

Shyira Trust

**Constituted as an Unincorporated Association since 10th September 2006.
Registration number 1118979**

Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2009

Objects and activities

Once again there have been significant changes to personnel in Rwanda and also a major structural change. The diocese of Shyira, with its headquarters in Ruhengeri, has been split into two dioceses – Shyira and a new diocese of Kivu with headquarters in Gisenyi. The Bishop of Kivu is Rt Rev Augustin Ahimana, who is well known to some trustees and liked by them having acted as their guide in August 2001. Rev. Samuel Sebahire had only a short stay in Shyira – he has now moved to be on the staff of the Kivu diocese in Gisenyi. His replacement in Shyira is Rev Anthony Ruzindana, previously head teacher at a technical school in Kibuye. Anthony has a dual role in Shyira as parish priest and head of a secondary school – Groupe Scolaire. Trustees who visited Shyira in January were impressed by Anthony, and feel that he will prove to be an excellent appointment.

The objects of the Trust are:

1. The relief of poverty and the preservation and protection of good health in Rwanda.
2. The advancement of education in Rwanda.

Poverty relief and health have centred on support for the hospital and its staff and the rebuilding of homes for child-headed families. The primary school has been provided with new desks. Trust members who have been to Rwanda would still like to see the interior of the primary school painted, but that continues to be a low priority for local people, and we do accept their wishes.

The Trust has partners that work alongside it:

- St. Luke's church, Formby. Most of the Trust's members are members of the church, and they raise the bulk of its income.
- Head of Midwifery Education at a university¹ who supports safe motherhood through the Trust and who paid for the education and training of a Midwife and continue to support her.
- The Rotary Club of Formby, who have equipped the maternity hospital and have provided library books and equipment for Shyira secondary schools. They have funds available for equipping the hospice, but must wait for the financial situation to ease before matched funding becomes available through Rotary nationally and internationally. Rotary Club funding is transferred via Rotary in Rwanda, not through the Trust.

There have been two visits to Rwanda organised this past year. One of them involved nine people who went in January 2009 and is commented on later. The other visit was two people from a university who worked for a week in Shyira hospital with one going to the graduation of Robinah, the midwife who had been sponsored through university.

The link between Range High School in Formby and Groupe Scolaire in Shyira is thriving. Range High School students and staff have been exchanging letters with students and staff at Groupe Scolaire and Rwanda has been studied by some Range students. The link was part of the successful application by Range for International School status. It is hoped that a visit from Range to Shyira will be possible over the coming year. The Trust continues to provide support to the school as they want it, and the school have supported some Trust events. Range High School has given a gift of a Keyboard to Groupe Scolaire. The Keyboard was purchased by Trust members visiting Rwanda and presented to a delighted Groupe Scolaire on behalf of Range. The whole process,

¹ The arrangement is with Faculty of Health of a university, not with the university.

purchasing to presentation and use, was recorded and a DVD was given to Range so that the delight their gift created could be seen by all children and staff who contributed.

Work in and around Shyira is continuing. Some examples are a total of ten child-headed family homes have now been rebuilt, equipping of the primary school with desks has been completed, over the year 65 children were sponsored in high school, and the Rotary Club of Formby books and equipment for high schools have been delivered. Training of a person as a midwife to work in Shyira hospital was completed and a second trainee midwife has started at university.

An Open Day is to be held in April in cooperation with St. Luke's Church. It will be supported by Range High School, Formby Rotary and university staff. The purpose is to tell people about Rwanda as a country, illustrating areas of recovery after the genocide and outstanding problems, and to publicise the work of the Trust. Advertising is in progress.

Verifying expenditure.

"How do you know that money reaches its intended beneficiary?" is a question we are asked on occasion. There has been an implicit or explicit assumption that all Africa is corrupt and the people lazy, and therefore money will be misused. Our answer has several aspects, some based on our knowledge of the people and situation of North West Rwanda, some based on observation.

The first and strongest point we must make is that in the experience of Trustees and Trust Supporters who have been to Rwanda is that the country is fairly free of corruption. Also the people are both hardworking and the necessary skills are there to complete most projects if financial problems can be overcome – poverty and a lack of the resources we in the UK take for granted are the issues.

