

## **Partnership between Swindon and Ulafu Community in Kenya initiated after support by Deanery for Peace and Justice Group**

Following the death of Martin Oluoch in December 2007, the Peace and Justice Group took the lead in supporting his bereaved family by consulting the local MP and the commonwealth office to seek Justice. The group also raised £250 through the support of a local restaurant to support families that were displaced during the post-election violence in Kenya. This money was used at a receiving center for IDPs (Internally displaced persons) set up to receive families that were evicted from their houses or flee for fear of their lives in the areas affected and had traveled back to their villages. Counseling services were provided and blankets provided to approximately 400 people (mostly women and children).

Since then, a partnership has emerged between Swindon and Ulafu initiated by Martin's sister and other members of the diaspora community living in Swindon aimed at supporting young people to engage in productive activities for example acquiring key skills towards income generating activities in order to address the high unemployment rates affecting this age group that may at times lead them to engage in violent or criminal activities.

Apart from the above, the partnership is committed to engage with whole communities in Swindon not just African Diaspora in addressing local needs e.g. social exclusion of vulnerable through positive engagement of teenagers in lowering teenage pregnancies and anti-social behavior, entrepreneurship to address unemployment, awareness and training on policies on various issues that affect them towards advocacy skills and engaging decision makers positively at all levels.

Since the partnership was initiated the following activities have taken place.

### **A. Engaging local communities in Swindon**

1. Youth engagement workshop: January 2011, identifying opportunities for youth to engage positively in schools and in the community towards high attainment, self-actualization and awareness on sexual health reproductive issues. Youth are provided with diaries to note down

successes and challenges at school. These are then shared at meetings and support given i.e. members support with various subjects. Their successes are acknowledged and celebrated; tokens given that support their educational needs.

2. Maternal Health care workshop; February 2011 Engaging women and young mothers in maternal well-being issues locally and internationally. Awareness on anti, neo and post natal issues and mapping out strategies to embed, access or provide for these.
3. Poverty alleviation workshop and exhibition; In June 2011 presentations were made to members of the public at the Punjabi Community Centre to create awareness about the partnership and to engage more people especially towards volunteering locally and in our partner community abroad.

All three events were funded by UKaid from the Department for International Development (DFID)

### **B. Engaging with communities in Africa-**

1. A Development awareness days held in April 2010 at St Joseph's Catholic College in collaboration with the African Community Development Foundation (ACDF-UK) where;
  - we provided a platform for linking young people in UK and Africa to learn and exchange experiences on key issues, sharing concrete actions and strategies i.e. reducing climate change and poverty, developing skills (creativity, independence, team work, reflective learner, self-managers and effective participants) that are vital for success in their learning and empowering them to contribute positively to local and international development.
  - We have and will continue to share development strategies from different parts of the world to stimulate economic growth and sustainable livelihoods at our partner community.
2. Individual members have volunteered through other organisations to share skills and experiences in Africa in summer 2009 and 2010 respectively.

3. A member of Ulafu community has recently visited Swindon to facilitate in an impact analysis event and to create awareness about progress made in Ulafu since the inception of the partnership. Ms Rose Waringa is an experienced community development consultant who has worked with Christian Children's Fund and is now the director of Precious tears (see a report of the work of Precious Tears Initiative attached). She has been instrumental in the ground in Kenya in mobilising members of Ulafu community towards establishing this partnership with Swindon.
4. We have data from members representing various African countries on primary and secondary schools. We have approached Swindon Borough Council to help us identify local schools that can form partnerships with these schools.
5. Our youth have approached teachers in their respective schools to donate books and IT facilities to these schools. Laptops have been donated by St Joseph's Catholic College to Ulafu Secondary School.
6. A group of young people in Swindon organised a fundraising activity to support Ulafu community and its initiatives in building a school library and IT facilities. £230 was raised and sent to the school.



Rose Waringa, Winnie Oluoch and members of Peace and Justice group below

