

# Welcome to Africa Unplugged

Promoting greater awareness and understanding through communication and education



APRIL 2011 UK NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME BACK JOMOH

A warm welcome back for an old aup friend Jomoh whose new garden project in the village of Bwelero has attracted our support. Story and pictures on page 2.



*Friends Robin and Jomoh*

## HELLO FROM OZ

Founder Chris sends his best wishes to members and friends. He is currently doing a diploma course in Community Services at the Sunshine Coast TAFE Nambour Campus but will be home for a couple of weeks in June to visit family and catch up with old friends.



*Chris with roo*

## CHILDREN VISIT MZUZU

We are delighted to tell you about another great day the shelter children enjoyed when they once again visited the Malawian Broadcasting Centre in Mzuzu and the SOS Children's Centre. Story and pictures on page 3.

## FUNDRAISING FRIENDS

In association with aup, Helen Tyler will be holding her third art exhibition on 12th May. The exhibition will include a selection of children's art displayed on behalf of our friends at Chimwemwe. The event will also include a charity auction and raffle.

has teamed up with her family to make and sell 40 beautiful hanging flower baskets. See page 4.



*Artist Helen*

Member Lindsey has also been very busy. She

## ROBIN

Latest star volunteer, marathon hero Robin from Surrey, recently spent 3 months working with our friends at Chimwemwe Umbrella. Story and pictures on page 5.

## BLANKETS AND NETS

Thanks to the generosity of aup friends we recently donated 20 blankets and 20 treated mosquito nets to our friends at the St Maria Goretti Hostel for the Blind. Story page 6.

# TEMWANENGE GARDEN PROJECT

Not far from Nkhata Bay in the village of Bwelero we met again our old friend Jomoh Mzemba. With the help of ladies representing 15 families Jomoh has created a garden project known as the Temwange Group. aup donated 23000Kw to purchase a range of gardening tools and the ladies started clearing the land at the end of February. The purchases included some hand tools, hoes, a couple of panga knives and slashers, watering cans, seeds, notepads and pens. We are really pleased to report that already great progress is being made.

The chair person is Face Kanyaso and the ladies meet each Saturday to discuss emerging issues and review the progress being made. Any member who fails to attend is fined 50Kw. A celebration was held to mark the start of the project. There were, of course many speeches and volunteer Robin, noting that the group would need lots of energy, donated funds to cover 3 meals. Chief Bhatia Mwase promised the group would work hard and sincerely thanked aup UK for their support.

*Jomoh wrote: 'I will provide them training for gardens as well as some pamphlet translated into local language known as Tonga for them to understand the importance of vegetables in their bodies. Dreams for the group to help others in different areas within the village and helping their sons and daughters for School. Teaching other friends importance of the vegetables having some food not only relying on (Nsima) as staple food. OBJECTIVES: Helping other communities in other foods. Women have to be independents on what they can do. Will create source of income to the community and will contribute more vegetables into the areas.'*

Recently the area has suffered very heavy rain fall. The project started with 53 seed beds but lost 10 due to flooding. They lost garlic, ginger and some vegetables although Jomoh said 'not much'.



*Working hard preparing the ground*



*Jomoh constructing the compost container*



*Members of the Temwanenge Group*

# CHILDREN VISIT MZUZU

Thanks to the generous support of aup members and friends we have once again been able to sponsor a special day out for the shelter children. The trip was described by Happy as follows.

As planned the trip was set for Friday 25th February. Everybody was ready by 8 o'clock but the driver was late and we left Nkhata Bay for Mzuzu at around 9.30. We reached our first place of visit which was MBC after 10 and found that our friends were already inside giving another visit so we waited for some 30 minutes or so before going inside.

After being welcomed we were divided into 3 groups. We were conducted in a tour of the studio and editing rooms as well as the transmission

room. Our children were asked to read the news on the radio as well as the TV, the TV part excited them much because they could see their friend reading the news on a separate screen, and also the editing part was very interesting for the kids saw how a picture or background can be transformed and the name of the newsreader moving around the screen.

From MBC we had lunch and drinks which had been prepared in the morning before we left.

Then due to time we did not visit other places instead we went straight to SOS Children's Village. Firstly we were showed the houses which they are using for caring of their children. After that we gathered in their

indaba hall and the children started their activities which they had rehearsed such as songs, poems, bible verses and dramas. After everything there were speeches where Robin and Happy spoke on behalf of Chimwemwe and the village youth leader spoke on behalf of SOS.

After everything as we were waiting for the bus the children were having fun mixing with their friends where a lot of pen pals were established.

We want to thank you sincerely for the donation and the children are sending their greetings as well for the trip has been an eye opener to them and they have promised to work hard so they can work at MBC or inoffices.



Happy and children at MBC



Packed into the Bus!!



