

St Patrick's Day at Doogles

St Patrick's Day festival on Saturday 15th March was again a fantastic multicultural event expertly organised by Mary O'Neill and her band of FBI leprechauns. Multicultural, not only because the Irish are renowned for their wanderlust, ability to get on with everybody and their generosity of spirit but also because there was a melting pot of all cultures metamorphosing into 'Fabulous, Beautiful and Irish' individuals enjoying a variety of entertainment ranging from an Irish band all the way from Dublin to Ben Mankumba and the ZigZaggers to Carla and the Funky Peppers and the famous Selvas disco. This was all washed down with Carlsberg Green beer, Guinness and some delicious food after kissing the Blarney Tree and everyone probably became pure geniuses with the gift of the gab. The next day the excuse was "The leprechauns made me do it!" Thanks to all the sponsors- you know who you are. K600, 000 was made by the Irish society who promptly donated half to Ubwino Wa Amayi and half to the Billy Riordan Malawi Project. The money Ubwino received was earmarked for the nursery school project.

The Namitembo Nursery School Project

So much has been done in the space of 9 months! On her annual visit to Donegal, Mary, like a snowball, gathered so much support for Ubwino Wa Amayi to the extent that a fundraising art auction was held and 8 builders were funded to venture into deepest Africa. Their task to help the community build the nursery school in one month. They arrived on 4th September to an incomplete foundation and left it on October 2nd ready to receive the roof. Hats off to the lads from Donegal especially given the delay in the supply of materials. Some of the Ubwino girls being funded through the Trade school were able to practice their bricklaying and carpentry skills- a great experience for both the builders and the students. It was sad to see them go but they'll be back. Thanks to Father Owen O'Donnell for making them so welcome and to John Duffel for his excellent blog about the builder's progress.

Achievements in Namitembo

This year, Ubwino have concentrated on the nursery school project. The goal was to have the nursery up and running by January 2009. That would have been a miracle and people around the world would have been making a pilgrimage to Namitembo to see it! Like the Millennium goals, there is no point in having easily achieved aims, one has to set their sights higher and greater things will be achieved. The community and the Ubwino team will now start planning what will be needed to make it run effectively and efficiently. As well as equipment and learning materials, volunteers, teachers and food will be required. Some nursery equipment has already been donated.

The Ubwino Wa Amayi project is now in its third year. To go back to our original project plan, the overall goal is to reduce poverty and improve health in the community of Namitembo by 2015. The assumption is, through research based evidence, that improved literacy and higher education attainment in girls reduces negative health impacts.

Our objectives were:

- To improve girl: boy ratios in classrooms by 80% by 2010
- To raise awareness in the community of Namitembo and in the wider national community about the negative impacts of high school drop out in girls by 2007
- To raise sufficient money through fundraising to cover all expenses for funding girls/young women to continue their education and all that goes with it by 2007.

Through community stakeholder meetings, the objectives evolved into not only providing bursaries but also to improving the quality of education and implementing early learning facilities in line with government education policy.

Fundraising activities

All this needs money and sadly we are running out! The Nursery school is costing more than double the original estimates. We did not anticipate a global credit crunch. This is why we have some more great fundraising ideas.

Mary has come up with “**another brick in the wall**” (*we do need some education*). This will enable a donor to buy K10, 000 worth of bricks for their name to be inscribed in the building. Your name can also be added to the wall on the website.

We are also in talks about the possibility of setting up a volunteer village to enable volunteers from all over the world to take advantage of **voluntourism** and impart their skills and knowledge to our young women and men in Malawi.

In December we plan to have a **cheese and wine evening** and are looking for a major sponsor.

Kate Mathias has kindly offered to help us with a mid-term review/evaluation to review the effectiveness of the project, for accountability, lesson learning and to establish whether our goals and purpose are being achieved.

2008 Milestones

- Mary walked in the Two Oceans fun marathon at Easter. Keep walking!
- An art auction was held in Donegal in to raise funds for the builders travel costs.
- Mary had an article in the Donegal democrat
- Diane was interviewed for a documentary entitled ‘Soldiers in the War on Poverty’ by www.projectmalawifilm.org
- Ubwino Wa Amayi became a company limited by guarantee and now has a registration number No.9100.
- A group of 8 builders came and took Namitembo by storm.

Thank you to our sponsors

The fact that up to 75 girls are being sponsored and a nursery school is being built at all is thanks to all the people who want to help to improve the lives of young women in Malawi and give them choices and chances and the ability to make decisions for themselves. If it wasn't for you we would not reach our objectives.

Whether you have given a one-off or regular donation we are grateful for your generosity. Thanks again to **Portfolio** designs for always printing our leaflets at the last minute; to **Skyband** Malawi for continually developing the website and giving us great ideas; to **Monica Peverelle** for giving us permission to use one of her paintings from 'Images of Malawi' in our logo design; To FMB, AGORA, Doogles, Carlsberg Danforth Yachting and Wilderness Safaris for donating raffle prizes.



