

## The Shonda Project - March 2018

- We are pleased to say that the school continues to thrive in difficult circumstances, pupil numbers are increasing and in the recent exams **St John's is in the top 10% of schools** in the Likoni area.
- This success has come at a cost and Shonda UK has donated more monies to the school than we are receiving. **Putting the project onto a sustainable footing is a key focus area** this year.
- A **visit to Shonda** by a group from UK during March will be used to ensure we maintain a sustainable project that addresses the local community needs.

### School flying high

You will see from the enclosed school reports that the school performs consistently well. We are pleased to report that in recent assessments, St Johns Shonda is now ranked 7th out of 89 local schools. This is amazing given the poverty and challenges in the Shonda area. It does however mean that together with a growing community, there is increasing pressure on St John's to accommodate more children.

### Key developments

2017 did not start well. You may remember that the school was broken into and the donated computers stolen. Following an appeal, 10 replacement computers are being funded from the UK, and now that the elections in Kenya have ended, these will be going in, which is great news.

Some of you may remember that the Shonda community grew out of a wilderness next to a quarry on abandoned land. With a growing community, over the last 10 years, there has been increasing pressure on land, with the school is now surrounded by lots of unplanned development. One of the ways in which the school is dealing with this, is with a more defined boundary and wall, together with employment of night-watchman. The school is also putting its future into a firmer legal position, an important step as the school grows.

We continue to fund 15 teacher salaries (out of a total teacher population on 22), together with a range of other requests including Feeding Programme, building work, books and desks.

### Financial challenges

The many new houses in the locality and the excellent academic results achieved by the school are generating a demand for school places. The school population which had been around 350 for many years is now around 500. This is putting extra demands upon Shonda UK which are unsustainable. For some years our giving has exceeded the monies we receive. Unfortunately a combination of events have accelerated this trend to a point where significant changes need to be made this year to ensure the longer term viability of the project.

Derek Moss, our Treasurer summarises the financial position:

- Whilst total income for 2017 was in line with 2016, a larger proportion of donations plus Gift Aid were directed at specific causes eg. new computers and sponsored secondary school children etc. which conceals the fact that income for ordinary funding has fallen.
- Expenditure has risen because of the full year effect of the Brexit sterling devaluation in the cost of salaries.
- The final result indicates that funds in hand at the end of 2017 represent only four months of our commitment to salaries and project manager costs which is uncomfortably low.
- The projection for 2018 that takes into account the fact that we will not see a contribution from Marlborough College. The year is projected to result in a further deficit of £5,700 and lead to us only having free reserves of £2,572 representing less than two months expenditure. I think we would have difficulty in justifying that the Project is a "going concern" if steps are not taken to alleviate the deficit.
- In terms of expenses, we are now transferring Ks200,000 per month which in sterling should come within the projected cost of £18,500.

### Addressing the Financial Challenges

Our plan is to:

1. Stables monthly expenditure
  - a. We have already capped the monthly amount we give to Shonda.
2. Identify opportunities to increase the income of St John's
  - a. This has started and will continue during our March visit
3. Increase awareness of the Shonda Project in UK
  - a. Through the giving of talks and improved communication about the Shonda Project – please let me know if you have a group or organisation that would like a talk on the Shonda Project
4. Seek additional sponsors for the Shonda Project
  - a. Identify and seek support from other bodies, trusts or charities with an interest in Africa and education.

### Visits to Shonda

Visits are important to both audit the accounting records (that supplement the regular financial reports we receive), to understand the specific challenges and needs the community have and to review and plan future activities.

Tanya Lawson visited the school last year, as part of a broader family trip to Kenya.

This year, Liz and David Woods and their son Chris, together with Sheila and Simon Mills and Dave Smith are visiting in March. Given the challenging financial position we are in this visit will include a review to see if and how the school could increase income locally.

But it isn't all money!, we are also taking out some 'expanding shoes' to trial them in the school, and to see if they are needed. For more info go to: <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/man-creates-shoes-that-grow-so-poor-kids-dont-outgrow-them/>

We are also going to take adjustable glasses for 29 children that have poor eyesight. These are made by Beautiful – Vision, <http://www.beautiful-vision.org/> a charitable foundation that supports projects working to deliver corrected vision to those in need.

