



News on

- Education and Health
- Environment



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# EDUCATION & HEALTH — September 2006

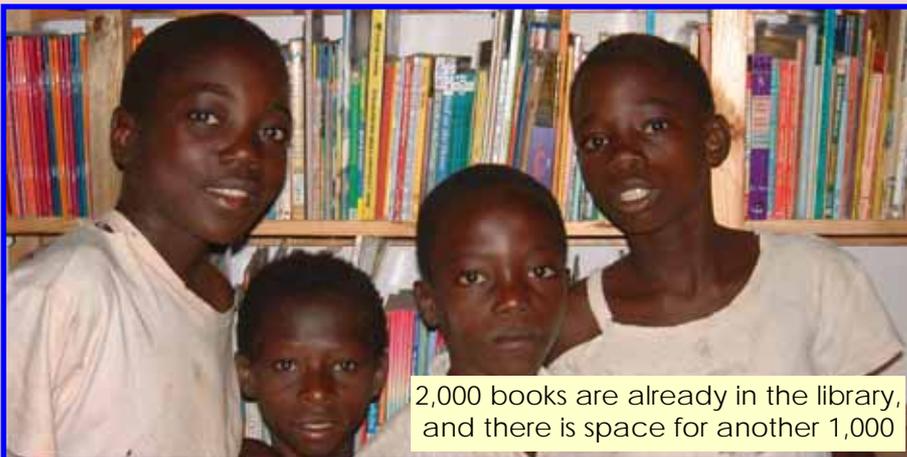


## New Community Library Is Now Open!



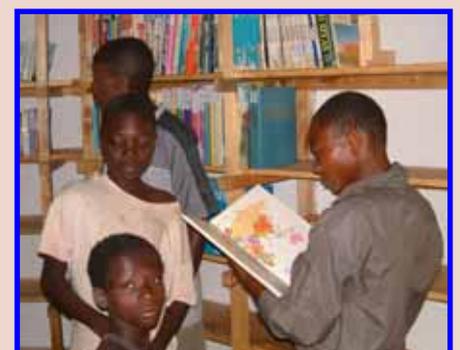
The Mwaya Community Library is now open. Thanks to so many people for their contributions, this library has become a reality. Firstly, a big "Thank You" to Georgina, Leila and Christina from Stowe School who raised the original funds, to Donncha, our volunteer librarian, for setting up the systems and training Mr Longwe to become the resident librarian, to all the schools and people who donated books, and to Mini Clipper who supplied free transportation for onward delivery to Malawi.

We had an official opening day on 28 November 2005 which was attended by the local community, and it was a great success. Since then, about 40 people per day have been withdrawing books. People of all ages are visiting the library, and Mr Longwe and his assistants, George and Samson, are very attentive and provide help with reading and selecting suitable books.



2,000 books are already in the library, and there is space for another 1,000

It was a joy to see the sheer wonderment in the eyes of people when they first visited the library. It was also great to see some of the young children with musical books which played music and made funny noises when you pushed the buttons - the "Quiet Please" notice was ignored just this once!



## Teacher Training Courses and Teaching at the Local Secondary School



Anne and Pete, who had previously been teaching in Ghana and had completed a TEFL course in the UK, really got stuck in to their work at the primary school. They also held regular English lessons for children after class and some of the women from the local community at Mwaya Beach.

Paul and Amy discovered quickly that the local teachers could benefit from extra training, so they set about a teacher training programme held at Mwaya Beach. The feedback from the teachers was very positive, and we will try and encourage future volunteers to get involved with this.

We have never had volunteer teachers at the local secondary school before but when Paul, Amy and Crt discovered that the students were not being taught because of drastic shortages of teachers (only four for the whole school), they set to and started helping. They kept fit as well - it was a 12 km cycle ride each way!

## Six New Students Pass Exams to Viphya Secondary School

We have recently started our programme to send the top achievers at Mwaya Primary School to good secondary boarding schools. This year, we were able to send six new students to Viphya Secondary School. They are keen to become lawyers, engineers, teachers, and one wants to become the Environment Minister to help save Malawi. Well, we'll have to see in a few years' time!



## Kachere Nursery School Is Now Finished

Frank, the builder, has now completed the work at the nursery school at Kachere. Windows with burglar bars have been installed and, now that the rooms are secure, things can be put up on the walls and materials can be left in the rooms overnight.

The school swing is in regular use and, although very inexpensive to build, it has proved to be a winner!



