



S · M · O · A · T
ST MARK'S OVERSEAS AID TRUST

Newsletter - Summer 2013

Dates for your diary:

Quiz Evening

Helier Dreux, Quizmaster extraordinaire, will be back with us on Friday 18th October 2013 for another evening of fun and criptic questions.

Hot meal provided, all for a ticket price of just £10.

The funds raised will be going to support a Practical Action water project in Zimbabwe, which will provide the full range of desperately needed clean water, sanitation and hygiene training.

Jazz Evening

Friday 15th November 2013

Enjoy a great evening's Entertainment with the
SUSSEX JAZZ KINGS

Adults £12.00 Children (under 12) £5.00

Pay Bar and **Free Nibbles**

All money raised will be used for a hydro-electric scheme in Malawi, which will provide power and lighting to a local community

Further details (and tickets) of all SMOAT events will be available nearer the time on our web site:

SMOAT.org.uk or from any of the committee.

Editorial

At the SMOAT Annual Meeting on 2 June I reported on a fall of income for the year to 31 December 2012 to £11,406. Our funds come mainly from the Christmas Appeal, which has stood up remarkably well in the current economic circumstances, fund raising events and donations. The decline in total income reflects no diminution in the enthusiasm and effort from the SMOAT Committee but increasing difficulty in attracting support.

We will continue to try and run fund raising events which are attractive to our supporters and provide a good financial result. Costs have to be covered and surpluses only come from the margin of those attending, so I urge you to support these events whenever you can by attending yourself and encouraging your friends and families to come along.

Donations have always been an important element in income and allow us to “top up” fund raising events to the level required for the particular projects supported. Most of the regular donors have been giving for many years, some from the inception of SMOAT over thirty years ago. We are enormously grateful to them.

I make no bones about it. What we need now is regular financial support from new donors. Such donations can be monthly, quarterly or yearly. Even a small sum of, say five or ten pounds a month could make a very big difference to our capacity to pursue our aim to help the very poorest in the world.

This is not aid for a disaster. Nor are they hand-outs. They are hand-ups. We only support small sums of capital for the poor to help themselves. We aim for the very best value for money for the most basic of needs such as clean water and sanitation, help for children, help to raise low incomes. It is not simply on-going charity. This is help from a small community usually to small communities of the very poorest.

Your support is essential to what we try to do. Your approval of what we do is our trust. Please respond to this appeal by completing the enclosed banker’s draft and Gift Aid form if appropriate.

HARRY INGRAM (*Chairman*)

SMOAT Gifts in the Year to 31 December 2012

Selecting suitable organisations and projects is not easy, though in some cases over the years we have gained considerable information about them.

Most charities funding projects in the developing world are well intentioned and run by people who are concerned for their fellow man. Some require ongoing funding to keep their projects going. Others do not seem to be soundly based. SMOAT tries to choose those which are directed to the most basic needs, on self help projects which are sustainable in the longer term to lift the living standards of the poor. We expect reports. I hope you will approve our choices.

Traidcraft: £650 Bangladesh

Traidcraft does more than sell fair trade products. Abroad, Traidcraft principally supports income generation and marketing for poor communities though it also establishes other aid projects.

This project was for the Mymensingh and Sherpur districts of Bangladesh where the population is very poor and vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change. They mainly get their living from small scale farming. The project aims to improve agricultural methods, adapt to climate change and generate higher incomes by increasing the bargaining power of the farmers.

It does this by:

- * Organising farmers into co operatives
- * Providing training in new agricultural methods, business and marketing
- * Negotiating with local government offices and private enterprises to improve services covering training, market guidance, disease control, use of fertilisers, pesticides, and better seeds.

Project Uganda: £3,000 Uganda

This organisation, formed in 2000, is run in this country by the Gothard extended family and works through "Moses", who they have known for over 10 years, in Rikungiri in central Uganda which is a dry, very poor area. PU's very limited funds come mainly come from organisations and churches in the village of Winterslow in Wiltshire.

Matt Gothard is in the building industry and spends every summer holiday with his family in Rikungiri. Matt's father is a retired builder and he and his wife go for at least three months every year. They help plan, oversee and take part in the projects. All go at their own expense.

Originally the project began by support for a vocational training institute. They constructed brick built dormitories, workshops and wash rooms of a very high quality on the campus and helped in student training. Now, PU has widened its activities to the surrounding area thus far mainly building

wash rooms for schools and providing mosquito nets with frames made by the students past and present as part of their practical training.

This year the project was for a wash room for the girls Central School at Rikangiri. Previously the girls had virtually no privacy or running water in a very primitive shelter. This gave rise to poor sanitation followed by illness. Now they have a large brick built wash room with a roof, running water, proper drainage and private washing bays.

Practical Action: £2500 Sudan

By contrast this is a large, well established organisation. Why do we support it? PA is one of the most innovative and effective aid organisations which has developed on the principles of Dr Schumacher of “ Small is beautiful”. He formed Intermediate Technology which has become PA.

