

Gift of Clothing

Summary

I want to extend many heartfelt thanks to all who have sent clothing here to me. I wanted to provide some sort of photographic display for you, showing you why we need such clothing, and best of all, let you know how they were used. I don't have pictures of every piece of clothing mailed to me, but did manage to get a few photos at the meeting of the Base Camp United Christian Foundation on 29th of November, 2008.

First of all, let me encourage you to go to the South Rwenzori web site, <http://www.southrd.org/faithprograms.html> where you will find a link to the Base Camp United Christian Foundation page. This provides information about the small group of people that we are trying to help. It was begun by Sebeya Peter, who is the "jack of all trades" that takes care of the Guest House (and me!) where I live, and also he manages the Youth Centre for the Diocese, in addition to running this small NGO (Non-Governmental Organization). As you look at



Figure 1: A photo of the children sitting outside on the rocks when I arrived on Saturday for the meeting.

the photos, you see a wide variety of clothing. We also had one little naked boy there (probably around 2-3). They were all quite happy – and more than a few of them were quite dirty.

Dirt here is not something that westerners would accept. But consider... these children have only the dirt to play in. They do not have water to keep clean – without carrying it for long distances, and then it is more important to drink than to 'wash' with. Not all of them drink "clean" water, for in order to drink clean water, you also need money to buy charcoal so that you can build a fire to boil it.



Figure 2: this photo is of the dirt - and the extreme lack of clothing for these children. The boy on the left was wearing, probably, all he had to wear. The little boy on the right was wearing nothing under his sweatshirt.

Buildings have dirt floors – mostly – concrete floors are present in well-constructed (more expensive) houses. Most of the poor live in whatever shelter is available to them, or what they can construct themselves. Some of these children live "in the bush" – they have no homes.

Current Status

The total number of children being cared for by this group is 134, spread out over various smaller centres. There are 47 children at the main centre, Kyakasanga and Kasese Parents Centre has 67;



Figure 3: (L) Muhindo John, aged 10. His mother is dead; the father is alive but jobless. They visited the home and the father doesn't mind the child, so they picked up the child and took him into the Centre. He returns home at night to sleep. (R) Bwambale Japhali, aged 12. This is a muslim child – parents both alive but do not care for the child. The father is jobless. He is basically taken into the school for education and food. Father evidently goes begging for labor to supply food needs; if he doesn't work, they don't eat. There are six children in the family and only this one is in BUFO



Figure 5: (L) Biira Joelyn, aged 12. She wearing one of the dresses given to the group. The parents are alive, but the children in the family (5 children) are all “vulnerable.” The parents do not care for them. This is the only child in the school. The parents are jobless, doing mainly manual labor for foodstuffs. (Center) Biira (other name unknown), aged 12. The parents are alive but jobless and unable to provide for the family. The mother is trying to run a small business of selling cassava flour; the yields are not enough to support the family. She has been included in the savings and loan scheme, whereby she can borrow small amounts and repay it over a fixed period of time.



Figure 4: This is a group of children performing a Welcome/Thank You song for us. The ages of this group are from 9–12.

there are 10 in Kapoko (up in the mountains) and there are 5 at Kahendero, and 5 at Hamukungu.

The desire, and plan, is to build one centre, on land acquired for the purpose of building a centre, so that all of the children can be housed and cared for in one central site.

The estimated cost of all of this is considerable – the first obstacle being the site for such a center. Availability of funds is dependent upon the good

will of well-wishers, as none of the people associated with the center have sufficient salary to contribute.

Regarding the Estimated cost of land — we require at least 3 acres of land on which to build a primary school, a home, a vocational school and an administrative block. It should be centrally located. In Kasese, one acre costs around two million shillings.

The goal is to care for 100 children and provide housing, education and training so that they can become self supporting,



Figure 6: (Middle) Musoki Jacklin, aged 10. There are 3 other children in the family (two boys/two girls). The parents sell cassava flour – a very low scale business.



Figure 8: Jennifer again. I took the picture of the little boy only because he was wearing a man's shirt. He is not a member of the BUFO group – probably just came to see all of the excitement. He wore no other clothing than the shirt.



Figure 7: The girl on upper right in striped shirt is Masika Jennifer, aged 13. There are just two girls in the family. The other girl was taken by a relative. The grandmother was looking after the child. Jennifer stays at the center at nights; the grandmother is old and unable to care for the children.



Figure 9: Unknown little girl in the middle - wearing one of the dresses sent to us.