

Project 2000- Operation Uganda children at risk Winterslow and Firsdow's Challenge for the next Millennium.

The millennium provides us all with an opportunity to celebrate. Whether it is 2000 years of Christianity, the technological advances of the twentieth century or the potential for a new beginning at the start of the twenty-first century, (or simply using it as a reason to have a good time with friends and family), for many the new millennium, like the old, offers little to celebrate or look forward to.

Third world economies struggle to pay the interest on their debts, while we in the West continue to demand a diet supplied from all corners of the world, for many starvation and disease remain a way of life. On an international scale there is no doubt that if there was a will many of these problems could be solved, but the likelihood of reaching an international consensus is remote. As we enter the next millennium we can all criticise politicians nationally and internationally for their inability to act and as an individual we feel powerless to make any significant impact.

In meetings held to discuss how Winterslow and Firsdow should celebrate and mark the millennium it was agreed that, in addition to our local activities we should aim to mark the millennium by developing an outreach project to support those less fortunate than ourselves.

Over the past six months a number of projects have been considered in which Winterslow and Firsdow could have an impact on poverty and enable Third World communities to help themselves. After reviewing a number of potential projects from charities and organisations active in the Third World we decided to join with other community groups in the UK to support Global Care's "Project 2000".

We have agreed to support Operation Uganda – Children at Risk.

In selecting a project our key criteria were that it should primarily involve supporting children and that, as a village, we could maintain an identity with the project. After meeting Ron Newby from Global care at the end of July we

felt that this was an organisation with which we could work and develop a partnership.

Within "Operation Uganda Children at Risk", we aim to develop an active involvement in several programmes including:

1.A twinning arrangement with the Modern Primary School at Rukungiri, which has 800 children (including pre-school groups - 200 children 3-6 years) and 7 primary classes - aged 7-16 years (approx.).

All the classrooms need furnishing and equipping and hostel accommodation is required for some boarders from remote, long distance villages. A Water bore-hole is required, a library and simple science block remain to be developed.

2. The development of a Vocational Training Centre for primary school leavers and other aged 16-18 year olds.

This provision is desperate for the school leavers - no other training is available in this region and is vital for the ongoing livelihood of these children. The aim is to train job-makers rather than job-seekers. Those trained and working will then be able to support younger members of their families.

3.Provision of support is required for Slum and Street children in Kampala.

Activities we may support include

Shelter, food and training for children on the streets.

The degree of involvement we have as a village can be as intense or as superficial as we like to make it. There is the opportunity for students taking GAP years after School or University to join in Global Care Projects. For those who are retired and would relish spending some time in a third world community teaching or passing on their skills here is an opportunity. We aim to develop a twinning arrangement between our village school and the school in Rukengeri.

For the project to have any chance of success money is essential and the more we can raise the more we can do and the greater can become our involvement as a village. Our commitment to Global Care is that we will aim to raise a minimum of £5000 per year for the next 4 years that is 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003; ideally we would like to raise double or treble that amount.

This is a very modest target, with an estimated 1000 households in Winterslow and Firsdown this is £5 per household per year. £5 per month per household would enable us to raise £60,000 per year.
(a bottle of wine a month or two Big-Mac value meals!).

We are seeking a commitment from each house-hold in our two villages to pledge a minimum of £5 per year for the next four years. Ideally by standing order payable to, "Village 2000 Fund" (Uganda).

If you are a taxpayer and are prepared to covenant your gift we will be able to reclaim the tax you have paid so increasing the value of your gift at no expense to you.

Please help us to help Winterslow and Firsdown make a difference to third World poverty in the new millennium, instead of shrugging our shoulders and feeling impotent, together we can make a difference.