

## Judy's Report on her Visit to Destiny Garden School, Mombasa - February 2012

I have had a wonderful trip to Mombasa, staying again with Jacob and Brenda who made me very welcome and spoilt me with their lovely African meals. The DGS children are happy and keen to learn, the teachers seem very dedicated, as do the other staff, all working well together as a team, and the standard of education at the school is high.

We have finally delivered all the **Party Bags** which were made up by the children at Kings Junior Division, and I gave them out on the first day of my visit. The DGS children needless to say were thrilled!



All the **photos of the children** who I photographed last year were printed, laminated and given to the children - they loved them and were very excited.



Giving the children their photos has advantages as it helps us when we take further photos. The parents and guardians appreciated them and it explains things when they see us photo'ing their children again. Many of the children have never seen a photo of themselves, let alone owned one.

**Jacob** continues to work hard and long hours with everything, and he has a clear vision of what he wants DGS to achieve. He is well known and respected by many – you can't walk down the street without him introducing you and stopping to chat to someone. Many people commented very favourably on his contribution to the community and to DGS. It was great seeing Brenda, Jacob's wife, and their newly born daughter Buela, and of course Marvel who will be 3 years old in July.





**Victor**, the DGS Manager who joined us in June last year, has been a great help to the Charity. He and I, with Masikah's help, took all the photos of the children and updated their profiles for the sponsorship programme.

**A camera had been donated to the school** by a member of the Macclesfield camera club. I gave Victor instructions on using the new camera and some general pointers on taking photos. We took all 300 Children's photos – a head shot and an action shot doing their favourite sport. An update with these photos will be sent to Sponsors after the April exams.

**Victor's Laptop**, which was kindly donated by a friend, is not firing on all cylinders; it won't load up programmes. If we can find another

second hand one again and someone from the UK to take it out to him, that would be helpful as it has proved to be very useful to Victor and the school.



Victor with Masikah in the school office.

## Urgent Work Needed at DGS

It was obvious on my first day at DGS that there is much still needing to be done to improve the school and the following needed urgent action. Fortunately DGS had some funds available that had been donated by Kings School Juniors, Regina Schack, Carlo Bone, Pat Roper, and many other supporters.

**Clearance of DGS grounds** - the grounds needed clearing as there were still piles of building materials, stones, sand etc. left over from the building of the new classrooms. This was creating quite a hazard for the children so we used funds to employ two casual workers to work 4 days tidying it all up.



The workmen found and killed a snake when clearing one pile of rubble, a dangerous black mamba. 3 similar snakes were found in the pile of fire wood, again in the school grounds. The hot weather is making the snakes seek out shade.



**Rubbish Tip** – we organised for a hole to be dug with a brick wall around it for all the rubbish which will be burnt in the evenings. This is a short term measure pending getting a proper incinerator which has been on the DGS business plan for over a year and was requested by the Health Inspectors for the clinical waste and general waste .

The children from one class had a session going round collecting the rubbish and putting it in the pit!



Cook Edith in the current Kitchen



**The Kitchen** urgently needs to be done as it is inadequate, dangerous for the staff and the smoke is going into classrooms one and two. The Health Inspectors pointed out a number of inadequacies over 6 months ago and DGS need to improve the kitchen asap.

Jacob, Regina, Bernd and Victor

We were very fortunate as Regina, a sponsor who did voluntary work at DGS for 3 months in 2010, and her partner Bernd, both from Germany, had raised substantial

funds before they came over to Mombasa for a holiday; their visit coinciding with mine. These funds enabled them to buy a plot of land adjacent to the school, and to start building a very much updated kitchen for the school. The cooks were delighted as it will make their work so much easier.



Work started on the new kitchen whilst we were there and should be finished before the end of March.





**Kindergarten Block Floors** – I hadn't realised quite how bad these were until I visited the school one Saturday and saw them without the children and tables and chairs, and they are much worse than this picture depicts (the tables and chairs are stored in the staff room overnight for security). We obtained a quote of £1,066 from the Mombasa contractors and thanks to a very generous donation specifically for this, work started before I left.



