



Report 19 August 2011

This report covers the work that has been done in the Vanessa Grant School, the Rongai Vocational Training School, Gogar Primary School and St Michael's Nursery School. A separate report has been circulated about the Vanessa Grant Girls' School.

Vanessa Grant School

Many boarding schools in Kenya have been forced to close because of the rocketing cost of food and its general scarcity. Thanks to Naomi's prudent management, the VGS is carrying on as normal and has stocks of food well into November. There has been some rain in Rongai so we hope for local availability for next year.

Playground: no major physical development has taken place at the VGS since the last report but the new playground is being put to good use. Work has just started on renovating the remaining wooden fence between the VGS and the new playground. This will be in steel to enable the children it see through into the playground and so give a greater sense of space and openness.



On the swings with the old fence in the background

Access is controlled so that both Gogar Primary School children and the children from the VGS can use the facility safely. There is still plenty of space for more equipment and this is where funds will be spent in the future. The money to complete the fence has been donated by David Holden at Brambletye and the playground has been named in memory of Dave's brother Gerard.



The Gerard Holden playground.

Website: the VGT has been lucky enough to have had Andy Jones working on the website. He spent a week in Rongai looking at all the projects in order to reflect the atmosphere of each in the updated design he is preparing. We hope that this will go live shortly.

Sponsorship: the Trust is very grateful to Katie Close who spent a week developing a spreadsheet to trace sponsors and payment and trained Dorothy, Naomi's daughter to update the sheet so that payments can be matched to children more efficiently and updates on children can be sent to sponsors. If you have sponsored a child and not received an update, please contact Dorothy on naomimax58@yahoo.com She is handling sponsors at both the VGS and the Vocational Training Centre.

Vocational Training School

Wizzy Morton and Burghard celebrated their 50th and asked people to donate funds to the training centre instead of presents. The money is being used to put a roof on the two new classrooms that are being built. That is a lasting present that will benefit generations to come.



Two new classes with their roof.

The training school has successfully placed two youngsters into jobs in the community.

Phillip and Kelvin are now tying flies commercially for Gone Fishing Ltd. We hope to find appropriate positions in other local companies for other graduates in due course.



Kelvin and Philip Training in 2010



Kelvin tying in 2011. (Philip was away.)

Gogar Primary School

Cheltenham College returned in force in July to continue the excellent work on paving and renovating classrooms. The school cannot say a big enough thank you for this continued support. Gogar Primary School is now the most sought after primary school in the division and probably the best equipped including the private ones. As David Harvey and Emma Taylor have always maintained, the benefit is very much both ways, as the volunteers who come out, whether short term in July or for three months, are given a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in a completely different culture and learn the value of giving something back to the community and taking away a wealth of experience. If any past volunteers reading this would like to send me your comments on your experience in Rongai, it would be a great to be able to post these on the website that is being upgraded at the moment.



David Harvey and new paving in the background. Extra paving near the tanks.

Brambletye School have been great supporters of the VGT over the years and it was a great pleasure for Gogar Primary to welcome a group of students and teachers led by Ian Purcell. They joined the classes in groups, ate lunch with the boarders, did some short talks and challenged the 1st XI to a football match which was tactfully drawn at 1-1.



Brambletye welcomed at Assembly.



Renovated classroom.

St Michael's Nursery School.

Lauren and Ross have bravely undertaken a new development project in Rongai under the umbrella of the VGST. Last year when they were here, they identified a small nursery school run by Agnes in a corrugated iron hut. They were so impressed by what was being achieved in modest circumstances that they have been fund raising since. A plot has been bought and work has started on a wall, classroom and latrine. The plot will be owned by a trust that is being set up to own the assets and monitor the management. Agnes will become a tenant at a nominal rent.

Funds will be channeled through the VGT UK and the VGST will monitor the progress.



Ross and Lauren in the classroom June. At the opening on 12th August.

August 12th started with a blessing for Ross and Lauren at St Walstan's Church in Rongai and the guests then moved to the site to open the St Michael's Nursery School and the children enjoyed a party. In reality there is still much work that needs to be completed and the school will not be ready until December. It is a fine tribute to Ross and Lauren's energy that the school is at this advanced stage when the land had not even been bought at the beginning of June.



Lauren, still in her wedding dress, cuts the ribbon. Agnes and her class sing with gusto.

www.vanessagrattrust.org

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J E O August 2011.