



VANESSA GRANT TRUST

Report 43 December 2023 on all projects.





EDUCATION TODAY *for*
LEADERSHIP TOMORROW

The Vanessa Grant Girls' School *is the biggest of the Vanessa Grant Trust projects and is a residential not-for-profit selective school for girls of secondary age. The trust provides as many assisted places as possible for bright girls from challenged backgrounds. Currently 38% are provided with fee support.*

Competency Based Curriculum: the school has just received registration and is now able to proceed with the admitting grades 7 and 8 students (age 12 and 13 years). This is great news as it now enables the school to deliver its academic and leadership programs over six years rather than just four. It also enables the school to expand numbers and so become more viable. There is an active marketing program on-going as I write.

Solar conversion: thanks to generous support from UK and Australian trustees, the process of converting the school to solar power and hot water generation is underway. Until this year, there were no hot water showers in the homes. Now each has solar hot water panels and, unsurprisingly, the students are delighted! Kenya has been experiencing ever escalating power costs and power cuts. To reduce these, solar power generation for the kitchen and resource centre is now provided through panels and super-capacitor storage. These have much longer life rating than lithium batteries. As funds become available, the school aims to further reduce its reliance on a thoroughly unreliable national grid.





Banner display in Nakuru advertising entry for 2024 for Grades 7 and 8.
Solar electricity panels





There are five hot water solar panels on each home.
The dining room with more panels.

In the classroom: throughout the year the staff have been attending workshops focused on developing a more interactive delivery of the school curriculum to make learning a more exciting process and to improve results. There was particular focus on Maths and Sciences early in the year and then on other subjects later in the year under the guidance of the wonderful Penn Kirk who has given so generously of her time and professional expertise. Recently several staff have also shadowed teachers at St Andrew's School Turi, a high performing independent British Curriculum School (and the school that Vanessa attended when the family still lived in Kenya). They all came back with plenty of fresh ideas.

We are very grateful to Penn and to St Andrew's for giving the VGGS these opportunities.





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Brief reports on the other projects supported by the VGT follow.

Flames of Hope

This is the youngest of the VGT projects. It opened its doors in January 2018. It is Naomi Ndungu's brainchild. While she was the Head Teacher at the Vanessa Grant Special School, she had particular success in enabling children with limited or no speech to be able to communicate. This is a residential school that also accepts nursery age children daily.

Water

The school now has water! The link to the borehole supply from the VGGS is working well. An application has also been made to give access to a public water supply system, but nothing is flowing through the pipes yet.

The new kitchen is in use providing meals and a facility for the students to develop their own skills in the kitchen.







A lesson in the new kitchen.

Vanessa Grant Special School. (VGSS)

This was the first project undertaken by the VGT and is a residential public school for forty children with special needs. It opened its doors in 2000 and has developed steadily since then.

This school has gone from strength to strength this year and the children continue to thrive. Thanks to the VGT UK, many are sponsored. As the economic climate deteriorates so parents are finding it harder and harder to support their children. Those with challenges are often at the lower end of the priority list, so this support is vital. Huge thanks.

The riding, occupational and music therapy input continues to provide such a valuable opportunity to all the children and adds to the variety and richness of experience that sets this school apart.

Unglamorous but important infrastructural projects here have been the installation of a biodigester to improve the sewage disposal and the provision of solar heating panels to improve the warm water provision in the showers. Again, this is thanks to the wonderful support of trustees in Australia and the UK. We are now looking at the practicality of pumping water using solar power as well.





Siting the biodigester, luckily before the rain set in!
The level of the loos had to be raised to ensure good flow.





The new higher header tank needed for the new solar panels. Amelia's wonderful mural in the boys' dormitory. Penn is standing next to her.

Amelia, and very talented artist volunteered at the schools in Rongai and helped with Art at the VGGS and created this spectacular mural at the VGS. Thank you.

Vocational Training School

The Vocational Training School was another of Naomi Ndungu's ideas when it became clear that there was no suitable place for the children from the VGSS to proceed to once they had to move on. This is a residential school for 40 boys and girls run by Peggy, Naomi's daughter.

Various trustees have made visits here this year because of the concern at the lack of progress in this school. There are improvements and we are all hoping to see an increase in the numbers in 2024. Meanwhile the building of the new classrooms is on hold.



