

TAKING FOOTBALL TO AFRICA AND BEYOND CHARITABLE APPEAL – KENYA 2014



The Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal is run by Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE, who is based at RAF Shawbury in Shropshire in collaboration with the RAF Football Association. The Appeal began in 2006 with the intention of collecting unwanted football shirts to be re-distributed to the needy in Africa. After a successful launch the Appeal branched out to worldwide deliveries and to date has delivered 90210 items including 30948 Football shirts to 45 countries worldwide.

As part of the Appeal Neil has made many journeys to Kenya, in East Africa, to deliver kits and other items to schools and orphanages around Nairobi and Gilgil. Many service and civilian personnel have joined Neil on the trips visiting areas such as Kibera, the largest slum town in Africa housing over 1 million people in shacks with little electricity, no running water or sewerage systems. On 2nd June 2014 Neil again travelled to Nairobi, with a mixed service and Football Association party to make a total of 29 deliveries of over 6500 items in 7 days.

Tour Party:

Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE – Appeal Co-Ordinator – SO1 DAAM, Air Command

Flt Lt Tony Kinchley – RAF Shawbury CATCS Instructor

Flt Sgt Louise Simpson – LATCC Mil - ATC

Cpl Ben Burton – RAF Brize Norton – 24 Sqn Ops

Cpl Sarah Komen – Herford Barracks, Germany

Sarah Weber – The FA – PA to the Director of Football Services

Rachel Foster - The FA – Acting FA Registrations Manager

The Touring party met at London Heathrow Airport on Monday 2nd June for the flights to Kenya. Most of the party flew with Qatar Airways via Doha with Sarah Weber flying via Amsterdam as she was partaking in a short Safari post returning home.

On arrival in Nairobi the party went straight into the first 2 deliveries on the way from Joma Kenyatta Airport.

Alive and Kicking

Alive and Kicking are a charity which has its Headquarters in London but has its workshops and local Headquarters in Nairobi in Kenya and also has bases in Ghana and Zambia. The RAFFA Charity linked to Alive and Kicking recently and this visit gave the party the chance to visit the workshop and see, first hand, how the footballs are produced and how the Charity operates. It is a not for profit charity which produces and sells footballs that are hard wearing hand stitched leather balls made to survive the harsh surfaces. Through money raised from the balls the charity pays local people a fair wage whilst putting the money into social projects and health projects across the region. At the workshop the party met Rose Makani who showed them around the workshop allowing them to meet the workers and chat about the production process. At the workshop the party also did several media interviews for the 3 main Television Channels in Kenya and also all of the main newspapers. Neil Hope explained the links between the RAF Charity and Alive and Kicking and explained what the Appeal did and where its kits came from. He also explained how the link had developed through John Herbert, the Head of Braeburn Garden Estate School. The party then donated 2 boxes of football kit to the Alive and Kicking Charity which were then given to MYSA, a Mathare based youth sports and football project. The items were handed to Austin Omondi Matete, an 11 year old player at MYSA playing for the Under 13 Norway team. Austin attends Komarock Primary School. The donation had items given by QPR, England, and Manchester United. In recognition of the new link Alive and Kicking donated 100 footballs to the Appeal, to be distributed during the week.

<http://www.aliveandkicking.org/>

<http://www.aliveandkicking.org/where-we-work/kenya/>

<http://www.mysakenya.org/>

Mukuru Combine

At the Alive and Kicking workshop the party also met 2 of the organisers of the Mukuru Combine football team, Dennis Muia and Patrick Otieno, from Embakasi slum. The kits will be donated to the team to assist them in growing their numbers. The donation included training cones and items from Aston Villa and Clifton St Vincent FC, a club from Bristol.

<https://www.facebook.com/mukurucombine.fa/posts/1436388723271441>



Alive and Kicking Workshop, Nairobi



Alive and Kicking in the workshop

The party then travelled across Nairobi to the Braeburn Garden Estate School, their base for the week.

Wednesday the 4th of June saw the party travel to the north of Nairobi for 2 visits in the sprawling Kibagare slum area.

