

News for Friends of Fusi Secondary School in Lesotho



New Classrooms

Fusi Secondary School is getting ready for the start of the new school year in January by building a new classroom. The school was built with three classrooms - one for each of the three years of education provided by the school. But last year, the Principal admitted two classes into Form A and moved the small Form C into the storeroom of the newly built kitchen block. In January, he expects again to be able to take in two classes in Form A, so he will need an extra classroom. The picture above shows the new classroom that is being built by a local man - the one who built the new toilets for the school.

The Principal has been using money raised from the school fees for the building. The walls have now been completed but he has run out of money before work could start on the roof. This will cost a further ZAR21,000 (about £1,700).

In the meantime, the promised new buildings paid for by the Japanese aid programme have started to materialise! Already, the foundations have been dug and concreted. It seems as though we have been holding our breath for almost two years now since it was first suggested that the school might be included in the Japanese building programme and we hardly dared hope that it would come to fruition - but work has actually started. Not only that, but it seems that the

school has been successful in being granted the fullest extent of what could be offered.

There are to be seven new classrooms. With the existing ones, this will mean that the school will have enough accommodation to support two-form entry throughout the school and also to extend to add Forms D and E to become a High School offering O levels: no schools in the country offer A levels. (At present students have to move to another school - and face the burden of higher fees and travel costs - once they gain their Junior Certificate in Form C.) Unfortunately the classrooms won't be ready in time for the January intake, which is why the school has to build the extra classroom. This, in due course, will become the library.

Particularly exciting is that the building programme also includes two houses for teachers. Ha Fusi is a poor village - which is why there is such a strong need for affordable secondary education in the area. There is no mains electricity or piped water and the school itself is rather isolated from housing - so security is an issue. The new houses should enable the school to attract high quality teachers who, otherwise, would work in more "comfortable" schools. An added bonus is that the Japanese are installing solar panels so that all the buildings will have electricity.

Lesotho is one of the world's poorest countries. The country is also devastated by the ravages of AIDS, with official figures saying that a staggering one in four people are HIV positive.

Orphans are commonplace. Children of school age are often heads of households, or living with and caring for grandparents as well as their younger siblings.

Primary education is free in Lesotho and villages often have their own primary school. But secondary schools charge fees, which are often beyond the means of people in a poor village like Ha Fusi. The government will pay the fees of orphans, but not the cost of travel to the school which often makes it impossible for children to attend.

When Andy Uglow spent a gap year at Ha Fusi he resolved to raise the funds to build a secondary school for the village which would be affordable for the local children. Despite problems along the way, his vision is now seeing children educated at a purpose-built school, with a well-respected local man as Principal and staffed by qualified teachers.

The school is recognised by the Ministry of Education. In due course, it is expected that the Ministry will pay all the teachers' salaries and the school will be fully viable financially. In the meantime, the school relies on donations to assist with the funding of salaries - just £1,000 per month, not much by UK standards but a fortune to the local people.

In 2010, the school introduced school lunches for all the students - a boon for children who often went hungry. Student fees - for tuition and all meals - are just £100 a year. As well as giving general financial support to the school, the Rafiki Thabo Foundation supports some individual students through scholarships.



Water Tank

With no piped water in the area, everyone has to rely on bore holes for their water. Drilling the hole was an expensive operation for the school as it was a long way down from the cliff on which the school is situated to the water table below.

Since this was done three years ago, the students have been pumping (and pumping and pumping) the water up by hand.

However, the Japanese threw down a challenge to the school: "If you put in a

proper pump and a water storage tank, we'll build you a science laboratory". And the school rose to the challenge.

They bought the pump and the tank you see above, and use the generator donated to them to drive the pump.

So what you see in the picture is not just a water tank, it's the foundation of a science laboratory for the school.

Also benefitting from the improved water supply is the school cook who no longer has to seek out students with strong arms to pump water for her.

Donations

At the moment, the salaries of half the teachers are paid by the Ministry of Education and the other half are paid for by your donations. The Japanese are lobbying hard for all the teachers to be paid by the Ministry, but

until they are the school does depend on your continuing support.

The new classrooms will also need desks for the increasing number of students. So any new donations will be most welcome and spent wisely.

**Donation to Rafiki Thabo Foundation (registered charity number 1118430)
for the support of Fusi Secondary School in Lesotho**

Gift Aid Declaration

I wish my donation to be Gift Aided - which increases its value by 25% - and will pay Income/Capital Gains Tax this year amounting to at least the amount reclaimed by the charity.

Full Name.....
Home address (House no/name).....
(Postcode).....

Amount of donation.....

Fusi Secondary School is supported by the Rafiki Thabo Foundation - a registered charity which is able to reclaim tax on your gift aided donations to the further benefit of the school. To do so, please complete this form and send it, with your cheque made out to "Rafiki Thabo Foundation" to

Dapplestones
Hastings Hill
Churchill
CHIPPING NORTON
OX7 6NA