**Water Tank** – The Navy provide DGS with water free of charge, they just had to pay for the petrol 4,000ksh (£32). The Navy could deliver up to 12,000 litres per delivery but DGS only had the one tank of 4,000 litres, so it made sense to buy another tank at the cost of 15,000 ksh (£120). The Navy are happy to fill the tanks as and when required providing it is ordered through Joy Fahili, the District Officer. This is going to make a big difference to DGS as the water can be drunk, with the addition of Watersafe, and will save buying in so much drinking water. If we could install further water tanks at DGS, the cost of water per litre would reduce further.



Jacob and Vincent



Water, which we tend to take for granted, is also needed for washing hands, cleaning, washing-up etc.





Masikah and local tailor Leonard

**Uniforms** – whilst not urgent, we had £94 donated specifically for uniforms through the Alternative Gift scheme. We had sent funds over in December so that all the children could have a uniform as a Christmas present but since then 80 more children joined DGS in January 2012. Masikah selected the most needy children. Leonard the local tailor came to the school to measure them up on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb and they were all made up by the Thursday before I left.



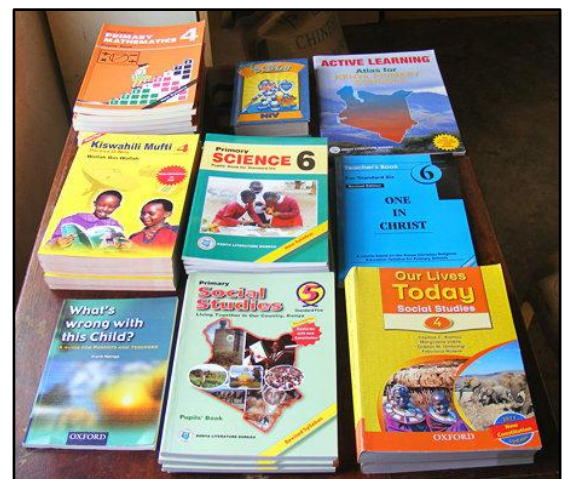
Before and After photos!



**Text Books** – I bought the teachers some of the urgent text books required out of donated funds and the other text books will have to come when funds permit – another £225 is needed. This is always going to be an on-going requirement



**Muslims and Christians** can be taught RE (Religious Education) in separate sessions but there was a need for DGS to recruit an Islamic teacher – hence Madam Mariam, who is also qualified to take the Swahili classes. The Kenyan syllabus requires Christianity or Islam to be taught to all primary school pupils, but as DGS has about 50% of each, it is great to be teaching the children their own religion.





## Enoch's Eye Problems



Victor thought that we should take Enoch Oningo, a nine year old orphaned boy in class 2, to the eye clinic. His Guardians realised he was short sighted when he was 3 years old and squinting and using his fists to make binoculars, but because of poverty were unable to do anything about it. It was the first time he has seen an optician, indeed none of the children at DGS wear glasses or have seen an optician – it would be wonderful if we could get Vision Aid to work in Mtongwe.

Enoch was diagnosed with cataracts in both eyes which need to be removed in the next few months – any later and further permanent damage could occur.

We could get them removed as a hardship charity case by the Lions Club of Mombasa, at a cost of £75 per eye, and this was recommended by the local optometrist doctor, who was confident it would be successful. The Charity cannot take on all the individual children's health problems, so I personally paid for the first eye to be operated on. He has now had his follow up appointment and all is going well, with a huge improvement in vision in that eye.



Enoch with Victor



**The School numbers** are now 306, including the new intake into the Baby Class. There are about 30 in each class but the KG classes over recruited so they have a few more. The KG classrooms are really too small for 30, but the Kenyan education System is introducing changes in the next 2 years, reducing the Kindergarten classes to two, and introducing a pre-primary class. This may give us the opportunity to convert the 4 Kindergarten classes into 2 classes, but we would need to find other accommodation for the Baby class.

**Two Hardship cases** came to light whilst I was there and we decided to let

the children join DGS, despite the school being up to capacity. One was Zuena Ongojo, 11 year old girl, whose parents have both been admitted to hospital terminally ill, and she and her 16 year old brother are struggling to survive, having been evicted from their rented accommodation. Zuena passed the tests to go into class 5 and Jacob provided them with ten kilos of rice as they hadn't eaten for 2 days. The other child was related to Masikah - her 40 year old widowed aunt died on the first Monday I was there, leaving a 5 year old orphan Nuru Gakweli, who is going to live with Masikah, and will go into Class KG3.



