

ROTARY MAGIC

THREE TIMES A WEEK
PORRIDGE BREAKFAST FOR
7,000 PUPILS

£1.20
Per child per
year!



7,000 PUPILS TO GET PORRIDGE BREAKFAST THREE TIMES A WEEK

A GROUP OF UK ROTARIANS have just returned from Tanzania having promised seven primary schools, each with over 1000 pupils, that the pupils will receive breakfast at school three times a week.

The schools are on the Lake Victoria island of Ukerewe, accessible only by a three and half hour ferry journey from the mainland town of Mwanza.

The island's 350 thousand population are subsistence farmers and fishermen and live on the edge of poverty.

Most school children walk long distances to school on an empty stomach and would be lucky to get something to eat when they get home after school.

Three years ago, with the help of local farmers John and Chris Philip initiated a Rotary project to establish in three

schools, environmental clubs each with a membership of 30.

The project's general aim was to 'inspire and empower children to be engaged in preserving and protecting their environment as well as benefitting from it as future farmers'.

Following a period of training, the pupils were given farming tools, watering cans, fertilisers, pesticides and a variety of seeds including maize, sorghum, egg plants, Chinese cabbage, Amaranthus.

The pupils and teachers worked outside school time and transformed many unused sections of the school compounds into thriving farms.

The first harvest was used to provide food for the entire school. The second harvest was used for the same and some produce were sold to generate funds to buy pencils, rubber, paper and toilet soap. It also helped them to buy bags of sugar.

'Our commitment is to scale up the programme to four more schools – seven in total. The total cost for two years until it becomes sustainable is £16,830.'

'This works out at £8,415 per year for 7 schools - £1,202 per school. This will help each school to feed its pupils three times a week during school year - at the cost of £1.20 per child per year and have an income for school items.'

'This is Rotary magic – Rotary working with local people to gain value for money.'



'When these children grow up they will remember you'

Each school also managed to establish a tree nursery – the total trees planted exceeded 35,000, which included many fruit trees.

Training was later extended to teachers and parents. They were trained on agroforestry practices, use of green and farm yard manure, planting of cover crops, crop rotation, use of liquid manure and mulching.

John and Chris have visited the schools before but on this occasion were invited to share breakfast at one of the schools.

Porridge was prepared on open wood fire under a tree by the pupils and at breaktime they queued up with 1400 pupils to receive a mug of porridge.

John said: 'This was the best breakfast ever for me. To share a mug of porridge with those

children, who but for Rotary's commitment, would have had nothing to eat, was to me a humbling experience.'

Headmaster Lucas Mtani said: 'On behalf of my pupils, I thank Rotary. My pupils now receive breakfast three times a week, I get good attendance and have a bit of money to buy essential items for the school. When these children grow up they will remember you.'

Chris Philip said: 'What a humbling experience it was to see 1,400 children queue in an orderly way to have a cup of hot, sweet porridge made from maize grown and cooked on the premises. The older children were so proud of their school garden and have obviously learned so much. That is why we have decided to scale up the project.'

For more information and presentation please contact:

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The project will be implemented locally by a farming group MVIWAW.

The technical back up and expertise will be provided by ViAgroforestry, a Swedish NGO www.viagroforestry.org/

UKEREWE is the largest inhabited island in Lake Victoria. It is accessible only a 3.5 hour ferry journey from Mwanza which is the second largest town in Tanzania. Ukerewe has a population of 350,000.

There are 121 primary schools and 22 secondary schools. The main town is Nansio.

Rotarians from the UK and Sweden have undertaken a variety of community projects on the island during the past nine years.
<http://www.rotariandoctors.org/>

