because I was used to the kind of life we were living under. I used to help my grandmother a lot because most of the time I was just at home. I used to blame myself for everything that I was passing through but at the end of the day I used to thank God for it. It was on a Saturday when father came and picked me from the rural area hoping to take me to secondary school but things didn't work for he had a very low earning so I stayed in the house for some times.

It was in the year 2004 when I was told about seed of hope by my father, we went to find out what they were doing I was so happy to be enrolled in as one of the students. Since then my life changed, I really felt at home and I realized there was something I really missed in life, I found loving people who really cared for me and my future life, they gave me the skills that would help me and those skills have made me what I am..." (abridged)

Read the rest of Maureen's article here: <http://www.vision-africa.org/news/index.php?id=150>

VOTE NOW: Optimist World



On the 9th July 2009, Vision Africa received an offer we just couldn't refuse. We have been invited to be listed on Optimist World's website and compete for their charity of the week / year award. As well as the free publicity, winners of the initial stages of this competition are in with a chance of winning a cash prize which would be put towards our projects in Kenya.

The competition is judged by readers' votes so to ensure that we move on into the second round of the competition, please go to the site, register (takes only one minute) on OptimistWorld.com and **vote for us before Thursday 23rd July at 6pm!!!**

[Optimist World](http://OptimistWorld.com) is a website dedicated to provide a good news agenda. As well as uplifting Good News, the site also investigates other aspects of everyday life which aim to inspire a positive outlook: Effective UK Charities, Responsible Companies and their CSR, Sports with a Positive Spin and Green Travel are their main areas. The site is edited by seasoned world class journalists but is also creating a community of optimists that share inspiring stories and vote on their favourite charities and companies each week.

Our Vision Africa article can be found by clicking [here](#)

Please take the time to vote Vision Africa as the charity of the week and encourage your friends, family and colleagues to do the same!! If you have time, you can also leave your comments about our organisation as they will count towards the final decision. Only one vote is allowed per valid email address.

Go to <http://optimistworld.com/Charities.aspx> to vote once you have registered.

Thank you!

Vision Africa on the web


Just a quick reminder of some of the places you can find us on the internet:

- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=35493762907>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/VisionAfrica>
- Justgiving: <http://www.justgiving.com/visionafrica>
- Easyfundraising.org: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/visionafrica>
- Easysearch: <http://visionafrica.easysearch.org.uk>
- Everyclick: <http://www.everyclick.com/vision-africa>
- Optimist World: <http://bit.ly/Ec6l3> or [click here](#)
- Charities Aid Foundation: <http://www.cafonline.org/charityprofile/visionafrica>

Our web sites:

- Vision Africa: <http://www.vision-africa.org>
- Seed of Hope: <http://www.seedofhope.info>

Keep up with the news

 If you have an RSS feed reader, or the latest web browsers such as Firefox 3 or IE7 you can keep up-to-date with our news by subscribing to our news feed.

What is RSS? It stands for 'Really Simple Syndication' and provides a real time feed of any updates we make to our news pages. Many web sites, especially news based sites, have RSS and you can use a simple programme or browser add-in to keep an eye on the headlines. Popular RSS readers include: Feedreader (www.feedreader.com), Google reader (www.google.co.uk/reader/) and RSS Owl (www.rssowl.org), but there are loads of them out there, just do a search on 'RSS reader' to find one that suits you.

You can get our newsfeed here: www.vision-africa.org/news/rss.php

And Chairman's blog at www.vision-africa.org/bobsblog/atom.xml or www.vision-africa.org/bobsblog/rss.xml

Email Contacts

Just a reminder of some of our key contact information:

For child sponsorship: sponsor@vision-africa.org

For fundraising & Kibera Football: kirsty@vision-africa.org

For general enquiries and everything else: info@vision-africa.org

To join our newsletter mailing list please go to our website and use the form provided to subscribe your email address: http://www.vision-africa.org/get_involved/newsletter.php

If you no longer wish to receive newsletters from Vision Africa you may use the same form to unsubscribe.

Please pass this newsletter on to anyone who you think might be interested in Vision Africa. Thank you!