



Green Olive Trust UK

FUNDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN KENYA

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Dear Friends

A big thank you to all those who have helped Green Olive Trust during its first two years of existence. 19 High School students and seven university students have been supported by you to continue their studies. We have news that all the young people have been doing well.

Two students have already graduated and moved into work. Frederick, who was orphaned as a young child, did extremely well at his teacher training college, achieving the third highest marks in a cohort of more than 200 students, and is now into his second year of teaching science and computing. Alex worked doubly hard to fast track through his accountancy course so that he could support his father, seriously ill with cancer and unable to work, and the rest of his family. In addition Michael graduates in law this summer. He too was orphaned as a child and is keen now to work to support his only sister and her child. He is passionate to work for human rights and justice in his local community.

This time last year I was visiting our partners in Kenya, the Green Olive Foundation, with Ruth Whately and Josh Coote, who came as volunteers. The main focus of my visit was around establishing good governance and a solid basis for our work. Ruth and Josh, brought with them previous experience of working with students on projects in Rwanda, and specific skills in university teaching and research (Josh) and social impact assessment in the voluntary sector in the UK (Ruth). They were extremely helpful in beginning some work on assessing the impact of our funding and ran some very useful workshops with both university and high school students. An unexpected outcome of their work is that the Kenyan students decided to form an ongoing group for mutual support and to provide mentoring and other help back in the villages for high school students and families. The group communicated throughout the year via WhatsApp and in June held their own second workshop which has led to their setting up their own small fund-raising activity (raising chickens) to fund their future events and they have encouraged some of their well-wishers in Kenya to raise the money to fund one student per year.

We were very pleased also that as a result of that visit I was able to forge the necessary links for local people to establish an “eye camp” where more than 800 people were provided with spectacles and other cases of special need were identified and referred for more

specialist treatment. Oscar Shamallah, the first student I funded who is now head of pharmacy in a hospital, was the prime mover in Kenya and the support from the UK came via Sight Aid International. Lavender, one of our current students, was present throughout, giving much appreciated assistance to the team.

We are happy to report that we finally achieved Charity Committee recognition in March this year, after a number of mishaps along the way – including our online application going astray in the Charity Commission's system!

Being such a small organisation has pluses and minuses. On the good side, we can be confident that we know the people who are working with and can be assured that all the money we raise goes to fund students who have been selected on criteria agreed with the Green Olive Foundation in Kenya: we support those who show potential and who cannot afford to continue their education without our support. Many other bursary schemes look to fund the top achievers in the primary school exams. The young people we are working with are from very poor backgrounds and have often attended primary schools which lack even basic facilities such as electricity, desks and books. So it is not surprising that their names do not figure at the top of the national exam lists. But our local contacts have proved themselves very good at identifying potential – we have not yet seen anyone we have taken on fail. There is a huge hunger for, and commitment to, education. On the less good side, our funds are limited, we constantly have to turn away very deserving cases, and here in the UK we are still developing a communications strategy which will mean that donors do not have to wait another two years before they hear how things are going!

We hope you will want to continue to help us with this work. Some substantial one-off donations have been a wonderful boost to the work. But regular committed giving is what will keep us confident of being able to commit to a student right through their studies. Thank you to those of you who have agreed to give on a regular basis. If you have not yet done so, please would you think of signing up now?

Please do visit our web-site www.greenolivetrust.co.uk for further information or to make a donation. Or if you prefer you can contact us by email or post to the above address.

Thank you again

Bronwyn Harwood
Trustee
Green Olive Trust UK