**Drums** - DGS desperately need a set of African drums to enable them to start training for the Kenyan Music Festival. These cost 15,000 ksh (£120). They are going to do a traditional African music routine using the drums. There were too many other urgent items for me to justify the DC funds, or mine, being spent on Drums.

In the short term I paid to hire some drums for £20 a month, but obviously this is not cost effective over many months. Since then, however, Trustee Adrian has kindly donated funds specifically for the drums.



The hired drums and the music teachers



**Dust** is everywhere in the dry season but a bit of a losing battle – DGS sweep the classroom after the children have left at 5.00pm, and then again in the morning as dust has blown in overnight. After lunch they throw all the washing up water on the compound outside the office and this dampens down things a bit. If we had louvres and shutters at all the windows it would help, together with paving outside the classes and in the compound. The new flooring in the classes and the Kindergarten rooms will help now but the office and Class 6 still need to be done.



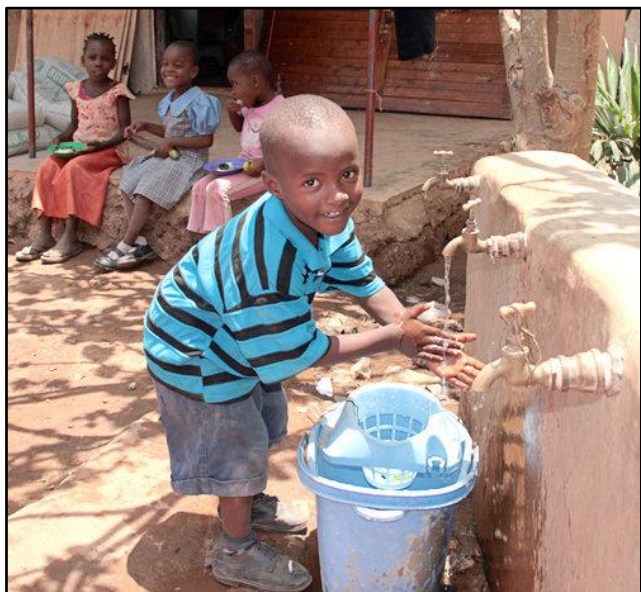
We had a freak down pour of rain whilst I was there and that settled the dust for a day – everyone said I was the 'bringer of rain'! From the photograph you will see that flooding occurs in the assembly area, and causes problems in the rainy season. Jacob has been using the rubble from the Classroom floors to fill this in, so it should be better in the next rainy season.



## DGS Running Cost

With the increase of 3 new staff, the intake of 80 new children, inflation in Kenya and the huge drop in the exchange rate, the DGS running costs have gone up and we are no longer able to contribute to the feeding programme which has gone up from 66,000 ksh (£507) to 80,000 ksh (£615). The drinking water has also increased from 3,800 ksh (£29) to 8,000 ksh (£62), but this can still be covered by the Charity.

At present the running costs per month, without the feeding programme come to £1,887 using a rate of Ksh 130 : £1.00.



To cover this we currently have 157 sponsors who produce an income of £1,570 per month and with Gift Aid we are able to send £1,885, so we can only just cover the running costs, apart from the feeding programme.

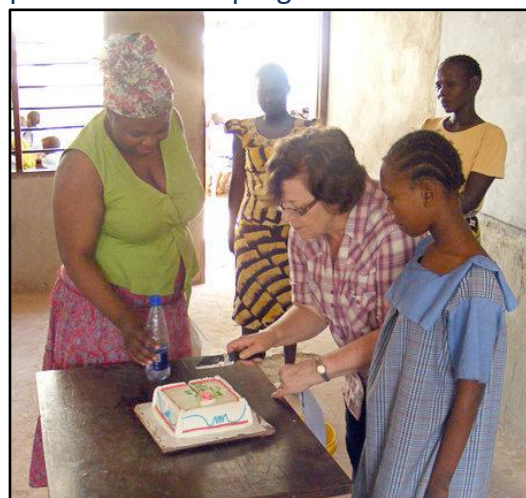
We are therefore urgently trying to recruit more sponsors and would initially like another 50 more children sponsored, as with their monthly donation of £10 per month and the Gift Aid we would be able to provide the children with a lunch each school day.

