

woodford

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Issue 8

“Education is
the enemy of
ignorance..”

Nasser Ssenyondo, Programmes
Officer, SignHealth Uganda

(speaking at the Promoting Disability-
Inclusive Development Conference, London,
May 2011)



Deaf children enjoying lessons at a school in Masaka, Uganda

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Contact us at 9 College Hill, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire SY1 1LZ UK. Tel: (44) 01743 364644
www.woodfordfoundation.org.uk
info@woodfordfoundation.org.uk

*Helping deaf children
and young people
around the world*



WOODFORD'S VISION AND MISSION 2

Woodford envisages a world in which children and young people who have sensory impairments are full and active participants in their families and communities.

Woodford's main aim is to support and empower deaf and deafblind children, young people and their families in income-poor countries by:

- Enabling greater access to education and vocational training
- Working with government and civil society to develop improved services
- Supporting community-based initiatives which empower

MALAWI



Teachers become the students at an awareness training session

June 2011 marked the end of the first of three years of the Scottish Government funded programme to help deaf children return to, or for the first time go to school. Woodford, working closely with our UK partners, Sense Scotland and the Woodford Foundation Scotland and our partners in Malawi, has now helped to improve the chances of thousands of deaf children to access education.

The initiative works with parents, teachers and community members to build awareness and communication levels surrounding deafness. By using this approach the aim has been to encourage key people in the lives of deaf children to be active advocates for their provision and inclusion in mainstream education.

Over the last year hundreds of parents, teachers and community members have gone through training awareness sessions, with the vast majority seeing wholesale changes in their attitudes towards deaf people. In Malawi, as in many other countries with relatively poor educational provision, there is a reliance on local superstitions to provide explanations about conditions such as deafness. This often means that deaf people are not considered to be on the same level as their hearing peers, causing increased marginalisation and a decreased chance of an equitable life. This programme helps to redress some of this imbalance and gives deaf people better opportunities to help themselves.

ZAMBIA

In early 2011, Woodford embarked on a new partnership with Zambia Deaf Youth and Women (ZDYW), a new Zambian organisation dedicated to improving the lives of both deaf women and deaf young people. This partnership marks the first project work that Woodford has undertaken in the country.

In all areas where Woodford operates, the initial initiatives are nearly always research based, so that the issues and situation on the ground, in that specific location, are taken into account. This greatly helps our organisation understand what the important and pressing issues are that we could potentially assist with.

The initial project has been to assess the general public's attitudes towards deafness, deaf people and their rights in relation to accessing education. This survey across a cross section of society has helped to garner valuable information about the beliefs and perceptions of communities towards those with hearing impairments. The results from the survey concluded that a significant proportion of people believe that witchcraft and devilry are major causes of deafness and other disabilities. These beliefs are not just held by the low skilled and poorly educated population, but are also held by more educated sections of society, like health and education professionals.

Woodford has been working closely with ZDYW to develop new initiatives which will help to address these awareness and other issues garnered from the survey. Project outlines have been drawn up and Woodford is now seeking help to find funds for these initiatives which will change many peoples lives for the better.



An agricultural project at a school for the deaf, in Zambia

Since the last Newsletter there has been an increase in project activity in Uganda. These advances have led to a first in the country.

Woodford works in collaboration with SignHealth UK, one of the leading UK based charities assisting deaf people, and SignHealth Uganda, a Ugandan based charity working to assist the country's deaf population. Over the last year these partners have worked together with the Uganda School for the Deaf to design, finance and open the first official pre-school for the deaf in Uganda. In April this year, representatives of all these partner organisations attended the inaugural opening of the pre-school in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. It is a significant step in the growth and development of Uganda's provision for those with hearing impairments, as it marks a new point where deaf children will be able to formally access education and start to learn sign language and other forms of communication. This will give them a significant improvement in their chances to become full and active members of society.



Pre-schoolers enjoying their new playground on the opening day of the pre-school, in Kampala

TANZANIA



Harry Salter (left), Woodford's Fundraising Officer, chatting to students at the VTCD

In June 2011 the Vocational Training Centre for the Deaf (VTCD) had its first birthday celebrations, marking one year of academic educational activity. The VTCD, which Woodford has helped to develop from its conception, through its construction phases and then onto the operational stages, is the first ever of its kind in Tanzania and offers practical and academic

training for deaf young people to go on to be able to access employment.

Although there is still a need for new buildings and resources for the VTCD, the centre has now seen its first dozen students finish their first year of studies. The coming years will see a steady increase in the numbers of students and the government is committed to continue to provide full academic support to the students. This is a huge leap in the opportunities of its students. Charlie, who is 21, and is enrolled at the VTCD told Harry Salter, from Woodford, "without the opportunities that I have here at the VTCD I would be at home doing nothing, with little hope of anything more. With the opportunities that I have now I am able to learn a practical skill and hope that when I graduate I will be able to start my own carpentry business, which I would have never been able to do before."

Charlie's story is typical of those at the VTCD and highlights the need to assist the VTCD to become self-sustaining. Woodford is working with its partners to a three year programme which looks to enable to VTCD to be able to generate its own income and sustain itself beyond the life of the relationship it has with Woodford. We therefore need more help to ensure that this goal can be achieved.

COMPETITIONS, EXHIBITIONS AND SO MUCH MORE

Since the end of last year Woodford has started to grow its volunteer support and in July of this year a Volunteer Council was created, so that this dedicated team can start to develop and implement some of their own fundraising activities. This is exciting as it represents a new chapter in the growth of our organisation, not only to generate valuable funds for the initiatives we operate, but also to raise awareness of the difficulties that deaf children and young people face everyday.

Over the coming months Woodford volunteers will be involved in and managing events such as Shropshire's first ever photo marathon; a photography exhibition showcasing photos from Woodford's projects around the world and photographs from the photo marathon; stalls and events at Shropshire's new music festival, Shrewsbury Fields Forever; and other events like bag packing at supermarkets, second hand stalls, dress down days and much much more....

If you are interested in helping out please contact Harry on our number below, or email him: harry@woodfordfoundation.org.uk



Volunteers Graham and Felicity making pancakes for the hordes on Shrove Tuesday!

A little goes a long way

£10 will provide the educational resources, for a deaf child to go to school for a year in Malawi. This will mean that they can have the same chance as their hearing peers.

Text donate:

DEAF11 £10 To 70070



£25 will help a whole family to be trained in deaf awareness. This can transform the lives of everyone by empowering the family to become active in the learning and growth of their deaf children.

Text donate: DEAF11 £25 to 70070

Make a world of difference

Woodford now offers supporters the opportunity to donate by text!

Simply text: **DEAF11 £10** (or other amount you wish to give) to **70070**

Current Appeals:

Zambia:

Pilot parents awareness training: **TARGET: £9,674**

Tanzania:

New project to install solar electricity to the VTCD, so that the deaf students can sign to each other at night: **TARGET: £15,750**

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