

Granaghan Outreach

Accepted as a charity by HM Revenue & Customs under reference number XT5466

On Sunday the 30th September a team left Granaghan to take part in the second volunteer project to the Wagwer School in Western Kenya. The group travelling at their own expense included Seamus Lagan, Tony Conway, John Mulholland, James McLarnon, Dessie Cleary, Paddy Turner, Brenda McWilliams, Ciara Bradley, Ciara McMaster, Damian O’Kane and Theresa Dunne.



Team Kenya 2007 on departure

The 2007 project was the renovation of four secondary classrooms at ‘Wagwer School’. Conditions at this school were awful with many of the buildings with no windows, doors, desks or floors. Bare footed children are often attacked by ‘jiggers’, insects which burrow their way into the soles of their feet.



Typical conditions of one of the secondary classrooms at the Wagwer school

The team travelled in the Moving Mountains truck and the journey took in total approx 10 hours on roads of varying quality and terrain. On the truck the team were joined by Francis Kioni the project supervisor and the teams contact to the locals, the truck driver, a hired cook and several street children, beneficiaries of the Moving Mountain Charity who were to be the teams work mates.

The team stayed in ‘Mwishi Mwishi’ Hotel, which was relatively clean and very basic. Electricity was available most evenings, while warm water ran out more evenings than not. Mosquito nets were essential for sleeping, although in some cases the mosquito’s found a way through! The school was only a few miles from the hotel.



One of the completed classrooms

Fr Matthews, the areas priest, who only can normally visit once every two months, was given special permission by the bishop to say Mass. A special meal, of local and traditional food, was prepared for which Team Kenya were the guests of honour



Fr Mathews Omogo

During the trip Fr Mathews was presented with a donation of £1,000 from Granaghan Outreach to help fund the installation of doors and windows and also to help concrete the dirt floor and plaster the church walls.

After ten days of hard work, and with the help of up to 25 locals, the renovations were almost complete and the community showed their gratitude by holding a thanksgiving ceremony during which a tree was planted on the school access lane for each member of the team.



Patrick Turner planting a tree at the thanksgiving ceremony

It had been arranged that on the homeward journey the team would visit Sr Theresa Rafferty at the Franciscan Convent in Kariobangi on the outskirts of Nairobi. Nothing could have prepared the team of what they were about to see.



Sister Theresa Rafferty with Tony Conway, Brenda McWilliams and Ciara McMaster

Granaghan Outreach

Accepted as a charity by HM Revenue & Customs under reference number XT5466

The nuns in the beautiful centre all have their particular focus. Sr Theresa takes responsibility for passing on our faith through services, work in schools and preparing books and publications. Sr Evana looks after elderly and runs a medical centre for AID's and leprosy. They feed over 600 mouths daily with food often begged from the stalls.

Sr Lydia took the team to the slums of Korogocho to see the work she does with the youth of the area. At the 'Hands of Care and Hope Child Care Centre' they were met by over 150 children aged between 5 and 12 years old, who had been taken from the surrounding dump sites to be 'rehabilitated' in the centre which currently consists of 4 mud huts for which have exorbitant rent. Many of these children, especially the girls, are in grave danger of abuse and exploitation. The children are filtered into parish schools after a period of 2 years in the centre.



The team were met by over 150 children

Sr Lydia informed the team, that the local headman, knowing the good work that she does, forewarned her of two sites which had become available in the middle of the Korogocho Slum. She has been able to buy the sites for 300,000 Kenyan Shillings (£8,000) with the intention of building a new school for the children. When the team learned that the project was going to cost approximately £35,000, Sr Lydia was asked where the money was to come from. She replied with great faith that 'God will provide'.

Granaghan Outreach has since contacted Sr Lydia in Nairobi and has received detailed plans and costs for the construction of the proposed building. A donation of £10,000 has already been forwarded and with various fundraising events, donations and local help the target of £35,000 should be achievable.

It is unfortunate that the recent election and the unresolved battle about who has won has ignited old tensions in Kenya. Sr Theresa's area of Kariobangi is very much affected. Korogocho has turned into a battlefield between the two ethnic groups – the Luos and Kikuyus. Homes, huts, and small shops have been burnt, people killed and wounded. Many people have fled and are in refugee camps. The situation is the same throughout the country, with food stuffs in short supply due to lack of transport, and food prices increasing by 50% over night.

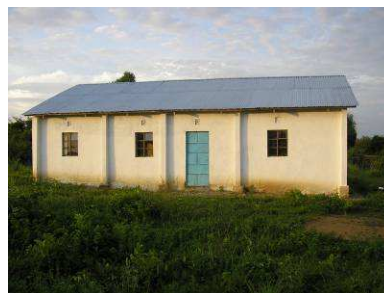
Sr Lydia has been in contact and confirms that they are all safe, but unfortunately the construction of the school will be delayed until situations improve. The children are in hiding and they have had to close the school.

Since 2006 Granaghan Outreach has completed the following:

- Funded the Nyasidhi School renovation in 2006. The school has gone from last place to near the top of performance league tables which has been attributed to our parish's involvement.
- Are funding an extra teacher for two years at Nyasidhi School.
- Helped purchase medical equipment for the Moving Mountains clinic in the Nairobi slums.
- Are funding a medical officer in the Moving Mountains clinic in Nairobi.
- Provided donation to Fr Matthews for the renovation of the local church.
- Funded the Wagwer School renovation in 2007
- Provided donation to help with Sr Rafferty's School project in Korogocho.
- Provided donations to Moving Mountains for feeding programmes etc in Nairobi Slums.

None of this work could have been possible without the generous help of the community through donations and active help. Granaghan Outreach plans are ambitious and preparations are being made for Team Kenya 2008 and other possible projects.

A project currently under consideration is the Barkawado Orphanage. Father Mathews has built a lovely but basic orphanage beside Barkawado Primary School in the District of Siaya in Western Kenya. Basically, he has got a building which can hopefully house up to 30 orphans. However the project is in need of help.



The Barkawado Orphanage

Before he can cope with this number he needs to provide a perimeter fence to secure the area which is essential in Kenya, an Outside Toilet Facility, bedding and a kitchen annex. Granaghan Outreach is continuing liaison with Fr Mathews in order to confirm costs.

For more information and if there is anyone interested in becoming involved with Granaghan Outreach please visit our website www.granaghanoutreach.com or alternatively contact Noel McGrath (028 79401586), Ciaran McGuckin (07779109018) or Barney McEldowney (07718340438).