



“making a real difference” in

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A new term, a new school & a new start

Monday was the official start of the new school year in Sierra Leone and I am really pleased to announce that the new school premises are ready for the first intake of Year 7 & 8 pupils. We are using this week as an enrolment/introductory week so that potential pupils and their parents can see the new facilities. Below is the school badge, which was designed by members of the community, with a little tweak from me, and this will feature on the children's polo shirts



The project has had its challenges, mainly due to the intense rains at times during the build and we also had some man management/timing issues with the main contractor – suffice to say that we will not be using him for any future phases of development.

Just to remind you, in March we purchased half an acre of land and since then we have completed the building and equipping 2 classrooms, an office, staffroom and a five-cubicle toilet block and we have already laid the concrete foundations for the next phase, another two classrooms. The total spend so far is **£16,400** and I would like to thank **ALL** those who have supported the project directly or by sponsoring me for the 10 mile walk I did in June. **YOUR** support has made this possible.

The start of a new school and year

The enrolment process for pupils has started fairly slowly. This is due to resistance from some parents regarding the payment of fees and the purchase of uniform. Previously the children were walking up to 5 miles each way to attend a government school, which was free, and although our initial consumer research was very positive for a school in the community, some parents are now finding it difficult to pay fees & purchase the school uniform, especially if they have more than one child. We are working with the community, offering incentives to help them overcome this financial difficulty.

So, why do we charge & what are the costs?

The school, initially will receive no government support (despite the fact that we still have to register with them) and therefore we have to charge school fees in order to pay the teachers a stipend and to buy essentials like chalk. To put things in perspective we are initially paying the teachers just **£20** per month! The termly cost is **£5** per pupil but they also need to buy the uniform which is **£12**. Some of them will need to buy school shoes **£10**, a school bag **£10** and they also have to buy their own exercise books **£8**.

St Mary's orphanage, Kono Town

There are currently 8 pupils at the orphanage who were attending the government school and we have offered them places with us and I am currently seeking sponsors to make this possible. If anyone is interested in finding out more information please contact me by e-mail: alanwooly@msn.com

I've just booked my 14th trip to Sierra Leone !!

On 10th November, my daughters birthday – OOPS! I am flying out to Freetown for a 10 day visit. This trip will give me the opportunity to visit Kono Town, for the first time, and to catch up with the eight other projects that I am involved with.

I am also hoping to have the opportunity to visit The Global Mercy, (Mercy Ships newest hospital ship) which has recently docked in Freetown for a period of field service. This will be full circle for me, as my first involvement in Sierra Leone was as a Rotary volunteer back in 2005, helping to build the Rotary Hostel of Hope at the Aberdeen Womens Centre in Freetown, a trip that I thought would be a one-off !!

The new block comprising 2 classrooms, an office and staffroom



Some of the kids proudly wearing their Westminster Community Secondary School uniform



The new Westminster polo shirts

