



# Shyira Trust

Registered Charity Number 1118979

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## Newsletter, June 2008

### **Milestones.**

We like to mark special years in our lives as milestones to be celebrated and acknowledged. A golden wedding anniversary after 50 years of marriage, or perhaps a telegram from the queen on someone's 100th birthday. So many of these milestones finish with one or more Os. In our support for Shyira we have reached a special milestone, one with five Os. We have now raised more than £100,000 to support the people of Shyira.

Initially all funds were sent through St. Luke's church, and this produced £62,879. The balance has been sent through the Trust. St. Luke's is still very active in support, and money is also coming from other sources.

Additional to the £100,000 sent through the church and trust, something like £44,000 has been sent by the Rotary Club of Formby. The first £24,000 provided equipment for the maternity hospital, and the secondary schools are now spending US\$40,000, about £20,000 on books for libraries.

In addition to the money we have sent we know that many individuals have sent gifts to friends in Shyira. Also we have paid to send gifts using Containers of Hope and an operating table, given by a doctor in Liverpool, is now in Shyira.

### **Where has the £100,000 come from?**

We can't give details, but it has come from a few large donations and many small ones. It is amazing how small amounts add up! There has been fund-raising by the Faculty of Health at Edge Hill University, and the tax man has contributed through reclaimed gift aid.

Some money has been given for specific purposes—child sponsorship is one example, while some has been sent to pay for banana leaf cards.

Wherever the money has come from we thank those who gave it. You have helped make a real difference to the lives of people in Shyira, people among the poorest in the world. Now please read on to see some examples of how that money has been used and why we need to keep going.

## Progress reports from Shyira

**Child-Headed families.** Help for child-headed families started in 2005 when a visiting group were invited into the home of one of the families and saw the state of the children's home - broken windows, bare walls, leaking roof, etc.

The families are organised into a cooperative to provide mutual support. For example, during our visit of 2006, a donation was given to the group, who decided that their most pressing needs were cooking pots and bedding. The donation was then used to buy one cooking pot for each family, and one blanket to be shared by 2 children.



More recently, a number of children's homes were identified by the parish as in need of replacement. To date, 5 houses have been rebuilt by CEFOPS using local materials in the same style as other homes around Shyira. **This is an ongoing project with more children's homes awaiting replacement.**

**Schools.** More than 100 children have been or are being sponsored through Groupe Scholaire - one of the secondary schools. Some have been sponsored through to sixth form, passed their national exams, and gone on to university. Others returned home after school, and some are still at school.

When we visited the primary school in 2001 we saw a building with cracked foundations, damaged walls, no doors or windows, a leaking roof, collapsing ceilings and no desks. Stage-by-stage the buildings have been repaired and renovated so they are now safe, secure and waterproof. Works still needs to be done with decoration, but major works have been completed. A recent large donation provided desks for the school, and all children have a decent desk - some for the first time.



The nursery school now has a second classroom, and a third is nearing completion.

**There is a lot more work to be done in renovating all schools to make them fit for the children—this is ongoing work**

**People living with HIV / AIDS.** This group has had a number of set-backs, but has shown remarkable resilience. They used a sizeable donation to create a chicken coop - using the eggs to improve their diet, selling the excess to fund medical treatment and support. Unfortunately, the chickens were badly affected by bird flu, and many died. To stop the spread of the disease, the remainder were separated, and shared out among the group, allowing the benefits to continue, but on a smaller scale.

The group have now started a bee-keeping project: again, the honey is used to supplement their diet, with any excess used to generate income.

Finally, the chicken coop is to be re-used to keep rabbits, thus providing a source of much-needed protein.

**Maternity hospital** The Maternity Hospital we provided in 2004 is very busy and its beds are full most of the time—we now hope to provide a second floor extension at a cost of £20,000. Also we continue to support safe motherhood. The hospital is benefiting from the skills of the German obstetrician, Matthias Kohls, and the donated theatre table is being put to good use for caesarean sections. The Trust, supported by Edge Hill University, has provided a scholarship for midwifery training and Robinah (see picture) will complete her course in November this year. She will return to the maternity hospital to work as a midwife—they do not have one at present. A second three year scholarship for a nurse to train as a midwife for Shyira is currently being set up.



**Coffee growing.** This is a long-term project, but the site for the coffee growing plantation has been established and work is being carried out to prepare it. The trust has provided some initial funding, and will continue to support this work.

**Ministry of Living Hope.** This is NOT simply a hospice for people suffering with HIV/AIDS - it provides accommodation for a number of uses, including counselling for victims of the genocide, and the recently bereaved. First phase construction has been funded from various sources, including the trust, but funds to provide furniture and equipment will come from Rotary. The project continues. It will serve not just Shyira but the whole region, and is ongoing work for the Trust.

## Why do we support just one remote village?

Why support just one community, wouldn't it be better to send less to Shyira and help some other community? That is a question we have been asked several times, and it is a good question.

By supporting people in Shyira we have been able to make a big difference—if we send small amounts to several communities the difference we make will be quite small, and may not be noticeable for long. It is important to recognise that Shyira is not just a small community—it is at the centre of something larger.

Shyira was one of the original mission stations that resulted in the East African Revival. It had a holistic ministry based on Church, School and Hospital, and served not just Shyira but the surrounding communities. That is largely true today, so although Shyira is a small community it reaches out to the surrounding areas.

- Shyira hospital is a district hospital. It has two outlying health centres that benefit from support given to the hospital.
- Living Hope Ministry, the hospice, is to serve people over a similar area to the hospital, it will take people who the hospital can't help further. A management group has recently been formed, ensuring that the hospice is a regional asset.
- Children sponsored at Groupe Scholaire come from all over Rwanda. The sponsored children have been selected as among the most needy children in the school.
- Children in the primary school walk in from the surrounding hills
- Child headed families from Shyira have been helped, as have others in the surrounding countryside.

There are two additional and important factors.

1. We have met people from Shyira, we know them. Emmanuel, Eva and Ambroise have been to Formby, as has Bishop John and Harriett. We have also been visited by Caleb, Louise and their children. Also we have had 29 different people (plus 5 from Rotary) visit Shyira. People there are our friends.
2. There is a link between St. Luke's parish in Formby and St. Mark's in Shyira, this link providing mutual support for ministry.