New friends Chimwemwe and SOS

## SHARP INCREASE IN FUEL PRICES

At the end of January there was a sharp increase in fuel prices in Malawi. The price of petrol went up by over 13%, diesel increased by almost the same amount and the price of paraffin increased by 6.6%. The increased cost of paraffin is particularly worrying as over 85% of the population use paraffin for lighting. Electricity is a luxury for many people in Malawi where the UN estimates that 60% of the population live below the poverty line.

# FUNDRAISING . . .

Talented local artist Helen Tyler is holding her third art exhibition on Thursday 12th May 2011 at the Slepe Hall Hotel in St Ives, Cambridgeshire. It promises to be another great fundraising evening with a charity auction and raffle, and guest artist Matt Harvey providing the musical entertainment. Everyone is welcome, admission is free and includes a complimentary drink and bar snacks.

This event is particularly special because, with the help of volunteers Lisa, Yolanda and Gresham who looks after the Chimwemwe library and information centre, we asked four local schools to produce some art work for us which will be

on display alongside Helen's paintings.

The schools submitted a selection of paintings and drawings from which 5 pieces from each school were selected. The display includes photographs of the children at work. We will feature a full report in our next issue.

## and there's more...

Member Lindsey recently teamed up with her family (mostly her Mum) to create 40 beautiful hanging flower baskets which she is selling at £12 each with all proceeds to aup UK. Interested then just email [info@africaunplugged.org.uk](mailto:info@africaunplugged.org.uk) and we will pass the message on. You will have to be quick though.



## DISABLED HAVE MIXED FORTUNES WITH RICE AND PARAFIN

This short article refers to some of the challenges local groups face in trying to establish a successful and sustainable income generating activity (IGA). Regular readers will remember an earlier knitting scheme started by the Siliva Disabled Group

and funded by aup UK which failed.

Volunteer Robin was approached with a proposal to buy 2litre tins of rice for 2200kw each from a remote area which the group would then re-sell locally at 3500 a tin. It was hoped to sell between 1 and 5 tins a week. Unfortunately, the true costs of purchase and transport had been seriously under-estimated and the selling price was simply not competitive so the scheme

had to be abandoned. Robin recovered what he could of his investment and undaunted tried again.

Liquid paraffin is the most common fuel used for lighting in Malawi. 20 litres of paraffin was purchased in Mzuzu and within a couple of days it had been sold locally making a profit of 1000kw (about £4). On this promising start Robin purchased more containers and paraffin. We wish the group every success. Watch this space.





# NEW BLANKETS AND NETS DELIGHT THE BLIND HOSTEL



*Excited pupils with new nets*

We are pleased to tell you that in conjunction with volunteer Robin we recently donated 20 new blankets, 20 treated mosquito nets and a radio to our friends in the St. Maria Goretti Hostel for the blind and partially sighted in Nkhata Bay. In mid February Robin and teacher in charge Peter Munthali went on a shopping trip to Mzuzu. So successful where our intrepid bargain hunters that a small balance was left over from our donation and this was given to the hostel kitchen.

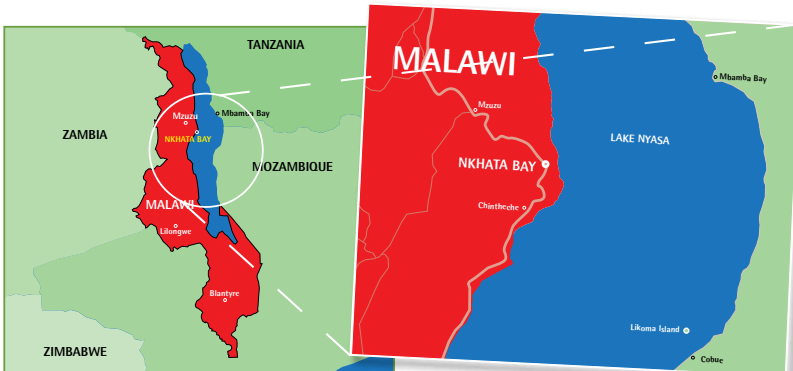
*thank you very much for the Donation of 20 blankets, 20 mosquito nets, a radio and Food allowance of K 7,000. Thank you very much for this timely donation because we received a Grant from The Government in December. May God bless you abundantly. I wish you all the best in your daily undertakings. Yours faithfully, Peter B. Munthali."*

Numbers fluctuate but the hostel currently has around 18 children of whom two thirds are boys. There are a small number of albino children. The hostel gets some government funding which is used to buy food and to pay for electricity and water. However, the amount and timing of government grants can vary and unfortunately is rarely above the barest subsistence level.

If you would like to know more about any of the projects mentioned please get in touch

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Peter wrote to founder Chris as follows: "*Hi Chris, I hope that you are fine with all members of Aup (UK). Here we all fine. I would like to*



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