Kibagare Good News Centre

Kibagare Good News Centre is a school in the slum area of Nairobi of Kibagare. It is run by a Church Charity and is led by Sister Leah Kimani. Leah is now 71 years old but has watched the centre build from a shack corrugated iron building into a school housing over 650 children. It teaches children up to 11 years old and also has a feeding project which provides a vital meal for over 1500 children each Saturday. The party were given a tour by Sister Leah before handing over donations of children's shoes given by Gloucestershire Schools, QPR and some t-shirts donated by Energize Shropshire as well as some shoes donated by Sarah Komen through the British Army in Germany. The Germany donations came from Lister Primary School in Herford, Prince Rupert School in Rinteln and Cpl Sarah Komen of No 1 Royal Military Police at Herford Barracks of No 1 HQ. As with all places visited the party also donated some footballs from Alive and Kicking. The visit was a nice introduction to those who were visiting Kenya for the first time. Rachel Foster spent the whole time with up to half a dozen children hanging off her arms and was regularly seen to don her sunglasses (which the party now know was her way of hiding the tears!!).

<http://kibagaregoodnewscentre1.org/>



Kibagare Good News Centre



Kibagare GNC – Sister Leah

Pastor Amos Okolo School

After the Good News Centre the party were joined by Pastor Amos Okolo. They walked through the slum area along to his small school. This school has around 25 children, who are housed in a very small corrugated iron building where they are taught by Anne and Joyce. Anne has been teaching at the school for 8 years and her children are also in the group. Anne is a passionate about passing on the dangers of HIV as her and one of her children are HIV+. The teachings of Pastor Amos and Anne are a great inspiration within the slum area, as with Sister Leah, and are an example to what can be achieved with very little in Kenya. Items donated by Sarah Komen, Gloucestershire Schools and Energize Shropshire were handed over to Pastor Amos.

<https://www.facebook.com/KibagareAcademyOfTheKibagareSlums/info>



Pastor Amos Okolo School, Kibagare



Tony Kinchley at Pastor Amos Okolo School

The group also met members of the Kibagare Ladies Football team and chatted about football. They gave the team some footballs donated by Alive and Kicking and promised to bring them kits on a future visit. After Kibagare the party travelled a short distance through Kangemi to the Mountain View Estate to visit the Hope House Children’s Orphanage.

Hope House Children’s Home

The Orphanage receives babies from many different areas including through the state and homes them whilst looking for families for them. Children from the home are adopted across the world including the UK. The youngest child in the home was a little boy who was just a

month old. After a tour of the facilities and time to hold some of the babies the party donated items given by Helen and Charlotte Hope, Anne Lewis, Adrian Vine, Moira Holt, Marchant Taylor School, in Crosby, Liverpool and Childs Ercall Church Ladies group. The Hope House visit saw the first real tears of the visit as emotions ran high....from Ben Burton.

<http://www.hopehousebabieshome.co.uk/>

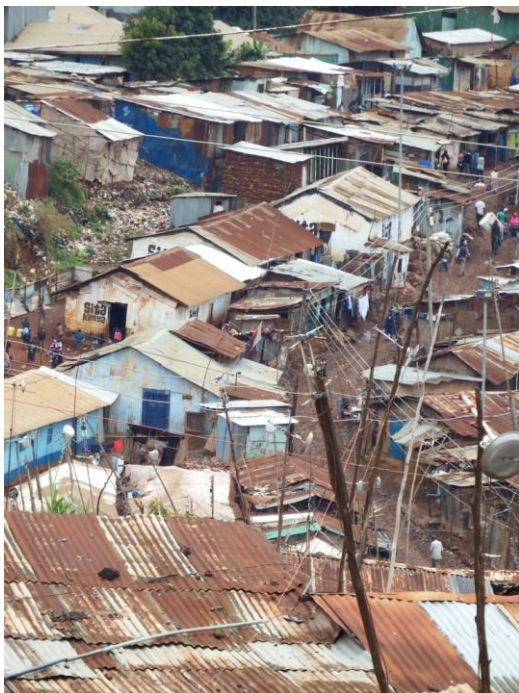
Game Changer Street Kids Project

Items were donated through Duncan Kinyua at Hope House to the Game Changer Street Kids football project based in Kangemi. The items were donated by QPR.