## Sponsorship Programme

The sponsorship programme could be seen as unfair on those children not sponsored. I needed to get across the message that whilst not all children are sponsored, they are all important and that it is the school the sponsors are supporting and then taking an interest in one particular child's progress at DGS.

With funds donated, I bought 6 cakes and orange juice for the children in the Primary Classes, 1 to 6. I went round to each class separately with Victor, Jacob and Masikah. I selected a child from each class to say that their sponsor wanted to give their child's class something special. This led nicely to me explaining the Sponsorship programme and letting the children know they all counted whether sponsored or not. The following week I explained all this to the parents and guardians.

I discussed a two tier sponsorship system with Jacob who agreed that this may well suit some sponsors better and that it will cut down the administrative work, both for the Charity and the School.



**Tier 1 - sponsor a named child** - support DGS and take an interest in a child's progress.

**Tier 2- sponsor an unnamed child** – support DGS and take an interest in the school as a whole.



**A Parents/Guardians Meeting** was arranged, a letter in Swahili was sent to all parents and guardians saying that I would be there and over 150 parents turned up!



I took the opportunity to explain the DC charity and Sponsorship programme, emphasising that sponsoring was to provide the school with funds for all the childrens' education. Some parents thought that sponsorship was aimed at the whole family and contact with the sponsors would be available. Some have even asked Jacob for items needed by the family – e.g. a bed! I put up facts and figures on the blackboard, what income we had and from where, and the school costs. I believe they now understand that we were only providing funds for their children's education, by paying the staff salaries and ultimately we hope the school meals, break time snack, uniforms, text books etc. Jacob thought the meeting went amazingly well, and it was good to meet some of the parents and guardians.

Another problem we have with the Sponsorship programme is the high turn-over of pupils, with orphans being found new guardians and parents moving to where jobs can be found. This is very disruptive for their education and also disheartening for the teachers and a headache for the sponsorship programme.

**A meeting with teachers** was arranged to explain the DC charity and Sponsorship programme, as per above. We also discussed the volunteer programme but sadly of late the school has had few volunteers.



The teachers were really appreciative with what the Charity is doing. On my last day we had a special lunch with the teachers – fish and more vegetables were added to the school meal, and Jacob bought some fantas and cokes, followed up with pawpaw from DGS's own trees.



## DGS Business Plan

An important part of my visit was to update the School's Business Plan. More work is still need on the mid and long term plans, and Jacob and Victor are working on these.

Below are the short term needs of the school.

Classroom 7 is needed by Jan 2013 and we will be applying to Trusts for grants to try and cover this. Failing that we need to start allocating all our fund raising money to go towards this building.



Short Term - roughly in order of priority	ksh	£ rate 125
Health certificates- cooking staff	4,000	32.00
Seal the Cess pit	15,400	123.20
Fencing new land	22,000	176.00
Door in Office to access new kitchen	25,000	200.00
School Gate	40,000	320.00
School Flag	3,500	28.00
Purchase additional land between KG & Kitchen	110,000	880.00
Completion of running toilet system	67,600	540.80
Tank for new Kitchen - 4,000 litres	30,000	240.00
Stand for tank for new Kitchen	15,000	120.00
Text books still needed	28,072	224.58
Cooks uniforms	8,500	68.00
Recommended Cups and plates	29,500	236.00
Door in KG Class/Toilets	10,000	80.00
KG external Front door	15,000	120.00
Repair Classroom Floor - Class 6	25,200	201.60
Repair office Floor	21,200	169.60
Basins in KG toilets (Tank, basin and stand)	120,600	964.80
Tank and Stand for KG block	45,000	360.00
School Stationery and text books	10,000	80.00
Classroom 7	800,000	6400.00
Extension of walls in classes	98,000	784.00
Ceilings for Classes 1-6	320,000	2560.00
Painting classrooms 5 & 6	35,000	280.00
Purchase additional land adjacent to kitchen	110,000	880.00
Incinerator	45,000	360.00
Clinic - nurse & equipment	40,000	320.00
	2,093,572	16,748.58

