

Changing their world

Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

Everyone who opens *InTouch* magazine is somehow connected to education. Not all articles are school based but discussions about travel, economics, health, the environment etc. are all educational. True education is about opening the mind, changing ourselves and changing the world around us.

After 40 years in the classroom I now have the privilege of being part of a small NGO called Pemba Support based in Ennistymon, Co Clare. Our aim is to alleviate poverty using a multifaceted approach among the poorest people of Tanzania who live on the remote island of Pemba. Education, in its broadest terms is at the very heart of our mission. The standard of schooling is extremely low and many people are illiterate and without skills so it was difficult to know where to begin!

The first thing people need is food so we have many small farming projects. Little village co-operatives have been set up and we are funding vegetable growing, beekeeping, chicken and duck rearing, goat farming and fishing projects. Over the past year, with help from Bothar, we set up a major cow rearing project in the remote north of the island which is helping to change the lives of the whole community there. Water is also vital for



Some of the students who are being supported by the INTO Global Solidarity Fund with teachers Yussuf (in striped shirt) and Mbarouk (in red shirt)

progress and we have just finished sponsoring our fourth well which will support projects and communities. In all of these projects people are learning new skills of farming, marketing, management and interfaith co-operation between the Muslim majority and the Christian minority.

Another facet of our mission is to support the most vulnerable people who get little or no support from government such as the 25 people suffering from leprosy in Makundeni leprosy village, people with low vision who cannot afford glasses, physically disabled children who have no services and Asha and Mariam, two deaf and dumb girls, who are training to become tailors.

Capacity building for the future is vital so, at the moment, we are helping to train two agricultural workers to diploma level,

two people who are committed to their communities who are doing their masters and a young man doing a diploma in tourism.

INTO funds are helping us to support 20 children in Makangale primary and secondary schools who cannot afford to pay for their school fees and uniforms, thus enabling these children to dream of a brighter future. The union is also supporting two teachers in the same school who are studying for their BA in Open University. With a monthly income of only €100 it would take Mbarouk and Yussuf up to ten years to achieve their dream! There is a great shortage of skilled workers in Pemba so the INTO is also funding the fees for three top students in electrical installation in the only vocational training centre on the island.

Each of these projects is offering real educational experiences and changing the lives of some of the poorest and most vulnerable people on the planet.

No, we can't change the world but the people of Pemba say to you, the teachers of Ireland, 'Thank you for changing our world'.

You are welcome to visit our website: www.pembasupport.org

PAT O'DOHERTY, Pemba Support, Ennistymon, Co Clare.



Caring for our world

Irish Aid Awards seek to help children in Ireland understand global issues

The Our World Irish Aid Awards are designed to help children in Ireland to understand global issues and Ireland's role in working to meet the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals focus on fighting hunger and poverty and improving the lives of those in the world's poorest countries.

Through the awards, pupils between the ages of eight and 13 learn about the lives of children in developing countries and the work of Irish Aid, the Government's programme for overseas development. Pupils then create a project to highlight the challenges facing children in developing countries and the progress which is being achieved.

This year's theme, 'Caring for our World', relates to all eight MDGs, with a particular focus on protecting the environment.

Registration for the programme is now open and the deadline for entries is Friday, 13 March 2015.

For more information visit ourworldirishaidawards.ie