An evening visit to the Royal Windsor Hotel for a quick swim and food allowed the party to get to know each other better.

Thursday 5th June saw the party take a day away from the deliveries as the boys visited the Royal Windsor Golf and Country Club for a round of Golf on the fantastic course. The course is spectacularly pretty and adds the bonus of trying to avoid the mass of Sykes Monkeys living on the course. The Ladies took to the road to visit the Sheldrake Elephant Orphanage and Nairobi National Park.

Friday 6th June was the day the party travelled into the Daddy of all African Slum towns as they ventured into Kibera. Kibera is one of Africa's largest slum town housing over 1 Million people in a shack town covering just 2.5 square kilometres. The sights and sounds, coupled with the smell of the area are very difficult to explain. People survive on every little money in these areas and there is no sewerage system, little electricity (beyond small generators) and no running water. HIV and other diseases are rife in the area. For safety reasons the party travel to the Prestige Supermarket, a couple of kilometres from the area, to meet their guide for the initial part of day, Vincent Kekode.



Kibera



Team in Kibera

Kibera Mpira Mtani Project

The Kibera project is run by Vincent. Vincent and his volunteers provide social and health awareness education projects through football. They run the Mpira Mtani Charity from a small area in the top of the water tower that has a TV and shows football matches for a small fee. The money then goes into projects within the slum area. They also run computer classes for people from the area. The idea is to teach about the dangers of HIV and make youngsters aware of the dangers of disease, alcohol and drugs. Vincent and his team provided the essential safety and guidance for any group wishing to visit the Kibera area. As well-known elders who provide assistance to all the party were as safe as can be in this sprawling area. As part of the project they run a Girls football tournament and provide essential health and sanitary education for the girls as well as providing essential items. They also educate against unwanted pregnancies. The project provides essential education which has resulted in placing over 150 children in scholarships and university placings. They also provide after school club placements for 300 children. The project runs the Rotary School in Kibera, which the party visited next. The party donated items given by Dronfield Town FC, QPR and Alive and Kicking balls to the project.

<http://kiberampiramtaani.org/index.php/sample-sites-2.html>

The Rotary School

After seeing the Kibera Project the party, led by Vincent, took the short walk through the slum to the small Rotary School. The building was built as a small community area by donations from the Brighton and Hove Rotary Club but has now become a school for around 60 pre-school and primary age children. The children are very fortunate youngsters from the slum area and get essential education and food at the school. The school received items from Helen Hope, Woden Primary School and QPR.

<http://kiberampiramtaani.org/index.php/education/the-rotary-education-centre>



Sarah Weber – Kibera Rotary School

Rachel Foster – Kibera Oloo School

Oloo School

After the Rotary School the party took a much longer walk deeper into the slum area to visit Oloo School. Again, this is a corrugated iron shack building housing 240 children in an amazingly small space. The heat inside the building was incredible and yet up to 60 children

were squeezed into each small 'classroom'. The school was started in 2008 by Judith Oloo with 30 children and grew over the years after a large donation from a Swedish family. The school takes more children each January and provides for pre-school, primary and secondary education. As with all Kenyan Schools, however, the behaviour was immaculate and it was so obvious that children have an incredibly strong desire to learn to give themselves a way out of the slum life. The party handed over a large donation of school uniforms from Woden Primary School in Wolverhampton as well as shirts donated by Wolverhampton Wanderers FC. The school can be followed on Facebook at OloosChildrensCentre@yahoo.com Judith can be contacted at juditholoo60@yahoo.com

<http://www.olooschool.co.uk/about-kibera/>

Kibera Celtic FC

Kibera Celtic FC have been a long standing friend of the Appeal and have received lots of kit through the years. They are an inspirational football club led by John Oyoo. They began as a club designed to give the Youth of Kibera a place in life and something to keep them busy. They have developed into a fantastic club with the main team now in the Kenyan 1st Division, the 2nd tier of Kenyan football. The party visited John and some of his players at the Kibera Celtic Boardroom, which is effectively a shack behind a car dismantlers at the top end of Kibera slum. Most of the team were unavailable as they were playing a friendly against Premier League team, KCB (Kenyan Commercial Bank). The party donated training bibs from QPR, footballs from Alive and Kicking, Norfolk FA shirts, football boots and trainers from North Riding FA, England kit, Army FA shirts, and jackets from the RAFFA and CSFA shirts.

