



São Tomé e Príncipe Union for Promotion

STeP UP Quarterly Report January – March 2007

Dear STeP UP Friends and Supporters,

The new year began quietly enough with the STeP UP team focusing on our on-going projects:

the girls' scholarships (with Winrock International),
malaria prevention (with UNICEF) and
Quintino's English school, SAPEL.

The environmental education project is on-hold since Mireia's departure in December. She has written since returning to Spain that she's gotten support for it there. She also hosted a seminar in Barcelona in mid-March about environmental education in São Tomé. We expect this project to pick up steam in the near future, as she plans to return here in September to resume where she left off and to start up a pilot project on solar energy.

Roberta and Quintinos' team of 3 are distributing school materials, food and clothes to the 600 girls of poor families who were selected for aid in the scholarship project. Because families with financial problems usually opt to stop their daughters' education – as opposed to their sons', as the girls are more useful at home doing chores - this project aims to encourage parents to allow their daughters to finish school, leading to better job opportunities for them in the future.

Roberta and Laurinda, her colleague who teaches sewing, are involved with 250 young women in designing and producing about 150 mosquito nets per month for sale in the local market and at their sewing center. UNICEF helps with the education component of the project, reinforcing the message that the nets, treated with insecticide, are necessary for malaria prevention. Finally, Quintino's English language school now has 200 students enrolled in 8 classes, from beginners to 5th level students.

You may recall from previous reports that we are importing 16 used computers from the St. Bernard School in New York City where an old friend working there offered them to us. After more than 5 months in transit, they arrived here in late February. Once they cleared customs, we took possession just as Tony Ede, a Nigerian computer volunteer, arrived on the island. He and an old friend from here, James Neves, are helping us set them up and get them on-line. We are negotiating with our office landlord to rent an air-conditioned room downstairs where we can set them up as classroom/cyber-café. Sara Careb, another volunteer, this one an American, is expected to arrive in early April

to work in this classroom and to continue investigating our core idea of trying to figure the best way of taking advantage of donated, usable computers from the developed world for education projects in the developing world.

In mid-March friends, a German film-making couple living in South Africa, arrived to do a documentary of STeP UP projects. Marion spent the first 2 weeks filming the islands, talking with project beneficiaries and local leaders and shooting projects both past and on-going. Arno, her husband, spent most of his time editing Marion's work at home. They expect to produce about 30 minutes of publicity for us and do a couple of other documentaries for European TV channels. Once finished here, they continued to Gabon where they have more work. With several STeP UP supporters in the US, we are upgrading our website to be able to show their documentary, have a photo gallery of stills, and solicit donations on the 'net' using credit cards. We hope to make it to the 21st Century yet!!

My summer plans are beginning to take shape, and at this point I hope to visit New York City (June 2-11); Washington, DC (June 11 – July 13), Boston (July 13-23), San Francisco (July 23 – August 2), and Portland OR (August 2-6). I only hope my strength can cope. Don't be surprised if somewhere along the line, I burn out and slip back to São Tomé (I'll be travelling solo this trip)! But I think I can make it.

My continuing thanks to all of you for your support and encouragement. I hope our website will be up-and-running in the next month or so, and we will be able to show a larger world the first-hand realities of this country and the obstacles we face in our work. Once the documentary is available on the website, I will be sure to let you know. Until then, please keep us in your thoughts. Thanks again – Ned

If you are able to help us, please send whatever contribution you can to our lawyer,
Mr. Eric McClafferty
Kelley and Drye
3050 K St., NW #4
Washington, DC 20007.
All donations are tax-deductible. Again, thanks for your help.