## New Incinerator and Sharps Pit for Medical Waste

We have been very fortunate to have had Jorien and Elmar working at Kachere last year. They really hit the ground running and set in place a number of interesting projects. One that will be of great significance is the building of an incinerator and a secure sharps pit for the disposal of hazardous waste from the health centre. Previously, dressings and used syringes, etc., were thrown into a shallow pit and posed a real danger. Now, with the new incinerator and sharps pit, these can be disposed of safely.



## HIV/AIDS Counselling and Testing



Although there is an HIV/AIDS counselling and testing centre at Kachere, there are many people who do not come to the clinic. Elmar and Jorien felt that an outreach counselling and testing programme should be set up. Ben, from Wisconsin, continued with this idea and worked on proposals to raise money for this. We are pleased to say that funds have been secured for this project from a UK charity - a real team effort!



## Kachere Health Centre



Interestingly, progress also has its drawbacks. Mains electricity has now come to Kachere, which is great news for the health centre, but there is now a bar playing loud music in the village which has attracted sex workers from outside of the area, and this will undoubtedly increase the incidence of HIV/AIDS.



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## ENVIRONMENT — September 2006



### Tree Nursery - 50,000 Trees Planted in January 2006

The tree nursery project has been attracting a lot of interest and, in January 2006, over 50,000 trees were planted out in the local area. People had registered their interest in trees for their gardens. These were recorded, and training was provided for the planting and care of the trees. Also, community wood lots have been created and, with a regular programme of planting, it is hoped that trees in our area will become sustainable.

Nitrogen-fixing trees have also been planted in cassava fields, and these will improve crop yields in the years to come.

On our official planting day, we had a number of important guests including the Minister of Agriculture, our local MP, senior Forest Officers and Malawi Radio, together with several Traditional Authorities (TAs) and Chiefs. Our tree project is really on the map now.



### Training Day for 50 Chiefs



The rate of deforestation in Malawi is frightening — **an area of forest the size of a football pitch is cut down every 10 minutes.**

We are putting together plans to plant **4 million trees** per year in the Nkhata Bay District, an area of 4,000 km<sup>2</sup>. We are actively looking for funding. **£1 pays for 10 trees** — please look at our website ([www.rippleafrica.org](http://www.rippleafrica.org)) for more details.

The key to preserving the forests and our reforestation project is simple, and this is to involve the Chiefs and the local communities. In December 2005, we had a very successful training day with 50 Chiefs. The meeting was also attended by Aleke Banda, our local MP, who has been very supportive.

The communities are fully aware of the deforestation problem, but they just don't know what to do. These training days can illustrate the problems and the solutions, and motivate the Malawians to help themselves. RIPPLE Africa will coordinate this project and provide equipment, polythene tubes and seeds, together with training.

Force Ngwira, the RIPPLE Africa environmental project manager, is now carrying out a number of training days with Chiefs, Traditional Authorities (TAs), Forest Guards and the local communities. The experience that we now have and the impressive results we have achieved, together with the facilities at Mwaya, are ideal for showing people what is possible, and they are keen to be involved.



Mbaula training — a trial to illustrate the amount of wood used

# 10,000 km Microlight Trip — Raising Funds for RIPPLE Africa



Geoff, Pauline, Matt, Liz, Steve, Darren, Julie

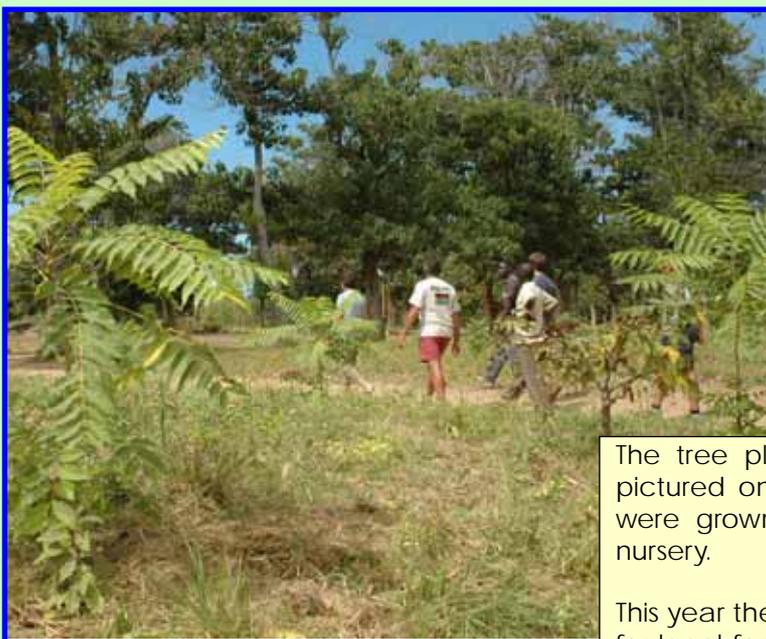


Two previous volunteers, Matt and Pauline, put together a magnificent adventure which took place this year between April and June: 7 people, 2 support vehicles, and a motorbike travelling through South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and back to South Africa — over 10,000 kms. Apart from having fun, they were able to raise £3,800 for RIPPLE Africa, and 25 additional tree nurseries have been started growing a total of 250,000 trees.