<http://thecelticnetwork.com/kibera-celtic/>

After Kibera the party drove a short distance to Dagaretti Corner to visit the Seed of Hope project run by Vision Africa.

Seed of Hope – Vision Africa

Seed of Hope is an excellent social charity which provides training for teenage boys and girls in dressmaking, fashion, and motor mechanics at its Vocational Training Centre. They train the youngsters and then assist them in setting up their own small businesses by empowering them with life, business and vocational skills. They also train life skills and maths and English. The centre is an excellent facility in Dagaretti that provides a superb surrounding for learning and plays an important part in the improvement of local youngsters. The centre currently has 80 students being taught by 6 teachers. The centre is also the home for Vision Africa and provides essential aid to a multitude of local schools, children's homes and children and adults. The party donated items given by QPR, Alive and Kicking, Aston Villa FC and Vauxhall FC.

http://www.vision-africa.org/what_we_do/seed_of_hope.php

Arsenal FC

Arsenal FC is a local football club in Dagaretti helped by Vision Africa with some players from the Seed of hope. As part of the visit the party donated kits from QPR to the club.

On Saturday 7th June the team drove up the edge of the Great Rift Valley en-route to Gilgil and 4 deliveries. The drive was different by Kenyan standards due to poor weather, driving in the cloud (the highest point on the drive is over 9000 feet) and many car crashes (fortunately not us).

GYSDA (Gilgil Youth and Sports Development Association)

GYSDA is a youth football organisation who provide education through participation in football. George Ouma and his team run football teams and a tournament which get together the youth of the Gilgil area and provide social and health education as part of those events. Items were given to George for use at the next Tournament and were donated by North Riding FA, Broseley Sports, Throstles Juniors, Handley Wood JFC, QPR, Staffordshire FA, Swallownest Jnrs, Gloucestershire FA, Clowne Comets JFC, Hagley Jnrs, Manchester United, England and Shrewsbury Town FC.

Woodard School

Woodard School was built through donations by the Woodard organisation through the efforts of Colonel (Rtd) Harry Vioulu Clarke MBE. Harry has been a long standing friend of the RAF Appeal. The school educates up to 250 children in a purpose built school which has laboratories and some excellent facilities. The children all walk to school each day from up to 5kms away. A school year costs parents 20000 Kenyan Shillings (Approx £130) a year. Whilst in English terms this is a tiny amount the average monthly wage for most Kenyans is equivalent to around the daily rate at minimum wage in the UK (Approx £45). After a tour of the school facilities the party handed over items donated by the Army FA, Westmoreland FA and Tim Oakes.

<http://www.woodard.co.uk/woodardkenyaschool.htm>



Children at Sanchat Re-Start Centre



Lou Simpson at Saidia Children's Home

The party lunched with the inspirational Mary Coulson at her spectacular home. Mary and her husband set up the Sanata Charitable Trust many years ago which includes the Sanchat Rescue Centre.

Sanchat Rescue Centre

The Sanchat Rescue Centre takes children off the streets of Gilgil and gives them a safe home, food and education as well as integrating them with other similar children. They are currently housed in old buildings in Gilgil but construction of a new purpose built is well underway. The party visited the new centre with Mary and were very impressed with it. Mary would ideally like to add a second layer to the boy's dormitory building to finish the project and needs assistance in sorting the area at the rear to make sports pitches but hopes to open the centre in September 2014. The party then visited the existing centre and were entertained by the children who danced. The party were able to spend time with the children, staff and volunteers before handing over items donated by Charlotte Hope and England, through the FA.

<http://www.restartafrica.org/>

Saidia Children's Home

Last delivery of the day was at the Saidia Children's Home. Saidia provides a home, food and education for abandoned and abused children. They currently have 60 children from age 3 up. The children appear to be very happy in the excellent surroundings of the small centre. The party spent time at the centre and toured the facilities before playing football with the children. They also handed over items donated by Charlotte Hope, Norfolk FA and Energize Shropshire.