Trust and knowing the people involved in a project are important factors. Funds sent to Rwanda normally follow one of two routes – they go either via an account belonging to an Episcopal Diocese in Rwanda or via a Shyira hospital account. The Shyira hospital is managed by a Management Committee that includes the hospital's Medical Director who is an American Missionary Doctor. The management committee is accountable for all money going through their accounts. The Bishop of Shyira expressed his wish to be held personally accountable for all funds sent through the diocese and we have received reports or photographs on expenditure. In a similar way the new Bishop of Kivu is accountable for funds transferred through his diocesan accounts.

Trustees are ultimately accountable for the correct use of all funds sent to Rwanda, and for that reason there are periodic visits to Shyira to see the way money has been used, and to ensure that it is helping meet the objectives of the Trust. In January this year two trustees went to Shyira to review progress, meet new personnel there and to act as guides to seven other people who were visiting Shyira. While there they saw progress in supporting child headed families, were shown developments in the primary school, toured the hospital and maternity, met with a newly trained midwife and one whose training had just started, saw the coffee growing project and were entertained by sponsored children in the secondary schools. They also took part in meetings with the parish council and at the hospital, and met staff of the new Kivu diocese.

A visit to the primary school was typical of the approach of the people of Shyira to visitors. After her guests had seen the refurbished school buildings and met most of the children in their classrooms the head teacher spoke to the assembled school, and to her visitors through an interpreter. The following is reproduced from a recording of the address, with her first speaking to the children and then her visitors:

"I think you have come to learn that these are visitors from the UK, our good friends from Formby. Two of them are here for the first time, others have been before and the tall one is here for the ninth time. That indicates friendship. That is an indication of the love they have for us, and we are always on their hearts.

Our visitors, we are happy to see you once more at our school here in Shyira. We welcome you. We remember that at one time our school was in shambles, but the beauty you see here; you had a very big hand in it. We had no desks, but at the moment I am informing you that at the moment all of our pupils are seated at desks as a result of you helping us. You may have learnt from pupils that they are able to improve in different sports, especially football, and the ball they are playing with was given by you. Our pupils are able to write, they can do different drawings, as a result of equipment given by you. I can't remember all the good things you have done for us, but I can say there are so many. When you go back greet people on our

behalf and tell them we are so grateful. Tell them that whatever they have sent to us, it has served its purpose. Thank you very much.”

The speech was open for all to hear. There was no doubt in the minds of visiting trustees that every word was genuine and heartfelt, and that all donations had been used as intended. There were comparable experiences in other locations.

Financial review and reserves

The Trust raises funds to support specified projects, and transfers money to support those projects three or four times a year. Because money is raised against projects there is no requirement for the trust to have reserves other than the membership fees. An exception to this is when a project has not commenced in Shyira but some fund raising has been carried out – an extension to the maternity hospital is possible example of where this may apply.

Over the year a total of £22,379 has been sent to Rwanda. Details are:

Alternative Gifts	£2,350
Child headed families/Poverty relief	£4,901
Maternity Extension	£1850
Education and schools	£7,750
Medical work through Shyira hospital	£3,025
Work of St Marks church	£1,161
Hospice	£500
CEFOPS(cards) and Mother’s Union	£842

Included in the alternative gifts is funding for safe motherhood, child headed families, a hospice and coffee growing.

The total funds now sent since St. Luke’s church became involved with Shyira are £118,695. This does not include funds sent through Rotary, or the many private gifts made to individuals in Rwanda by trust members and supporters.

The fall in the value of the pound is a particular concern to the trust. The exchange rate dropped from around RWF 1040 to £1.00 at the time of our previous report to RWF 805 to £1.00 at the time of our January visit. As this report is written there has been a slight recovery to around RWF 850 to £1.00. Money we now send to Shyira is worth only 81¾% of its value a year ago, so the Trust has increased some costs to supporters – the main one is the cost of child sponsorship. The risk in this is that there will be a reduction in support.