### Shonda UK – fundraising

We are grateful to the various organisations that raise money and contribute to the Shonda Project, these include:

- **Pinewood School**, near Shrivenham, Wiltshire, Pinewood kindly did a collection at their Year 7 School Play "Hamlet" and again at their yearly Pinewood Carol Service which raised significant funds. There is going to be a "Colour Run" in May this year, held within the school grounds to raise money for 'Shoes that Grow' for some of the pupils at Shonda. Pinewood has an informed interest in St Johns and are a key supporter of the school.
- **Love Food Ready Meals**, whose 'Share the Love' campaign donates a meal to a child in Shonda for every ready meal sold.
- **Marlborough College** who made a significant donation from their Carol Concert.
- **Birstwith C of E Primary school**, near Harrogate for the contributions they continue to send us – most recently from their Harvest Festival.
- **St Peter's Church** Brockely,
- **St. Mary's Church** Marlborough, who donate a percentage of their income to charities, one of which is the Shonda Project.
- **St Mary's Church Toddler Group** in Oxted.

### Supporting Shonda

We very much appreciate the loyal group of individual supporters who give to Shonda and a monthly donation is a great way to give and make a real difference in Shonda, for example giving £15 per month, over a year; will pay for approximately a month and a half of a teacher.

Many people do give by standing order which allows Shonda to better plan its future. However as mentioned above we are having to deal with inflated costs which leads to the request whether you could increase your monthly donation? Inflation may seem low but the value of a £1 in 2002 is now £1.50.

If you would like to start a monthly donation you will find the bank details, the form to set up a standing order and a form for Gift Aid at <http://shonda.org.uk/support>

### Keeping in touch

We have provided updates by email during the year, if you would like to be added to the email list, please contact <http://shonda.org.uk/AddToMailingList> or send an email to [info@shonda.org.uk](mailto:info@shonda.org.uk). Furthermore imminent changes to the data protection legislation will mean that we will need to obtain your confirmation that we can hold your contact details and this we will have to do fairly shortly.

We have a FaceBook page – [www.facebook.com/TheShondaProject](http://www.facebook.com/TheShondaProject) We will use this to give updates from the Shonda trip in March.

As always, none of this would be possible without your support and your donations, so on behalf of the children of Shonda a big 'Thank you.'

Please write to me if you have any comments or suggestions as to how to help the community of Shonda.

### Reports from Shonda

Whilst we have some challenging work to do we must not be downhearted, The Shonda Project has improved the lives of over 1000 children and given hope to a community. Please find not one but 2 reports from Shonda in the following pages that I hope will bring some African sunshine into your home!

Kind regards



Simon Mills,  
Representing Shonda Project UK

## **END YEAR SCHOOL REPORT**

Hello our sponsors and how are you? It's my sincere hope that you are fine. On behalf of the Shonda Kenya community we are all fine in God. We thank God for the far that he has taken the St Johns project. We believe that we have come from far and still we are going far.

### **1. Marube's Visit**

This term we have been so lucky Mr. Marube visited us on (date). Though a short and brief visit but we enjoyed being with him. He walked round the school with the school administrator and is sure he can narrate how St. Johns is growing. We also took photos with him at the school compound.



### **2. Repair Of The Shade**

We are very grateful to our school administrator Mr. Joseph in conjunction with the board members for the effort that they are putting towards the growth of St. Johns. They are working hard to ensure that the school shade that was consumed by fire is repaired. By so doing, children will get a better place to take their meals from. The school matron will also get a good place to store her things.



### **3. Kg 3 Graduation Ceremony**

The St Johns kg 3 graduation ceremony was held on 21<sup>st</sup> October this year. It was a very colorful occasion with a number of activities taking place. Teachers and pupils co-operated to make the day a success. The following events took place that day:



*KG three in their graduation gowns*

#### **a) Preparation of meals**

As usual our feeding programme supported us very well during this ceremony. Our school matron in conjunction with the cooks prepared a very delicious meal for both the parents, pupils and teachers. Everybody ate to his/her satisfaction.

#### **b) Entertainment**

There were some entertainments done by the pupils through the aid of their teachers. Each class from baby class to kg 3 had songs for entertainment the guest of honor as well as their parents. They performed very well.



*Kindergarten three reciting a poem*

#### **c) Modeling**

Though the children did not change the school attire, they did some modeling still in their school uniform. It was quite entertaining. Boys and girls had different modeling styles.



*A Pupil showing her style*

**d) Issuing of certificates**

It was the most important part of the graduation ceremony. The kg 3 certificate is usually the first certificate a child gets and is as important as any other certificate. Every child was accompanied by his/her parents to receive their certificate bearing their names and pictures.



*Guest of honor issuing a certificate*

**e) Cutting of the cake**

Our dear sponsors, graduation are just a ceremony like any other. A very big cake bearing the school name is usually purchased. It is usually cut by the children in conjunction with their teachers and together as St Johns family we share as a sign of oneness. Everybody gets a piece including the parents, teachers, pupils and guests. The children and teachers feed the guests.