<http://www.saidia-gilgil.org.uk/index.shtml>



Team entertaining at Sanchat



Saidia Children's Home

The party spent the night at the superb **Sunbird Lodge** overlooking Lake Elementaita with its flamingos before traveling back to Nairobi via the look out over the Great Rift Valley. They arrived back at Braeburn in time to watch the Braeburn 6 a side football tournament and hand out some England and Manchester United shirts to some of the players. During the afternoon many other charities visited Braeburn to receive kits from the Appeal.

http://www.sunbirdkenya.com/pages/the_lodge/accommodation_/index.html

Aspire Academy

The Aspire Academy is based in the north of Kenya. Francis Eusibias travelled, with a companion, 350kms to meet the party at Braeburn School. It is inspiring that people make the huge efforts to travel and receive the kits to improve the lives of those in their schools and clubs. The Aspire Academy is a school that develops football talent through education. Donations of kits received through Linford Wanderers FC, Cheshire FA and Vauxhall FC.

<http://www.mission-soccer.org/#!/donate/cbky>

Sunrise, Juja

The Sunrise football team is based in Juja, around an hour north west of Nairobi on the Thika road. Ibrahim Kimani and his wife Grace travelled to Braeburn School to collect a box of kit donated by Vauxhall FC.

Ironstrickers FC

The Ironstrickers FC are a long standing link with the Appeal. A few years ago the RAF team played the Ironstrickers in a match. Geoffrey Omokakula runs the team and strives to gain kits and items to help the team in Nairobi. The Appeal donated items from Shrewsbury Town FC, North Riding FA and Manchester United to the Iron Strickers.

Fred Akida

Fred Akida is originally from Uganda but now resides in Nairobi. Fred is a football Referee and has worked his way through the system to gain a place officiating in the top tier of Kenyan football; the Kenyan Premier League. Fred also assists in youth football in his original home village in Uganda. Fred received items donated by Lancashire FA, Sheffield & Hallamshire FA, Ian Vaines, Worcestershire FA, AP Forry, Tim Oakes and the Army FA.

Dave Osborne, Absolute Africa

Absolute Africa are a tour company who provide trips across Africa for students and people wanting a different adventure. From Nairobi the vehicles take long trips down to Cape Town. The Appeal has joined forces with David Osborne, the CEO of Absolute Africa, to take kits with the vehicles which can be handed out across the continent to extend the reach of the Charitable Appeal. Kits donated by Wolverhampton Wanderers, the English FA, Cheltenham Saracens FC, Newcastle United FC, Phil Moore of Millmoor Juniors FC and Norwich City FC (through Sporting ID, Newcastle).

<http://www.absoluteafrica.com/>

http://www.itwgraphics.com/sporting_sid.htm

Dave Queen – Small Steps Forward

Dave Queen accompanied the Appeal on a Kenya visit four years ago when he was a teacher at Thomas Adams School in Wem, Shropshire, as part of the Appeal's link to the school and its partner school in Kenya. After retirement Dave set up his own small charity,

Small Steps Forward, which provides a small school in Miriu, in Northern Kenya. Dave regularly travels to Kenya and works with a friend of the Appeal, Pam Galley, in providing a future for the children of Kenya. Neil and the team left Dave a large box full of kit donated by England and Manchester United for the school.

<http://www.hopeloveandconfidence.com/partnership/#>

Nicholas Muyoti Academy

Nicholas Muyoti is a well-known ex professional footballer in Kenya. Nicki played at the highest level in Kenya including representing his country. Post retirement he started a football academy to help underprivileged children in getting into football and receiving proper training. The Appeal has linked with Nicki in providing equipment to assist at the academy and donated kit given by Manchester United, Shropshire FA, Ollie, Westmoreland FA, Tunbridge Wells FC and Hampshire FA.

