

woodford

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Issue 7

“If these families don’t get help then these deaf children will never be educated...”

David Njaidi, Director of Special Needs, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Government of Malawi



Parents of deaf children at a deaf awareness and communication training session, in the Northern Region, of Malawi

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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

PRESIDENT RETIRES

In the later half of last year Doreen Woodford, retired as President and trustee of Woodford. Doreen has dedicated her life to assisting deaf and hearing impaired people, both in the UK and overseas. She said of her time here, "I have achieved what I set out to achieve and I will be watching the Woodford Foundation in the future with pleasure and pride."



Doreen Woodford on one of her last official Woodford Foundation visits

Doreen has had 40 years experience in the education of deaf children. She began her career with Barnardo Childcare and at the Liverpool School for the Deaf. Following her degree and teacher training at the University of Manchester, Doreen taught at schools in Margate, Liverpool, Malvern and London.

When she retired from full-time employment she began to work to improve the education of deaf children across the world. With a number of other professionals from the field of assistance for the deaf, she founded the Woodford Foundation in 2004.

Doreen has been one of the driving forces of Woodford, over the last few years, and although we will be keeping in touch with her, the organisation will not be the same again.

UGANDA

There is great excitement in Woodford and SignHealth, both here and in Uganda, as the partners prepare for the opening, in April this year, of the first official and affiliated pre-school service for deaf children, in Uganda.

It has been a vision for a long time to offer pre-primary school services to deaf children to help them obtain and develop their language skills. So often deaf children are left without language assistance, as they rarely have peers, parents, or teachers they can learn from. This means that they are increasingly likely to remain marginalised and dependent on others for the rest of their lives. This new programme offers them the first chance of gaining valuable skills that will equip them with the ability and confidence to navigate life at home, in school and beyond.

Woodford and SignHealth have been working with the Uganda School for the Deaf, to put together facilities and services so that deaf pre-schoolers will get the best start in education that they can. We have signed agreements with the government and other bodies to ensure that the best possible provision is in place for the first intake of children into the centre. It is our hope and intention that the pre-school is educational, sustainable and beneficial for a long time to come.

In other news from Uganda, SignHealth Uganda (Woodford's partner) have recently conducted a survey into the attitudes and awareness of the general public about deafness and disability. The survey asked people, from all walks of life, what their views were and where deaf people's place should be in society. The results show that over a quarter of all those surveyed believe that deafness can be caused by witchcraft or the devil. Even within the group of trained medical workers the figure was still as high as 20%, with teachers also scoring at 23%.

Woodford and its partners are now looking to design awareness programmes to help allay these negative stereotypes about deaf people.

Woodford has been working closely with UWAVIKA, a local Tanzanian association of parents of the deaf, for over five years. In this time the partnership has developed and built the first ever Vocational Training Centre for the Deaf (VTCD), in Tanzania. In June 2010 the first students were enrolled and began their classes in carpentry, tailoring and business entrepreneurship. This marked a significant point in the educational access for young deaf people leaving primary school, in Tanzania.

Jenifa Elias is a student at the VTCD, "Before coming to the VTCD...I hoped to continue with further studies. I expressed this idea to my parents but they...could not afford (this) and also there (are) few school that instruct through sign language..."

"My parents then got information...that there was a centre that provides vocational training and uses sign language as the medium of instruction, this was the VTCD. My parents told me about this and decided to send me there. I am so happy as there are so many deaf children who do not have this opportunity.

"My ambition is to become an expert tailor, so as to be able to teach other deaf children. I will then be able to help many others who also need such education and



One of the students, Jenifa Elias (right), signing with one of the teachers at the VTCD

skills. Thanks to all the people who in one way or another contributed to the establishment of the VTCD."

Jenifa is one of a number of students studying tailoring at the VTCD. Although the centre is currently open, Woodford still needs funds to help make this a beneficial, sustainable and permanent centre for deaf young people like Jenifa.

MALAWI



Children at Embangweni School for the Deaf, Malawi

Woodford's Comic Relief and Scottish Government funded programme started in the middle of 2010. Its aim has been to identify and assess as many hearing impaired children as possible in the Northern region of the country. The programme then works with parents, teachers and the community to raise deaf awareness and communication skills. The ultimate aim is to help deaf children access education, therefore enabling them the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Since the programme began the uptake and enthusiasm

surrounding the awareness and communication sessions has been way beyond expectations. The Ministry of Education and the local education authorities have been fully behind the initiatives and this has helped garner huge support for the programme.

Many people come along to the sessions with deep seated cultural stereotypes of deaf people, believing they are lazy and stupid and sometimes victims of witchcraft. The training sessions look to give basic physiological answers to some of the questions raised and looks to allay negative stereotypes which, left unchecked, can lead to marginalisation, isolation and discrimination. The over whelming majority of those attending the sessions have come away with more positive attitudes towards those with hearing impairments.

Although, this programme is showing great success, there is still a great need to continue to build on the positive responses that we are receiving. Woodford is looking to kit out and manage a test resource centre which will help itinerant (roaming) teachers of the deaf travel to and reach some of the most geographically challenging areas of northern Malawi, so that more and more deaf children are given the opportunities in life that is the right of every child. We are therefore looking for people to aid us to help these children have a chance.

HARRY NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Harry Salter is Woodford's new Fundraising Officer, who started with the organisation late last year. He has already held a number of community fundraising events, but is looking for willing volunteers to take up the cause and run a raffle, or a marathon, hold a coffee morning or come up with something unique to do. Anything to help Woodford to raise its profile, get our message across and raise a few pounds to help us continue to help deaf children and young people around the world.

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



Harry and two of Woodford's hard working volunteers, Amanda (centre) and Felicity (right)

VOLUNTEER COLUMN

This section is new to Woodford's Newsletter and will be written by one of our volunteers, talking about their experiences with Woodford, or an upcoming event that they have planned. This edition we have Mai Perry-Gosling, who is currently helping Woodford out in the office, but has also been out and about actively fundraising:

I first came into contact with the Woodford Foundation when Harry approached me about helping out for Woodford's Christmas Campaign; I happily agreed and had an utter blast (see my blog about my fundraising experience on the Woodford Website) and from there I was kindly extended the opportunity to come in for a few days a week and help out round the office. My first mission was to input survey results into a database and produce some statistics. This actually proved to be a great introduction to working with Woodford, as I was able to learn about the current understanding of deafness in Uganda and the typical attitudes towards it. It was particularly astonishing to find out that witchcraft is still considered by many, including nurses and medical staff, to be a primary cause of deafness. During my time at Woodford, I've also been working with Harry on a couple of fundraising initiatives, I've written/edited some funding applications and I'm looking forward to learning about more community fundraising in some of our up-coming projects, which include a pancake day extravaganza and a campaign of several stalls all around Shropshire, I can't wait!

Who we are:

Chairman:	Rodney Clark
Trustees:	David Bond Rita Hopper Julie Gemmill
Development Director:	Mathew Gilbert
Programmes Manager:	Karen Goodman-Jones
Fundraising Officer:	Harry Salter

Current Appeals:

Tanzania:

Running costs for first 3 years: TARGET: £20,000 per year.

Malawi:

New project to fund and equip a resource centre for roaming teachers of the deaf: TARGET: £40,000

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