There is an amazing trip website with lots of photos and a journal of the adventures the Sky High team had at [www.skyhighforafrica.com](http://www.skyhighforafrica.com).



## June 2006 — Some of the 50,000 Trees Planted Out in January



Trees planted at Mwaya Primary School (above)

Trees planted at Kachere Primary School (below)



The tree planting this year has been very successful. The trees pictured on the left were photographed in June 2006, and they were grown from seed in September 2005 at the Mwaya tree nursery.

This year there has been lots of rain, which has not only been good for local farmers but has given the trees planted out in January a wonderful start.

This project is drawing much interest from other Chiefs and Traditional Authorities (TAs), and the project at Mwaya is showing what can be achieved by other communities.

## 50 New Tree Nurseries Started



Tree nursery starter pack



Each nursery will grow 10,000 trees (2,000 illustrated)

RIPPLE Africa is well on the way to achieving its goal of growing 4 million trees per year. By June 2006, we had set up 50 new community tree nurseries which will grow 500,000 trees. Force, our environmental project manager, and his team, together with the Forestry Department, are delivering materials, training communities and establishing these nurseries. The Chiefs are all really keen to have their own nurseries and to be part of the programme, and there is healthy competition between the Chiefs and their communities.



Equipment being delivered by Benji, RIPPLE Africa's new pickup

## Mbaula Projects Being Started

It is one thing to grow new trees, but people need to be aware of how they can reduce the wood they use. We have started our mbaula programme — mbaulas are fuel-efficient wood stoves. For each community that develops a tree nursery, we will provide training and basic materials to small groups who can then set up an mbaula manufacturing business. These units are made and sold for \$1.50 each and are proving very popular with the women who are generally responsible for collecting the wood for the cooking fires. Our aim is to introduce 50,000 of these over the next 2 years.



Mobile Food Warming Unit — The unit is like a slow cooker and saves firewood



Mbaula training and production

## Charcoal For Sale at the Side of the Road

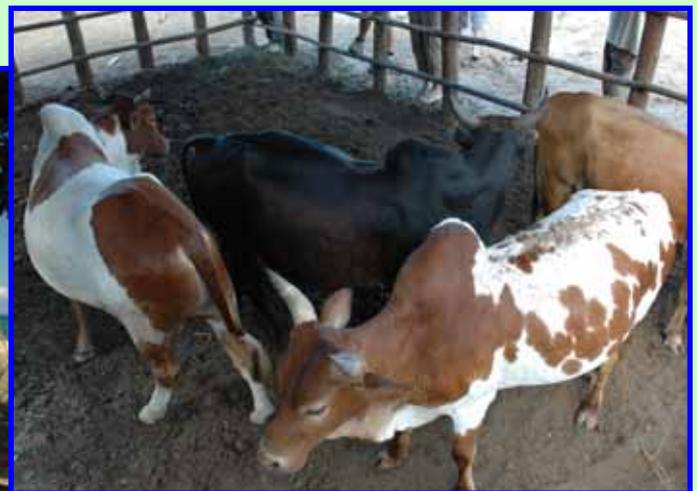


Charcoal for sale at the side of the road

In June, we noticed a large increase in the amount of charcoal for sale at the side of the road on the way to Mzuzu. However, this practice is illegal and is a major problem in the south of Malawi. Poverty is leading people to make charcoal, and beautiful hardwood trees are being cut down. It can take three medium sized trees to produce one bag of charcoal and, currently, this practice is not sustainable. In fact, very few local people use charcoal — it is mainly purchased by people in towns who probably have access to electricity. RIPPLE Africa, in conjunction with the Forestry Department and the District Assembly, is now trying to put an end to this practice and has been confiscating the charcoal for sale at the side of the road. RIPPLE Africa gives talks to the communities, who are generally pleased for this practice to stop as they recognise that it is reducing their future timber. So far, we have confiscated 130 bags.

We are keen to see how this ban on charcoal sales is working during our next visit.

## Bulls and Ox Carts



The four bulls, Gin and Tonic, and Rum and Coke, are settling into their new roles and are a useful asset to local transport, transporting soil, building materials, logs, etc.