Management arrangements

The trust has six trustees, as described above. They each serve for three years, after which they may be re-elected for a maximum of three terms. All trustees are required to sign a declaration that there are no reasons for them to be barred from being a trustee, and in addition are required to either have or to gain CRB clearance. All have the necessary clearance.

Members pay an annual membership fee. The purpose of the fee is to cover the cost of the annual meeting and the associated documentation, and the cost of managing the Trust. This allows the Trust to send all funds raised to Rwanda, with the exception of the amounts specified in publicity as for other purposes. As an example alternative gifts include £1.00 per gift, this to cover the cost of a banana leaf card, printing and postage. It should be noted that the banana leaf card is made at CEFOPS school in Shyira, so the amount deducted to pay for the card still goes to Rwanda.

Trustees meet regularly to consider the progress of the Trust, and to review the fund raising and use of resources in Africa. It is expected that information will be received from Shyira showing how money has been used, and it is also anticipated that there will be occasional visits of trustees to Rwanda so that they may monitor progress. Trustees going to Rwanda have so far been self-funding.

Also members and supporters have made occasional visits to Shyira, always at their own expense. These visits are valuable because they allow needs to be assessed and progress monitored.

Procedures for grant making

The Trust accepts that local people are better able to prioritise their needs than the Trust is. The Trust therefore sends money to Rwanda for use against specific projects, but allows the detail of the way money is used to be determined locally. There is an exception to this when money has been allocated for a specific purpose as with alternative gifts. We occasionally get individual requests for support – two recently were for a computer for the primary school and a computer for the parish. Neither of these will be specifically provided by the trust, but if the parish sees these items as a priority then it may provide them from funds sent.

As the people of Shyira and district see their priorities and needs changing the Trust seeks to accommodate them. In the past year the people in Shyira have decided that they would like to build a Children's Centre. This will be a three room building serving as a Sunday School on Sundays, and providing after school and other resources through the week. The trust is presently in discussion with members of the parish council about the priority of the children's centre in relation to other projects.

This approach has always worked in the past. It depends on trust between us and the people in Shyira and the intention of their Bishop to be accountable for all transferred funds. Also through our visits we are able to see how money has been used as described earlier.

On occasions the Trust is able to help members transfer money for specific purposes. A recent example of this is that when two members wanted to jointly provide funds to help a seriously disabled lady have an operation and gain mobility through the fitting of prosthesis, the trust was able to arrange for the transfer of money.

Public interest.

There are several pointers to this aspect of the Trust's work:

- The Trust facilitated the setting up of a link between a school in Formby and a school in Shyira and continues to provide support
- The Trust works with partners – St. Luke's church, University Staff and the Rotary Club of Formby.
- Some members of the trust have developed friendships with people in Rwanda, exchanging letters, telephone calls and small gifts.
- After the year end, in April 2009, an Open Day was held to provide the wider community with an opportunity to increase their knowledge of Central Africa in general and Rwanda in particular.
- The Trust is given quite a lot of publicity in the local press.

The future.

The Trust, with partners in Rwanda has identified seven areas of activity for development in Shyira. They are:

1. The church. The pastor is a leader in the community providing spiritual support and helping with plans to alleviate poverty.
2. The construction of a new children's centre. This will be for a Sunday School and will provide accommodation for after-school activities throughout the week.
3. The hospital, including safe motherhood, training of a second midwife and a second floor extension to the maternity unit. Since the new maternity unit was opened in 2004 the number of women using it has doubled and it is now too small.
4. Child headed families, to ensure that they have weatherproof housing
5. Support for the schools, including child sponsorship and further building refurbishment.
6. Help in establishing a coffee growing project.
7. A hospice and counselling centre to be called "Living Hope Ministry".

Trustees are working with the people of Shyira to prioritise these developments.

In Summary

As previously, the Trust continues to build on the strong foundation that developed through Trust supporters gaining ever deeper understanding of the people of Rwanda and their problems. Financially the support given to Shyira this past year was higher than the previous year, but the value in Rwanda was reduced by the loss in value of the pound. We look for continued growth in the future.

Any visits to Rwanda, by trustees or supporters, over the coming year will be used to verify the continued effectiveness of the Trust's support.