

ANNUAL REPORT for 2010-2011
NYQM Great Lakes Region (Africa) Education Committee
July 30, 2011

This year, our tenth, has been exceptionally productive for the Quarterly Meeting's African Education Committee. On January 22nd at Kisangura Friends Primary School in Tanzania, 125 students orphaned by AIDS received uniforms, shoes, books, supplies, and in the case of those in the secondary school, had their fees paid; all of this is required if they are to attend classes. At the same time, in Davanga, Kenya, committee member Margaret Mulindi was using funds donated by NYQM members in 2009 and 2010 to build a brand-new four-classroom Friends primary school. Meanwhile, back at Kisangura, the rest of those funds were committed to new construction mandated by the fundraising campaign at those Quaker schools. On May first, thanks to Marna Herrity, Brooklyn Meeting enjoyed an exhibit of artwork by students at Brooklyn Friends School and Kisangura Friends Secondary School. Four of the seven members of our committee have been present at one of our two sites in Africa since last year's report.

The committee's membership remains unchanged from last year: Margery Cornwell, Marna Herrity, Corona Machemer, Margaret Mulindi, Tony Shitemi, Betty Williams and Jim Morgan, co-opted as Project Manager. We met seven times since last July.

Support for Children Orphaned by AIDS

Our effort to support as many children orphaned by AIDS as possible to attend school in Kisangura has, ironically, brought us a challenge we may not succeed in meeting. Each cycle in recent years we have managed, sometimes barely, to send off in November, enough money to provide the 125 students with goods they need to be allowed into the classroom. Two years ago, we were offered the chance to provide funds for five of our secondary school graduates to go on to further education. They are now about to complete high school. Their tuition money has come out of the general fund for orphans. In the meantime, we have been requested to help two recent graduates to continue in vocational training as Clinical Officers, and are seeking the \$2500 needed. At the same time, while we find that the number of donors continues to increase, the average size of donations intended for the Kisangura school kids becomes smaller each year. As you may have noticed, we are publishing two newsletters annually now hoping to solicit gifts from Friends who haven't given before but also, maybe, a second contribution from those who already have this year. At this point, we must still raise more than half of the \$18,000 of the amount we normally send off in November for the Kisangura "distribution." Please keep us in mind in the next few months when you choose to share some of your worldly resources.

A New Friends Primary School at Davanga, Kenya

Nothing has pleased our committee more this past year than to follow Margaret Mulindi's progress as she has overseen the construction of a new four-classroom building for Davanga Monthly Meeting. With the \$22,000 of the capital funds raised last year allotted to this project, she has inspired that community to create a truly impressive structure, as witnessed by Tony Shitemi who visited there last winter. The building was put to immediate use for eighty children as a school run by volunteers from the meeting; not until later this year will the Kenyan government take over its operation. For everyone's inspection, we offer Margaret's accounting of how all the money was spent as well as photos. But there's more: foundation stones were laid at the time for four more classrooms; our committee intends to ask NYQM to consider investing further in African education, in part to facilitate prompt completion of these school buildings.

On-going Developments at Kisangura

As a result of negotiations during our Project Manager's month-long stay in Kisangura this past winter, construction work is actively underway on more latrines and two teachers' houses. The latter project, at the request of everyone involved with the secondary school, has become not beginning but completing the structures. Two house shells have been standing for several years awaiting funds to finish interior work so that teachers may finally occupy them. Based on a report received on July 27th, our money is now being used for that purpose: installing windows, doors, interior plastering, ceilings, floors, toilets and septic tanks. And due to favorable exchange rates, enough cash may remain once they are done that the foundation and masonry walls for a third house can be started. Things are going slowly there, however, because of a serious lack of water for construction purposes; this week's report confirms that the primary school water tank has been repaired. Our source wasn't sure however if the secondary school tanks are back in operation harvesting rainwater at this point.

Collaborating with NYC Friends schools

Probably the most appealing component of what we've accomplished this past year is the result of contributions made by both Friends Seminary and Brooklyn Friends School. Nine large boxes of athletic uniforms no longer needed at the Seminary were sent to Kisangura Friends Secondary School in February and distributed among students there. Most of them now have jerseys emblazoned with the word "Friends." Unlike their American counterparts, however, they are discouraged from wearing them to class; formal uniforms must be worn during the school day.

Last year, two seniors at Brooklyn Friends School, Nina Ryser and Max Scherzer, got more than thirty Upper School classmates to prepare large "self-portraits" including a brief description of each person's interests, to be sent to Kisangura in order to begin a dialogue with students there. Marna Herrity, their teacher, while visiting Kisangura last summer, arranged for a young local artist, Frederick Nyansongo, to teach drawing classes to eighth and ninth graders, few of whom had ever experienced drawing as a means of expression. At their last class with him, the BFS drawings were handed out for their enjoyment and appreciation. As a result, with great excitement, they sent about thirty of their drawings back to Brooklyn where, on May first, they were mounted alongside digital copies of the original BFS pictures in an exhibit, called "Jambo, Si Jambo," at Brooklyn Meeting. Enthusiastically received, this brought the human dimension of our committee's work into a new and appealing focus.

Our finances

As of July 30, 2011, we have about \$8,000 in our Amalgamated Bank account, having now disbursed all of the funds raised in 2009 and 2010. In addition, we need to raise almost \$10,000 by November for our annual contribution to school equipment for 125 orphaned children at the two Kisangura Friends schools. As a result we have published and distributed to every member of NYQM two newsletters this past year. All expenses connected with the newsletters and with other aspects of our work, such as travel costs, are donated so that every dollar we receive is spent in Africa.

This report drafted by Jim Morgan and reviewed by committee members.
Submitted by Betty Williams, Clerk

