

# THANK YOU

from the children of Ukerewe (an island in Lake Victoria)



Ukerewe is the largest inhabited island in Lake Victoria accessed by 3.5-hour ferry journey from the nearest Tanzania town of Mwanza. The island has a population of 350,000, mostly subsistence farmers and fishermen.

Its remote location has perhaps contributed to its under development. The infrastructure of schools, hospital and health centres are precarious and the facilities minimal.

With generous support from Rotary and others we have improved water supply to some schools, built toilets, equipped science lab, library and have introduced IT studies - a lot more remains to be done.

We all acknowledge that education is the key that unlocks the chains of poverty. But it is difficult to imagine that there are many children who do not have access to decent education – even primary education.

When we saw 100+ pupils in a classroom, many sitting on the floor – the room itself with broken windows, meagre furnishing, blackboard which was hardly black – we could not walk away without helping them.

This was on an island in Lake Victoria and the time was Jan 2019.

We talked to the authorities who had an ambitious list of wants and needs beyond our ability. We only had limited resources – so we agreed that we will do two things

- 1) help the schools acquire desperately needed classroom desks and benches
- 2) support the continuation of our previously supported programme of introducing farming in schools. This consisted of forming 30-strong environmental clubs who under the guidance of local farmers would help cultivate land around schools to grow maize, sorghum, and other plants mainly for consumption of the pupils but also to sell any surplus to generate income for items such as pens, pencils and books.

Rotarians and friends offered support. To those who supported, the children of Ukerewe say 'Asante Sans (thank you).

## PUPILS LEARNING SUSTAINABLE FARMING TECHNIQUES



## DESKS

The local Vocational Training school has been busy. The trainees learned carpentry skills under the supervision of an experienced trainer – by making desks, so far 212!

## SUSTIANBLE FARMING

Twelve schools formed environmental clubs (30 each) to learn about ground preparation, mulching, crop rotation and weeding - they now grow enough produce to feed in each school about 1,000 pupils and generate some income to sustain the programme. It was a pleasure for us to see smiles on the faces of children, satisfaction on the faces of the teachers and huge aspiration all around – a 'we can do it' feel.

They are on the move – they will become masters of their own destiny. They have challenges – water shortage, pests, crop failures – that is why we still want to walk alongside them. It is not the money that is keeping their morale high – it is the knowledge that they have friends in far away places who care for them, who share their aspiration and who hurt when they hurt.

But we also need money – we are determined to fund mor desks £16 per desks and fund more schools to start using the space they have around to grow crops.

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*“On behalf of Ukerewe District Council community, please accept our sincere thanks for the excellent support provided by FFS and by Rotary in improving teaching and learning environment. Apart from desks, your organisation has supported our twelve schools with more than 4,200 tree seedlings which helps to improve and create teaching and learning environment attractive. Thank you so much. Nine schools have so far received 202 desks thanks to Rotary. There are 6,366 pupils in these schools – sadly, we are still short of desks. Thank you for your continued support.”*

*Emmanuel L Sherebi, District Executive Director, Ukerewe District.*

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**CLASS ROOM DESKS MADE BY VOCATIONAL TRAINEES - £16 PER DESK**

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## ENVIORNMENTAL CHAMPIONS IN UKEREWE