requested by Health Authorities  
safety

Security

Security

Security

requested by teachers

to join KG up with main school

requested by Health Authorities

requested by Health Authorities

requested by Health Authorities

Security

Health

ongoing monthly cost  
apply to trusts

more space & to stop it being built on

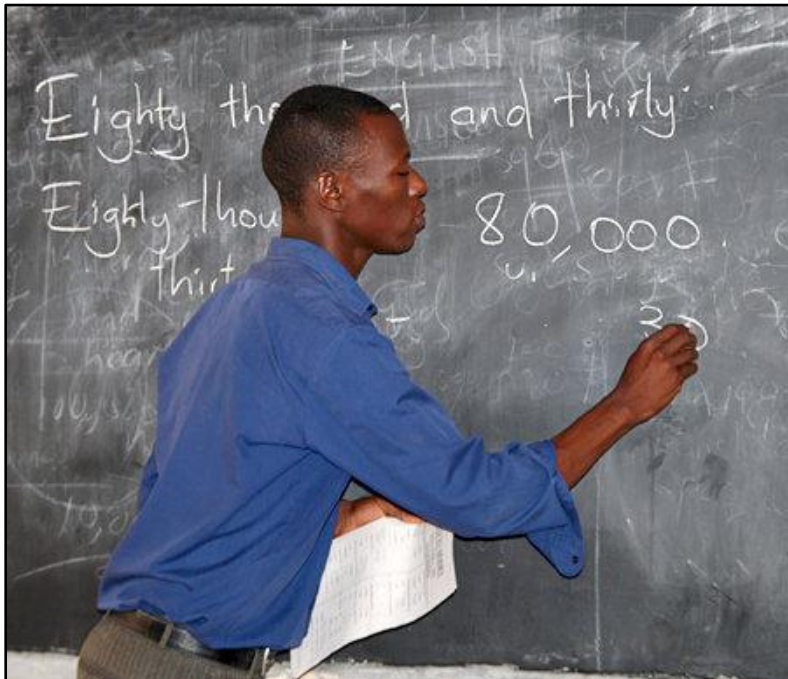
running costs re part time nurse



## Solar Panel Project and Adult Education

Whilst I was in Mombasa, the Marr-Munning Trust awarded us £5,000 in response to our application to install solar panels at DGS. This gave me the opportunity to meet the Solar Panel expert and get new quotes, together with the Electrician. However it does look tight scaling down the costs from the £13,000 applied for to the £5,000 we were granted. We need to be sure the project will meet the criteria of our application below, and still be within the £5,000

1. Give the older children experience in the use of computers.
2. Enable adult education classes to be offered in the evenings.
3. Improve classroom environment, fans etc.
4. Improve security by installing security lights.



**Adult Education** was encouraged by the local government officials as being a good community thing to do. A high proportion of adults in the area missed out on education and are keen to learn - when we mentioned it at the parent/guardian meeting many hands went up. It is something we would love to introduce at DGS as, with the solar powered lighting, it will have all the facilities to give adult education classes. We can now do it in a small way with the £5,000 grant for the Solar Panels, but we need to find a way of paying the teacher who will deliver it - some more sponsors as it will be an on-going cost.

## The Music Festival Project

The DGS staff, particularly Jacob and Masikah, are very keen that DGS should enter the Kenyan Music Festival again this year. The School entered in 2010 and 2 choir went all the way to the finals, funded by volunteers and the MDMT. Last year DGS reached the finals but were unable to attend as they could not get the funding. However they want to try again this year. The cost will be over £2,500 if they are successful in reaching the finals as it involves transport and accommodation. In addition they need to pay 10,000ksh a month to a music teacher, to provide the children with the necessary training. The Macclesfield Rotary club are investigating ways of supporting the project, and it will be wonderful if they can.





## Children not attending school

35% of children in the Mtongwe area do not attend school. I was not surprised with this figure as all around the school there are children hanging around during school hours. I took this photo through the DGS wire fence and you can see 11 children not at school.

