

PROGRESS OF THE ACTIVITIES IN MIFUMI – February 2003

The New Year began with buildings completed for the start of the new term on 10th February 2003. Mifumi Primary School now has a functioning Library Block. This comprises of a Library, Staff Room, Store, Reception and offices.

Shelves for the Library have been purchased and made and the stocking of the library is ongoing. In addition to the generous donations from Jersey and PROMPT additional books have been donated by the Library Services of Uganda who gave us six boxes of books.

Staff are happy to now have a dedicated staff room and the senior staff, the Headmaster and Deputy, have individual offices at their disposal. Two typewriters have been purchased to aid in administrative tasks. The new Deputy Headmaster will shortly move into the staff accommodation. Interviews have been held for Nursery and Primary teachers and two successful female teachers have moved into the Jersey funded staff accommodation.

The two-classroom block that was started by the Jersey volunteers is now complete. Classes are now being taught in these classrooms. One of the classes has been earmarked as a computer class and Mifumians are happy to hear that some computers have been donated by the people of Jersey and are awaiting to be shipped by PROMPT.

Twelve young persons went to Tororo for a two-month training workshop for making furniture for the School. Most had never done any carpentry before but all were willing to have a go. They were spurred on by the proposal that the trainer, Mr Munene, offered that a few might be given full time employment after the training. The young people gained many skills during their training and have returned to the village with confidence. They produced 80 desks for the new two-classroom block. Three of the trainees have been offered employment.

The next building under construction at the School is a community hall. This fine building will be used for many purposes including School Assembly, Village Meetings, Plays, Church Services, Wedding Celebrations etc. It will house a stage as well as changing rooms at the back. A small canteen is also in the plans. Work started in January and the workmen under the able direction of Okello, the foreman, have already got to roof level. We hope to be able to use the building by April.

Many textbooks have recently been purchased for the School (see attached Photo). Thanks again to the people of Jersey.

The feeding programme continues to be popular amongst pupils and parents. So much so that the School is finding it difficult to keep up with the demand for places at the School. The school now has 680 enrolled pupils and this could have been far more had the numbers not been restricted.

At a recent parents meeting, parents were asked to contribute 300/- (about 10p) for manila files for the children. Discussions centred on whether this should be for the whole year or each term. Poverty amongst the population continues to be a serious issue.

We are happy to note that the Electricity Board is making progress on the provision to the School. It does seem to be taking a very long time, however they are now half way from the road to the School. We will keep you posted on this progress.

The young persons have performed a play on domestic violence and Bride Price to visitors from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The dancing costumes and musical instruments have now all been purchased. The young people are now rehearsing a play, which will tackle the tricky issue of widow inheritance and domestic violence.

At the health centre patients continue to come in their hundreds. In February 2003, our records indicate that over 1,900 patients were treated in the outpatients department. In addition, 71 patients were tested for various diseases such as Malaria, HIV and Syphilis in the Jersey funded Laboratory. Malaria continues to be a serious problem. Tororo District has one of the highest incidences of the disease and Malaria is our largest recorded disease by far and a killer. Mosquito nets at about 5 pounds each are out of reach for the majority of our residents. In January the Laboratory was disrupted by the placing of a Grinding Mill nearby. This affected the power supply and caused problems with the operation of the equipment. Since then the Electricity Board have installed 3 Phase Power, which allows the Grinding Mill to operate without disruption to our Laboratory. All the equipment is now working well.

Long after the Jersey volunteers left the significant benefits continue to be felt and appreciated by the people of Mifumi.

Glyn Turner
The Mifumi Project