Connecting Scotland – how Scottish organisations engage internationally

Aim Hai Trust: supporting education in Tanzania

Who we are

The Aim Hai Charitable Trust was originally established in 2008 to support the development of education in the town of Bomang’ombe in the Hai district of Tanzania. In 2014 it registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Aim Hai Trust SCIO, registration number SCO40029).

The Trust’s objects are:

To advance educational standards in primary schools by providing educational materials and technology, support for teachers and other related goods and services; and
To promote and support wider involvement of parents and the community in primary education; and
To relieve poverty by providing funds to sponsor pupils from households experiencing financial hardship to attend Aim Hai Primary School and Kindergarten and other schools in the area.

Further information can be found on our website www.aimhaitrust.net.

There are 7 trustees, who have a range of experience and a desire to support the developing world. We have no paid staff. The trustees meet at least quarterly, and more often if required.

Our activities comprise raising funds in the UK and elsewhere and working with our partners to use what we raise to support primary education in the town. This has initially been by making donations for specific purposes to Aim Hai Primary School and Kindergarten, a private but non-profit-distributing school. The Trust has also begun to explore in recent years how this school can work with others to improve the quality of primary education, and the skills of pupils, teachers, parents and the community generally.

Addressing your questions

1 What international activities are happening now in your sector and/or organisation? Please describe how and why these activities take place. Are other sectors or organisations involved? What do these activities contribute or achieve?

We support Aim Hai School, and education in the wider community, in Bomang’ombe, Tanzania. Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in Africa and levels of poverty in the Hai district are very high. Good quality education for local children is key not only for their own personal fulfilment but to the development of the community and the country, but many families cannot afford to send their children to good schools, and educational materials are in short supply.
Two of our trustees, Marian and Norman Jacobs have had a long association with technical education in Tanzania. Norman, our chair and founder, and Harold G Shangali, Director of Aim Hai School, first met as professional colleagues in the field of prosthetics technical education at Strathclyde University and Tanzania Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technology respectively. In 2005, they became involved in the establishment of Aim Hai Primary School and Kindergarten. The Aim Hai Trust followed in 2008 as a way of channelling offers of support from well-wishers in the UK.

The school now has 285 pupils. They are achieving excellent educational results and a recent local authority inspection reported very favourably. The school is still being developed, with the construction of 7 new classrooms and a laboratory under way.

The activities of the Aim Hai Trust are:
We raise funds from our base in the UK,
We use the funds raised to support educational activity in Bomang’ombe,
We provide sponsorship to help cover the fees and other costs such as uniforms, food and travel for pupils who come from families that cannot afford these costs,
We are currently trying to secure funding for a feasibility study to bring an internet connection to Aim Hai and the other ten schools in the Hai district.

Our two trustees Norman and Marian visit Tanzania once or twice a year (at their own cost), taking financial resources and educational materials, meeting with the school’s Director and local steering group, and reporting back to the rest of the trustees.

Since its inception in 2008 the Trust has sponsored 41 pupils, provided funds for a new school bus, supported the building programme, and contributed educational materials which are hard to source in Tanzania. It has raised funds from generous individuals, from one other Trust and from the fund raising efforts of a school in the Netherlands. In addition the Tanzanian office of the Special Fund for the Disabled of the International Committee of the red Cross are funding a small number of disabled children each year.

2 Do you think your sector and/ or organisation is effective in participating in international activities? If not, what would help you to make improvements? What prevents you from making improvements now?

We are a small Trust with modest objectives, and we achieve them reasonably effectively. As a result of the joint efforts of the Trust and our colleagues in Tanzania, the growth and success of the school in Bomang’ombe has been enhanced, and 41 children from impoverished families and a further 6 children with disabilities have been able to access an education that would otherwise have been denied them.

Our longstanding relationship with colleagues and partners in Tanzania means we are familiar with, and have been able to overcome, the frustrations that can come from the different conventions at work in two very different cultures. In these joint ventures it is essential that the leadership of the project remains in the project country and that our support is on their terms. We have a genuine working partnership where we supply encouragement, resources and expertise.
Currently the thing that prevents us making improvements is a lack of funds to bring internet access to the 11 local schools of which Aim Hai is one. More generally, we want to support the completion of the school buildings and increase financial support to the school. In order to do both we recognise we need to increase the profile of the Trust to gain more Scottish support.

3 What should organisations in Scotland do to be effective internationally? Are you aware of any good examples of this from Scotland or another country?

Despite our longstanding links with education in Tanzania we are not experienced in international development, and we value NIDOS as a support service. So we hope NIDOS continues to enjoy finance and support from the Scottish Government. We are aware of the networking, training and information available through NIDOS and should perhaps explore these further before being able to respond to this question.

We do feel that it is important for the Scottish Government to continue to support international development, especially in the field of education, and to spread its support as far afield as possible.

George Thom
Trustee and Board Member

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I enclose a copy of a recent article in the Evening Times for information
Couple on African education mission

Pensioners set off to help kids in Tanzania

By HANNAH RODGER

AN ELDERLY couple have travelled to Africa to help boost education in the developing world. Norman and Marian Jacobs, who founded their Aim Hai Trust seven years ago, set off for Tanzania yesterday.

The pair, aged 75 and 72, have left the comfort of their home in the West End for the town of Romang‘ombe in the Hai district.

Armed with educational materials and health provisions, the duo will be visiting a local school to help hundreds of young pupils studying there.

Norman, a former professor of prosthetics and orthotics at Strathclyde University, started visiting the country through his job more than a decade ago.

He later joined forces with a colleague who was planning to set up a school in a nearby town.

Norman said: “I thought it would be interesting to get involved in establishing the school and my wife and I both became directors, helping with the establishment and setting it up. It’s been running for 10 years and it is really progressing.

“After a while we realised it was going to cost a lot of money to get things done so we set up a charitable trust to help in the school but also take an interest in wider issues.

“Although we started by trying to raise money for the school, we are now trying to do something more.

“Both my wife and I are retired so that allows us to spend more time on this.”

Norman and Marian, a former director at a city housing association, both feel passionately about the trust’s work.

Locals rarely have access to clean water and the couple have taken water purification kits, solar power kits and generators with them on their latest trip.

Norman added: “What we’re trying to do is give the children a good opportunity to progress from primary to secondary school.

“Although primary is mandatory, secondary is not and it’s only the brighter students who will get there.”

The pair are due to return at the end of the month and continue their fundraising for the school back in Glasgow.