

A major donor reflects on his visit to Uganda, October 2008



In October 2008, Tom Lindsay and his son Alex accompanied Dame Diana Rigg on a fact finding trip to Kumi District in Uganda. Tom has made a significant contribution to our Build a School programme and we wanted to show him at first hand how the work is progressing. It was a thought-provoking and at times emotional experience. Tom says in his round-up of the visit: “We got to see an amazing country with the potential for an amazing future”. Always honest and constructive, here are some extracts from his travelogue...

...on community participation: “It was clear to me that Build Africa’s model of working with communities and the local authorities is definitely the right approach and is working very well. It seems that many charities turn up and make promises and then fail to deliver. Not Build Africa. I was seriously impressed with the relationships that the Build Africa Uganda team in Kumi have developed with the local councils and with the communities. They are exceptional people.”

...on School Development Plans (a three-year model uniquely designed for each school by the teachers, pupils, parents, and local education authority and facilitated by Build Africa to identify specific plans and targets for the schools): “This initiative seems to be the backbone to the school development model. It also seems the local education departments want to see it built into their own models. That would be great!”

...on the achievements of the Build a School programme: “We inspected the two new classroom blocks at Obosoi Primary School - the standards were high and the school seems in good shape. We saw a truck bringing new desks for the newly completed classrooms. In comparison with some schools we saw later this school is very advanced. I think the key now is to follow up with programmes for textbooks and

sports equipment. Housing and transport for the teachers is a problem – the community needs to work with Build Africa to resolve this issue.”

“Kachuru Primary School appears to be a great example of what Build Africa can do. The second new block was just being finished. We received an excellent welcome with some great performances from the children including a particularly good performance of a poem about HIV.”



“We had an excellent visit to Kongatuny Primary School as well with very nice singing from the choir. There was a superb turnout for the ‘opening’ of the new block which I much enjoyed doing. The new teacher accommodation is a great example to other communities and must be utilised as such to encourage them to copy it! There was a good opportunity to meet local council representatives who I felt were particularly impressive and very appreciative of Build Africa’s work.”

...on the challenges facing the Build a School programme: “Amugagara Primary School is an example of a school in dire need of urgent help. Most of the classrooms have been condemned by engineers. There was a good turnout of parents who clearly see the need for help. We had a long meeting in the chapel with parents, the Parent Teachers Association, the School Management Committee plus local religious leaders. I certainly think the school deserves Build Africa’s help!”



Build Africa will be working with local communities to develop a total of 51 schools in 2009. Work at Obosoi School and Kachuru School will focus on teacher training and teaching materials. At both Kongatuny School and Amugarara School, we hope to supply three new classrooms, new latrines, school furniture and teacher training.