<http://www.futaa.com/football/article/up-close-with-sofapakas-nicholas-muyoti>



Nicki Muyoti with Ben Burton and Lou Simpson



Match with Kibagare Ladies

Braeburn Garden Estate School Tournament

John Herbert runs a football tournament each June at the school which attracts entries from similar teams to the Railway Wanderers team that he helps to run. It is billed as a mini world cup tournament and each team represents a different country. At this year's tournament Japan won the Plate and the Biafra Free State won the main competition. The Appeal provided some England and Manchester United shirts as prizes for the teams.

<http://www.braeburn.com/braeburn-schools-contacts/school-contacts/130-braeburn-garden-estate-school>

Tushinde

Tushinde is an excellent charity that works with underprivileged children and adults in and around the Mathare slum town and Nairobi. They provide essential assistance required to get children into education whilst also helping parents to provide for the children. The Appeal has a long standing link to the charity through Megan Wright and was more than happy to donate items received through Tesco (school uniforms), QPR, Charlotte Hope, Alison

Williamson MBE, Helen Hope, Childs Ercall Church Group and Manchester United Foundation.

<http://www.tushinde.org.uk/#/about/4541465876>

Stella Maris School

The Stella Maris School is another long standing link for the charitable appeal. The small school is in Mathare slum and is run by Laban Fundia. Laban and his staff provide education for over 120 children in some very small classrooms. The team visited the school on its final delivery day and spent time in the classrooms with the children. They donated items given by Whitley Bay Boys Club, QPR, Charlotte Hope, Ken Brotherwood, Wellington WI, Three Milestone FC from Cornwall FA and Sue Pilcher from UHNS.

Chelata Primary School

Chelata Primary School is in the area of Runda and is near Braeburn School. It has over 900 children with some class sizes in the high 70s. Gemma and Mark Roach, from BATUK are assisting the school in improving classrooms and in preparing an area below the school to be made into a football pitch. The party were shown around the school by the Deputy Head master, Titus, who was very passionate about the school and its children. The party handed over a box full of toys, books and clothes from Charlotte Hope as well as some Alive and Kicking footballs. The Appeal will send football kits in the coming months for the school.



Sarah Weber and Rachel Foster at Stella Maris School



Chelata Primary School

Alive and Kicking Workshop Team

After the successful first day visit the Alive and Kicking Workshop were inspired to re-start the works football team. To help the Appeal provided 2 strips donated by England FA and Manchester United to Rose Makani for the team.

Comments on the trip from members of the touring party:

Wing Commander Neil Hope MBE – AIR/DE&S SO1 Danger Area Airspace Manager – Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Appeal Co-ordinator:

This was an excellent 8th trip and possibly the best visit yet. The party that came to Kenya had a really good time and got to visit places they may never have the chance to again. It is always very gratifying to see the faces of the volunteers as they pass out kits to children and adults in the slum areas. This has been a record breaking visit with over 6500 items handed out over 29 visits. We have also set up new links with charities and schools we have not visited before as well as our new link with Alive and Kicking. I look forward to beginning work on the next visit later in 2014 or in 2015. I never stop believing that the work the Appeal does is worthwhile and the proof is in the happy children and adults across Kenya who we brought some happiness too. I would like to thank all the people that assist the Appeal in making it the success it has become, especially the lads in R&D at RAF Shawbury, Cpl Conor Dixon and Mr Dave Gaylor at RAF Brize Norton and the personnel at BATUK as well as John Herbert and the staff at Braeburn Garden Estate School, to name just a few.

Sarah Weber – Wembley Stadium - PA to Director of Football Services at the Football Association:

I have always wanted to come to Kenya so when the opportunity arose I jumped at the chance. I am so glad I did as I have had the most amazing experience. What made it so special was the inspirational people we met who truly cared about the children, many of which will hold a special place in my heart. I will always remember their infectious smiles and their desire to learn.