We did enjoy the music that was happening during one visit. Have a look and listen.

https://youtu.be/-BBbn9Qgy_g

Gogar Primary School

Gogar Primary School is a public school that the trust started supporting in 2012 by linking it to Cheltenham College and undertaking additional fund raising to refurbish and build new classrooms, renovate the latrines, build a library, staffroom, computer room, and kitchen and provide a water supply. Numbers at the school have increased from 300 to 900 day students today.

Cheltenham College has been very active fund-raising and it was great to be able to welcome another group back to Rongai in October led by Mr Johnson. The funds raised have provided for a much-needed ECD (Early Child Development) classroom which is complete and will be painted when the plaster is dry. It should be ready and furnished by the time the new school year opens in January. In addition to this, the volunteer group repainted classrooms, taught lessons and coached sport. Listen here to a short talk by two of the group. <https://youtu.be/b7w6aYOuylc>





Repainting a classroom ...
is quite fun.





The group is presented to the school in the new hall also built with money raised by Cheltenham. The mammoth task of tidying the library.





The new ECD classroom built with Cheltenham funds.
Saying goodbye.

Another very encouraging development is that the government has recognised the need to support Gogar Primary School and has provided funds to replace the roof over many of the classrooms and to replace the rough concrete floors with terrazzo. Until this year, all development at this school has had to come through the Vanessa Grant Trust.



New roof and new floors thanks to government support.

St Michael's Nursery School.

St Michael's nursery school is a project initiated by Lauren Sundercombe (VGT Trustee) and Cornwall College. It is a school for children between four and six and is run by Agnes Wangari. Fluid Branding, the company that Ross Sundercombe, Lauren's husband works for, has been wonderfully supportive and enabled the VGT to buy the adjacent plot to develop as a playground – requirement for registration with the Ministry of Education.

S Michael's continues to thrive and is in great demand as the nursery school of choice. No significant capital development has taken place here since the August.

Molo River House (MRH)

The Molo River House is accommodation that Cheltenham College and Cornwall College helped the VGT to fund to provide a safe and comfortable place for the increasing number of volunteers that have been arriving over the years. This has eight

rooms and sleeps sixteen people very comfortably and more when needed. Situated in the middle of Gogar Farm, it is quiet and secure.

Thanks to all the guests and the volunteers that now contribute to staying at the Molo River House, it has been possible to upgrade the kitchen and living area with a new cooker and fridge. All the bedding has been replaced and new mattresses bought. The camp chairs at the dining tables have been replaced with dining chairs made locally. No longer is table height chin height.

Pamela Scott Secondary School, Leldet Primary School and three Deloraine Nursery Schools.

Thanks to support from the Peter Cundill Foundation and donations from Xan Smiley, the VGT has been able to extend support to another five schools in the area. There are three small and very modest nursery schools serving the local community, Leldet Primary School with about 500 children and Pamela Scott Secondary School with about 800 students.

Nursery Schools: Money raised by Xan (Pam Scott's nephew) has enabled water tanks and guttering to be erected beside each school to provide at least some water for the children. Books and other resources have also been provided.





The new tanks and guttering and promising cloud.
Inside a classroom where children are holding up donated resources.

Leldet Primary School: The Board of Management decided that the most pressing need at this school was complete refurbishment of the long drop latrines for the girls. I must say that these were in abject condition. The work on these should be complete by the end of December. The trust has also donated two used desktops as a pilot project to see how these will be used.





Xan assessing needs with the Head Teacher and some Board members.
Work is under way on the girls' latrine block.





First the pit had to be emptied.

Delivering computers as part of a pilot project to Mr Kulei the Head Teacher.

Pamela Scott Secondary School: this is a relatively new school named appropriately after Pam Scott who owned Deloraine Farm before handing it over to the Rift Valley Institute. Two computers were trialed here earlier this year. Clearly, they have been put to good use, so the trust is now paying for the refurbishment of the old staff room as a computer room in preparation for the delivery of more machines in January.





First steps, four to one machine.

Work in progress to provide for 35 machines.

Kware Kapkwen: this is a very modest government secondary school just up the road from the VGS. The school has paid for power to be connected and some new tables ready for delivery of more machines. The pilot project with three machines has been a success. More will be delivered once these arrive from the UK.



Computers being delivered.





Staff receiving training a few days later.

**Happy Christmas from a sunny Rongai and
our sincere thanks for the wonderful support
received this year.**

VGT Trustees

USA: Hermione Gluck, Mary Asphar, Susan Nelson.

UK: Lucinda Bolton-Carter, Nutty Thrupp, Sarah Darling, Lauren Sundercombe, Karen Robertson-Macleod.

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