Well known for its simple but innovative solutions to a wide range of problems, PA still develops simple technology and provides an advisory service. But mainly it devises solutions closely tailored to local needs in conjunction with the local people.

This project, called “Hitting Hunger Harder”, is directed at the very poorest in the Kossala State of Eastern Sudan where, through climate change, people exist only on the cusp of starvation.

How does it work? The people know that their traditional agricultural methods can at best only sustain them in their present plight.

The project is a complete package covering new technology, advice and training necessary to change. Centres have been set up for advice and training. Demonstration plots, creation of farms owned by women, co-operatives to help the change and improve marketing; irrigation schemes and terracing, tree planting are essential parts of the package.

This large project for the very poor, involves community building as well as changed practices. Centres resolve disputes between nomads and farmers.

VSO: £1,500 Malawi

SMOAT has always supported VSO. Today VSOs are usually mature volunteers who are vetted for skills to meet the special demands of their placements: plumbers, carpenters, teachers (usually in a development role), builders, and so on. Recently we have supported doctors and nurses who also concentrate on developing local services.

Jessica Townshend is a qualified nurse with specialisms in medical, surgical and critical care. She was based at St John’s Hospital, Lilongwe, Malawi, but her training and practice duties also took her into the rural areas. Her messages tell of the many differences in the culture and medical provision and of her struggles to adapt. Wards for 40 often top 100 with all patients

mixed up with their carers to feed them. However, her latest report is of her first hand experience of illness and her good fortune in receiving priority of attention. Nevertheless the process was drawn out and in the end she has had to return to London for a cure.

Today I received a message which included: "I am back in Mzuzu and have hit the ground running giving lectures, marking exams, assessing students and visiting orphanages with students, so plenty to keep me busy".

Bridge2Aid: £850 Tanzania

This organisation was founded 2004 by a Newcastle dentist and his wife. Its main activity is dentistry (it also supports schools and the Bukumba Care Home (for lepers and disabled).

There is very little dental provision for rural Tanzania. Many suffer from dental pain for many months or even years and serious conditions develop as a result of the lack of treatment and d.i.y. extractions.

The organisation has set up the Hope Dental Centre, which treats over 10,000 patients a month but SMOAT supports the dental Volunteer Programme.

B2A sends over 100 dentists from the UK to Tanzania each year. They form teams which runs treatment camps and in about 2 weeks treat about 450 patients and train 6 local health workers so they can give basic dental treatment.

When they leave their instruments stay behind with the health workers. SMOAT has funded full sets of instruments, covering: instrument kit, sterilisation equipment, torch, kerosene for pressure cookers, and post training supervision for 6 local health workers.

Brinos: (British Nepal Otolaryngology Service) Tikajit Guring: £700

The high location of Nepal coupled with the use of fires in huts gives rise to many serious ear problems in Nepal. This can be especially debilitating and prevent children from developing normally. Deafness is the largest single disability in Nepal. Health care is very limited especially in the mountainous inaccessible countryside.

For many years Brinos (British Nepal Otolaryngology Service) formed by Dr Neil Weir of the Royal Surrey County Hospital Guildford, has been sending medical teams to Nepal to supplement the local services and train local young doctors, rather like B2A. Over the years SMOAT has supported this organisation many times.

In 2009 we sponsored Lance Corporal Tianjin Goring of the Royal Army Medical Corps. After a spell in Camp Bastion Hospital in Iraq this is the way he chooses to wind down. So we supported him again in 2012.

He has sent us some wonderful reports and photographs telling of the many life changing operations carried out by his medical team. We hear his team has been awarded the Karen Woo award for the best UK medical team of the year and also the BMJ Medical Team of the Year award.

Microloan Foundation: Jenda, Central Malawi £1,300

SMOAT tries to help the poor to help themselves. The principle is that instead of continuously providing supporting aid, the objective is to help others to stand on their own two feet, feed themselves pay for their own social services. Where the state is poor, how much better, for example, for the poor to fund their children's education than for them to depend on charity.

Economic activity is funded by debt whether you are a multinational or a poor farmer. Nearly always borrowing is essential to cover the capital and running costs of an enterprise. In the developing world finance is very expensive. Many NGOs now recognise that lending is a most essential part of progress. One of the first of these bodies was the Microloan Foundation.

Microloan makes small loans to small businesses to enable them to buy stock and trade. The terms, of course, include repayment and interest to cover running costs and over 98% of loans are repaid, partly because other members of the revolving loan group will benefit once the repayment has been made.

This scheme in Jenda is a little different. The loans are a little larger, about £50 instead of £10, and have a somewhat longer term (repayment will begin about 4 months after the loans are made). These loans fund the materials of small irrigation projects and agricultural stock such as seeds and fertilisers. Much of the costs are met out of the interest charged on loans but there is heavy setting up costs such as the pay of the field officer, his travel expenses and training materials part of which is not recovered.

We do not underestimate the value of all small businesses but we consider the investment in agriculture is vital to provide food as well as income generation.