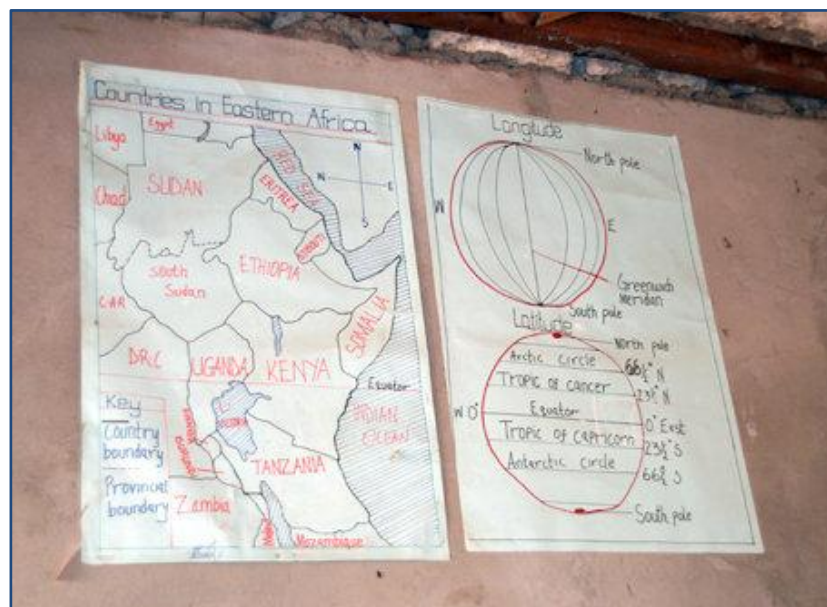


## Children's' Uniforms

Whilst DC had bought all the children a uniform at Christmas, many of the children were still wearing their old uniforms, as the photo shows. They hadn't discarded their old uniform and wore it when their new one was in the wash. Before they used to wash the uniform overnight, so clearly two sets each would be ideal!

## Teachers Resources

The teachers could do with a lot more posters and maps etc. However they are very resourceful and will draw their own, as depicted in this photo.





## New Buildings in Mtongwe



I was quite amazed at the number of new buildings that have sprung up in Mtongwe, and all around DGS. The school doesn't seem so rural, becoming more part of a suburb now.

## Wednesday afternoon is sports

It was lovely to see the children take part in sports every Wednesday afternoon, they all thoroughly enjoyed it, laughter and smiles all round. All ages are split into houses – United Kingdom, America, Canada and Australia, and they are very competitive!



**I visited several local organisations** and met a number of local people, including District Officer, Joy Fahili, at the District Commissionaires Office which is very close to DGS, Fatuma Khamis, the chief, Madam Zainab the Education Advisor, and visited Mtongwe Clinic where I met the two nurses that worked at the Destiny Garden School 'clinic' - they would like to repeat the children's' examinations and maintain their medical records but we need funding to do this. It was very heartening to hear how highly they all think of Jacob and how they value the work he is doing with Destiny Garden School. Jacob is obviously a much respected member of the community





## Bananas!



Thanks to a kind donation from one of our sponsors, I bought bananas from the Mombasa market for the children and staff at DGS. This was on my last day at the school and it was a real treat for all the children. There was great excitement; even though bananas are currently in season, the children rarely have them.



**Leisure Time** - free time was short, I could have done with another week at least; next visit I will be more relaxed as Victor can now take the photos of the children! I did have a few minutes of nostalgia when I dipped my toes into the sea at Shelley Beach, the holiday resort my parents took the family to when I was very young – the hotel we used to stay at is now very dilapidated. I also visited the Ali Baba Beach on the south Coast when Boniface drove Regina and Bernd there. Bernd reckons it is the best beach in the world; it certainly was beautiful with its white sand, blue sea and palm trees – what a difference from dry, dusty Mtongwe, why couldn't we have built the school on a beach!! I treated Brenda, Jacob, Marvel, Buela, Happy, Boniface, Regina and Bernd to a meal at an African restaurant on my last evening in Mombasa – it was the restaurant where Jacob proposed to Brenda!