*Cutting of cake*

**f) Meals**

The school matron had organized a very delicious Pilau for the school. It was served together with a bottle of soda. Children enjoyed the food very much together with their parents. It was a very enjoyable occasion.



*KG three having their meal*

**4. Exams**

We did our end of year exams a week prior to the closing week. The exams were done well. Marking and compiling of the results went on as expected. Sincerely, the results were promising. The six classes in upper primary had means of 300 and above except class seven. In the lower levels also the results were very much since it was the exam to determine promotion to the next class.



*E.C.D.E pupils doing exam*

**Giving of presents**

The best learners were issued with presents that are position 1, 2 and three. The presents included books, pens, rubbers and pencils. Teachers assisted in issuing of the presents. The closing assembly was just brief due to the weather.



*Teachers awarding pupils*

### **5. School closing day**

St Johns primary school was officially closed on 24<sup>th</sup> October. Though there were many challenges we managed to do it. It was raining but the pupils protected themselves with umbrellas. That did not hinder any process from happening the way it is supposed to happen.



### **Our Candidate Class After Their Last Exams**

Our class eight candidates officially left the school yesterday 2<sup>nd</sup> after their last KCPE paper. Personally, I was with them. They assured me that they had done their exams well and that they are optimistic of success. I took them a picture with their supervisor and invigilators as they left.



Lastly our dear sponsors and on behalf of the St Johns family, I want to take this golden opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. May our dear Lord be with you till we meet again in 2018.

# 2018 FIRST SCHOOL REPORT

I hope this finds you are all fine in Jesus name. I hope that you celebrated your Christmas well. Ours here in Kenya was also fine despite some challenges here and there. We are also good in health and also academically. I feel the pleasure to update you on the early 2018 St. Johns Shonda Kenya project events.

## Opening date

We officially opened school on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018. It was a Tuesday a day just after celebrating New Year. Though it seemed abnormal opening school on 2<sup>nd</sup> but minds switched back to work in a day or two. We have now resumed our normal activities.



*Pupils at the first 2018 assembly*

## School environment

The school environment was very dirty when we opened. Grass had grown all over the compound and it looked untidy. The teacher on duty however worked in conjunction with the pupils and now things are no longer in a mess.



*Pupils cleaning the school compound*

## New Kenyan Education System

The new education system is set to replace the 8-4-4 system. The new system will help learners to base on

their ability to apply knowledge and skills in performing various task within specific settings.

The teachers will need to adapt this curriculum which is coming so difficult because the government has not yet provide the teaching materials to most of the school.



*Our pre- primary ii pupils*

## School roll

The school roll was not up to position during the first week. Children were still held up due to travelling problems and financial problems also. It was quite a big challenge to the teachers as they wanted to know the whereabouts of their children. The school roll was very poor. However during the second week, children turned up. Our classes are now full. In fact the St Johns project is growing. Thanks be to God almighty.



## The school feeding programme

Our school feeding programme still continues. We are very happy both teachers and pupils. It is through this feeding programme that both the rich and the poor become equal. Both children and teachers are very happy about it. Thanks to our school administrator in conjunction with the school matron.



**Pupils having their special meal "pilau"**

Our young kids also benefit from this project. They get a cup of porridge during break time which they enjoy very much.



**Day care children having their porridge**

## Interviews

As usual we received a lot of new children during the first week of this term. Through the interviews master we supplied them with exam s to determine their new classes and each joined where they fitted. St Johns primary school is becoming a stream school soon. Let us pray hard.



*Interview in progress*

## Class 8 2017 results

Although am sure you are already updated I just can't fail to mention that the St. Johns staff is very happy. The former class eight did us very proud. Our

school emerged the winner among the neighboring schools here in Shonda. You will bear me witness that getting a mean of 315 is not a joke. A lot of effort is needed. We thank God first you sponsors Mr. Joseph the school administrator and everybody else who worked in conjunction with us for the success of those kids. God bless you all.

## The candidate class

It is also good that you see our candidate class this year let us join our hands together helping these children. In God name they will pass their exams. If other have passed why them



**class 8 in class**

## School voting

Since it is a new year we had to choose new school leaders we engaged the children in a voting exercise in which they participated very well. We chose leaders in different posts right from the school head boy, head girl up to the class representatives. St Johns is a democratic school and so we exercise democracy even to the learners. Long live St. Johns.



*The elected school leaders*

## **The school water project**

This water still continues to serve the school. We are happy it is readily available near us. Children enjoy it very much. It also helps us to prevent some diseases which might attack us if we don't observe hygiene like cholera. Long live the St. Johns water project.



*Pupils taking water*

I hope you will enjoy reading. Be blessed  
Rose and Eve