We hope you approve of the above ways we have gifted the money raised with your support.

HARRY INGRAM

Barn Dance

On 19th April this year, we held our Family Barn Dance. Once again, it was a great event, enjoyed by all who attended. It was billed as a Family Barn Dance and so it was that many families came along. All the children were keen to try the dances and were, in fact, rather good at it.

As a spectator this year, I sat on the side lines and watched and actually it's always amusing when people get it wrong. However, I thought that the

children did an excellent job at not getting it wrong! They followed the instructions and all had a fantastic time. Of course, apart from organising a great fun event, we were also raising money for a Faith in Action project – *Family Business Loan Schemes in Malawi*.

The schemes provide for families to set up small businesses, which enable them to be less dependent upon crops which can often fail. They are given small interest-free loans and are encouraged

to set themselves up in businesses such as tinsmiths, mat- and basket-making, metal poultry feeder-making, poultry keeping and canoe-making.

Once the businesses are up and running, the loans are paid back and are then offered to other families. Thus, the money we raise goes a long way and helps many families to improve the quality of their lives, become independent, win back their

self-esteem and have enough money to feed and clothe themselves and enable their children to be educated.

We sent £1,500 to the Project and when you think that the average loans given to families amounts to just under £55 – probably not half the amount that we spend on an average week's family shop – you will realise what a difference it will make to so many families.

BARBARA PERKINS

Music, and more music - the SMOATathon

Gather together a large group of musicians (singers and players) and invite them to perform, individually or in groups, in St Mark's Hall throughout a Sunday afternoon. At the same time, ask them to suggest to their family / friends / colleagues / schoolmates etc that they may like to sponsor them, so that the whole exercise can raise funds for a SMOAT project.

From this simple concept, the SMOATathon was born. Its length was fixed at 5 ¹/₂ hours, and, between 11.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. on Sunday 3 February 2013, 25 singers and / or players produced a programme of continuous live music, with only the shortest of breaks between performances.

The music, as varied as the ages of the performers, included classical pieces, songs from the shows, ragtime, ballads and English pastoral music, spirituals and a wide range of popular songs. The event was launched by the soon-to-retire Vicar of St Mark's, Martin Wright, and his wife Geraldine, and, an age later (or so it seemed), concluded with a half-hour of meditative music from the TaizÉ Community in France. Throughout it all, the programme was appreciated by an audience that came, stayed for a while, and left maybe to return a couple of hours later!

And the aim of the event? To raise funds for an IMPACT school health project in the Kibwezi District of Kenya, which would provide immensely practical help to improve the lives of children in four schools in the most impoverished parts of the area. The package of care would include the establishment of a health monitoring scheme in each of the schools, the provision of glasses for those with severe visual impairment, the supply of first aid kits to help prevent secondary infections when children injured themselves etc.

The total sum raised through the SMOATathon, including the recovery of tax through Gift Aid, amounted to more than £2,250, and all of this was donated to IMPACT in support of the project.

The SMOAT Committee is extremely grateful to all those who sponsored the SMOATathon performers as well as, of course, the singers and players themselves, who turned the concept into reality. It was a memorable event, the most significant aspect of which may have been that it introduced SMOAT to a large number of people who were previously unaware of its existence, and who gave generously when invited to become sponsors.

DAVID LEAR

The Value of Giving

Giving to a good cause brings its own reward. I suppose it comes from the knowledge that one has done something for the needy where there is no personal self interest. However, this note is concerned with the value for money given to the recipient.

It is almost customary these days to demonstrate what can be achieved for a small gift to a particular NGO working overseas. Here are some examples trawled from projects SMOAT has supported:-

- * A mosquito net, to provide a defence from the many mosquito born diseases which debilitate and some times results in death, costs £6 in Malawi.
- * A goat in Uganda, to provide the basis for a small family business to raise income and fund education and welfare of its children, costs in Uganda £27.
- * A cataract operation costs £20 in Kenya. £30 will buy twenty pairs of glasses.
- * A loan of £50 repaid in four months can set up a business in tin utensil manufacture or basket manufacture. It then goes on to do the same thing again many times.
- * The cost of all the instruments, to enable a clinical officer to undertake basic dentistry not previously provided, can be just £60.

But although such costings feature in projects we have supported, generally SMOAT supports larger projects. For example:-

- * A village well in Zambia may cost £1294.
- * A water tower and village water system in Zanzibar can cost £1594.

However, the great value of donations to SMOAT is that they give us the capacity to “top up” the proceeds of fund raising events so that we are able to fund the full requirement of the many projects you will have read about in this newsletter.

If you would like to make a regular donation the necessary forms are enclosed.

HARRY INGRAM

For more information, or to join our mailing list, please contact any of the committee.

Harry Ingram (Chairman)

17 Carlton Road, Redhill, RH1 2BY
e-mail: chairman-harry@smoat.org.uk

Alan Preston (Treasurer)

e-mail: treasurer-alan@smoat.org.uk