Rachel Foster – Wembley Stadium – Football Association Registrations Officer

The people we encountered in Kenya are so inspirational in their outlook, in the face of real adversity. Every single child we met had such a zest for life despite having so little. Most amazing of all was that they have real ambition to do well for themselves against all the odds – they want to be pilots, lawyers, journalists and nurses. It was humbling to meet some of the people who have dedicated their time to setting up schools or providing vocational opportunities to give children the best possible start in life, and to be able to contribute in a small way by donating football kit, shoes and toys was amazing. Sadly, the children we met are the lucky ones despite being in real poverty. They are in the system, being schooled and fed and given a chance in life and there are so many more that simply aren't that fortunate. What we did was just a drop in the ocean but hopefully we can spread the word and next year's appeal will be doubly successful.

The trip was at the same time both heart-breaking and uplifting but I fell completely in love with the people there and I'd return to Kenya in a heartbeat. It was a real privilege to be a part of and thanks must go to Neil for his incredible efforts in putting it together.

Flight Lieutenant Tony Kinchley – RAF Shawbury - Central Air Traffic Control School

I jumped at the chance to return to Kenya again having gained rewarding memories from two previous trips. The country has changed over the years, however it is still a country of huge contrast between the haves and the have not's. Through "Taking football to Africa and

beyond” I have been able to visit the worst slums in Nairobi and witness first-hand the appalling living conditions that exists for thousands of people. I have also been privileged to see what a small act of kindness in the shape of a football strip can make to a child. To stand in front of sixty children crammed into a small class room, the smell of raw sewage never far away, watching them react as we hand out small gifts, will stay with me for ever. Their joy, thanks and obvious appreciation is etched in my memories. These children have very little and often have suffered from abuse and neglect, however they never have a smile far away from their faces. They are so hard working and understand what education will mean to them; an opportunity to improve their lives and the lives of their families. I also met so many dedicated teachers, coaches and helpers who are totally devoted to these children and want to make a difference in any way they can. I feel so privileged to have spent time in such a fascinating place and thank Neil for all his hard work and continued dedication to such a fantastic cause.

Flight Sergeant Louise Simpson – Swanwick Military – London Air Traffic Control Centre

After hearing from others who have been with Neil to Kenya I was very grateful when he said I could be part of the team this trip. From day one I could see the difference the charity is making to people’s lives and was very proud to be a small part of it. The people I have met that are trying to help and empower children and young adults through education and sport are inspiring. The simple act of giving your time by holding a hand, talking to them or pushing them on a swing can show a child that someone cares. The big smiles in the faces of children who have very little will stay with me forever. Taking Football to Africa and Beyond is an amazing charitable organisation that I hope I have the privilege to be a part of in the future.

Corporal Ben Burton – RAF Brize Norton – 24 Squadron

To be able to put smiles on hundreds of children’s faces over the duration of the trip is a great feeling. With this being my second Kenya trip I half knew on what to expect; hot and clammy weather, stupidly congested roads and the week to be an emotional rollercoaster. For me, it was fantastic to see familiar faces from four years ago and to see how the people and the country as a whole has changed. The highlight of the trip for me was giving a boy aged about 12 years old a new pair of trainers, as his had disfigured to the point he was no longer walking on the sole but on the side wall of the trainers. His face lit up like it was Christmas and ran to ask his teacher if he could keep them. For the next 30 minutes he didn’t stop staring and smiling at his new trainers. That for me was literally the best feeling ever. As expected the trip was a huge success. I feel extremely privileged to have been a part of the trip that conducted more deliveries than before, distributed more kit than on previous trips and to have met so many driven and inspirational people that are embedded within Kenya all with the same goal. This is certainly a trip I will remember for many years and has cemented my love for Kenya even more. A huge thanks to Neil Hope for the invitation to join the team for this trip.

Conclusion

This was another hugely successful trip delivering over 6500 items to 29 different teams/groups thus providing a huge amount of Aid through the love of football.

Thanks as always to all those people who make the charitable appeal so successful; the guys at R&D RAF Shawbury, Air Exports at Brize Norton, especially Dave Gaylor and Marc Williams and Conor Dixon at ATC RAF Brize Norton. Also special mention to John Herbert at Braeburn Garden Estate School and the personnel at BATUK in Nairobi. Here's to the next visit, scheduled for June 2015.

Neil Hope MBE
Wing Commander RAFR



Wg Cdr Neil Hope MBE with Jill Baraka at Saidia Children's Home in Gilgil