

# SIGBI Programme Director's Blog February 2017

It has been a very busy start to the year, preparing documents for meetings, planning for CSW and meeting up with members of Child.org in London to discuss the progress and changes to the Federation Project.

Patricia Gatherum ( Project Liaison Officer) and I were invited to Child.org's annual "shindig"- a wonderful event attended by over 100 supporters, charity workers and charity apprentices- most of them well under 30.

The event took place in a disused brewery and despite outward appearances, it cost them very little as food was donated and the venue very low cost. The whole evening was a resounding success on a very low budget, so different from what we often see with bigger charities.

We were addressed by one of the trustees and learnt that the majority of the other trustees have a medical background, from a paediatricians to an anaesthetist, and all with the same motivation- to improve the lives of children and.

We heard all about their plans for the future which had been so well thought out that we both came away fully convinced the members had made a good choice in the Meru Project.



The following day we met with the CEO and two other team members- one( Marti) working out in the Meru and Amanjit our main contact in the organisation.

Now that the funding has reached the minimum starting point it will not be long before the first groups of women enrol on their course- there are 120 interested so demand is high.

The alternative rites of passage (anti-FGM) have been very well received and they are now intending to educate the men as well as the women.

We also discussed the first field trip to the project. This will be timed to coincide with the graduation of the first group of women in 2018. Sadly 2017 is a time for a general election and it was not deemed a good idea to arrange anything during this year.

My initial dealing with Child.org were not smooth, but I came away from this meeting with enthusiasm and respect for what they are doing.

This project is nearing the 12 month mark and will run until Conference 2019- PLEASE support it to your fullest capabilities- it really does EDUCATE, ENABLE and EMPOWER and will leave a lasting legacy that we and they can be proud of.

Yours in friendship

Barbara Dixon  
Programme Director