



A Partnership between the scouts of Northamptonshire and the staff and pupils of Outspan School, Kampala, Uganda.

Outspan School

The school is situated in the slum suburb of Bwaise and has 500 children between the ages of 3 and 13. Many are orphans or come from very poor families or broken homes. The original timber classrooms have now been replaced with brick buildings, although this was never anticipated at the outset. The only promise we made was to assist with the provision of basic educational resources.

The Ugandan government does not provide enough money for education and so parents have to pay fees to the schools that their children attend. Outspan School believes that all children are entitled to an education and will not turn anyone away who asks for an education, whether they can afford to pay or not, and so struggles to give the children the best education that they can.

The project has helped Northamptonshire Scouts to contribute to the education of their friends in Uganda, by providing the school with basic educational resources such as pens, pencils, exercise books, text books, calculators etc., whilst, at the same time, it has also contributed to the scouts of Northamptonshire's knowledge and awareness of the world and the realisation that they can, and have, made a difference to the lives of others.

Project Development

Project developed after visit to Uganda in 1995 by three Leaders. Two and a half weeks were spent travelling around the country and meeting members of local communities to discuss possible opportunities for partnerships. Many friends were gained but no firm promises made other than that, at the very least, we would return again to visit the beautiful country and people of Uganda.

On return to the UK all possible project options were evaluated against the following criteria:

- Is the project worthwhile for both Ugandan people and Northamptonshire scouts?
- Is it worthwhile for those who may not be part of a visiting group?
- Is it worthwhile for those who will visit Uganda?
- Is it educational?
- Is it spiritual?
- Is it a people project or just bricks and mortar?
- Is it accessible to all? (It should not preclude anyone who wants to take part).
- Is it achievable? (Attractive in a way that will arouse interest and encourage the giving of funds).
- Is it flexible? (Can the project be changed in scope if anticipated fund raising and support is not achieved so as not to disappoint our partners?).
- Is it in an accessible part of the country and can the security of the visiting group be assured?

Having assessed all the possible options it was decided that a partnership with Outspan School would best fulfil all of the above criteria, because:

- 1) The aim of Scouting is to develop young people physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually. This partnership achieves this by:
 - ❑ Promoting interest and compassion for young people in another country.
 - ❑ Providing stimulating programme ideas.
 - ❑ Being accessible to all training sections in the County.
- 2) This project is involved with a cross section of Ugandan children and not just those with scout links.
- 3) The project does not have a fixed target in respect of fund raising as any money raised will be of direct benefit to the school and therefore the children.
- 4) The project is not a building project it is a people project. Therefore, when the visit takes place, all those taking part will have some skill that will be of benefit to the school.

In order to test the viability of the project a presentation was made to the County Executive Committee. Having obtained their backing, further presentations were made to each training section, including Scout Fellowship.

Once the commitment of all sections had been obtained a Project Management Team was established. Job descriptions were written for each of its members and specific individuals targeted to take on specific roles.

Sectional Co-Ordinators were given the task to select a team of people (including young people) to develop ways of promoting the project within their respective sections and consider links to the progressive training scheme.

A roadshow was developed which toured the County and, through slideshows, talks, games and activities, complete 'Bwaise Evenings' were delivered to Beaver Colonies, Cub Scout Packs, Scout Troops, Venture Scout Units, Scout Fellowship and Leaders meetings.

In the first year more than 200 presentations were made and these were attended by over 6500 people.

A Resource Book, with information about Uganda and the school, and full of games and activities, was developed. 1000 copies were printed and a free copy was distributed to every section leader in the County.

The Scout Section developed a 'Bwaise Proficiency Woggle'. Achieved by finding out facts about Uganda and the school, taking part in activities from the book and raising money for the project. Other sections devised their own ways of promoting the project.

To date over £50,000 has been raised for the school.

Individuals and groups/Groups have written to the school and developed friendships. Some orphans, or those from particularly poor homes, have their school fees paid by sponsors back here in the UK.

In 1997, after a year of team building activities following their selection interviews, an Expedition of 56 young people and leaders left Northampton on 18th July for a three week stay in Uganda.

Members visited and worked at the school, camped with Ugandan scouts, toured the country, went on safari and rafted down the Nile.

The project still continues - good friendships never stop. The scouts of Northamptonshire have done much to contribute to the education of 500 young people in a school in Uganda. However, in return, these young people have contributed to the education and development of over 10,000 young people in Northamptonshire and many other people within and outside of both Scouting and the County.