

Farming for Africa's future



Enterprising fish farmers at work in the new Self Help Africa programme in Malawi **6**



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Agriculture holds the key to a bright future for emerging Africa



Growth in emerging African economies is built on a strengthening agricultural sector

Ghana is enjoying rapid economic growth, much of it built upon a strengthening agricultural sector.



If you read just the headlines you would believe that Africa is a hopeless case, blighted by an endless litany of hunger, poverty and suffering. The major news story to emerge

from the continent last year told of a grave humanitarian crisis that displaced entire communities and claimed the lives of thousands in the Horn of Africa.

And this year has been little different, as newspapers, radio and television carried endless reports of despair amongst impoverished communities who fled barren fields after widespread drought caused crops to fail across wide swathes of West Africa.

Has nothing changed? Have we made no headway at all in Africa, you could legitimately ask?

How did India emerge from famine and poverty to become the economic powerhouse that it is in Asia today, when so much of sub-Saharan Africa remains heavily dependent on foreign aid, with millions seeming just a bad season away from destitution.

To answer the first question posed above, it is heartening to be able to say that things have, and are changing in Africa – fast.

From a lower base than anywhere else on the planet, African countries are lifting themselves out of poverty.

The continent that we aspire to see – one

free from hunger and poverty – may yet be some way off, but it is no exaggeration to say that green shoots of economic growth are in plain sight in many countries that are still amongst the poorest in the world.

Ethiopia and Ghana, two countries where Self Help Africa works, are currently amongst the fastest growing economies in the world, and in fact in 2011 seven of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies were African.

The growth in virtually all of these emerging African economies has been built upon the foundations of a strengthening agricultural sector, underlining the critical role that farming and food production must play in the fight against poverty. This situation is far from unique to Africa however, as virtually every country aside from those with oil wealth have emerged from poverty due to the productivity of their farmers.

Since Self Help Africa was established nearly 30 years ago we have recognised the vital importance of agriculture in the fight to end hunger and poverty in Africa.

By supporting irrigation, developing better seed systems, strengthening agricultural extension, knowledge and training systems, and by improving access to credit, to enterprise opportunities and to markets, Self Help Africa has enabled hundreds of thousands of rural farm families to work their way out of poverty.

Considerable challenges remain – and indeed new ones are emerging – in the form of climate change, population growth, and in spiraling prices of staple foods, but Africa's farmers are becoming more robust,

more adaptable, and more educated, as they confront head-on these and other impediments.

A great deal remains to be done if current growth patterns are to be sustained, and the 30% of African people – approximately 250 million, who live in extreme poverty, can be helped to achieve a better life.

But nobody can dispute the role that agriculture must play in that work – given that more than 70% of Africans rely directly on small-farms for their survival, and statistics that show that upwards of 75% of African farmland has the potential – with better farming systems, irrigation and other measures, to grow much more than at present.

Self Help Africa is grateful for the continuing backing that we receive from our supporters for the work we do with Africa's farmers. It is rewarding work, and is reaping rewards. We look forward to continuing with you on this journey, and playing our part in Africa's growth and development in the year ahead.

Self Help Africa receives programme funding from Irish Aid, UK Aid and US Aid, and is also backed by a series of trusts and foundations.

Our gratitude also to members of the public in Ireland, UK and USA for their generous backing.



Developing market links for cashew farmers

Up to 1,000 farmers in West Africa will benefit from an innovative partnership established between Self Help Africa and the giant beverage and snack company, Pepsi, recently.

The new project, to be run on a trial basis for 20 months in Benin, is jointly funded by Pepsi's snackfoods subsidiary, Frito Lay, and sees Self Help Africa working with cashew farmers to improve production.

Working in two districts near the town of Parakou in central Benin, Self Help Africa will assist farmers in increasing both the quality and quantity of their cashew production, as well as helping them with the formation of farmer cooperatives. The cashew crop will be sold into a new processing facility, run by the project's other partner, Tolaro Global.

Cashew harvests average around three kilos per tree per year in West Africa, while the

newest varieties of cashew trees, farmed at optimum levels, can produce up to 60 kilos. By introducing these new varieties and helping farmers with orchard layout, pruning and other agronomic practices, Self Help Africa aims to increase farm incomes dramatically. A model farm and a farmer field school will be established, to allow farmers to witness how the adoption of new practices can boost their harvests.

"The new partnership with Pepsi and Tolaro is a first for us in Self Help Africa," said CEO Ray Jordan. "It's a great example of a real partnership at work, with Self Help Africa assisting farmers to grow more cashew, Tolaro buying and processing this cashew after harvest, and Pepsi bringing the cashew all the way to the consumers in Europe and the US."



West African smallholder farmers have a valuable new market for their cashew crop, under a recently established partnership with Pepsico.

Making community connections in Uganda

An ambitious new development project that will aim to improve services to almost half a million people has been launched by Self Help Africa in Uganda.

Uganda Community Connector (UCC) is designed to improve the nutritional status and the livelihoods of over 80,000 households in Uganda over a five year period, and has received backing from the American government's 'USAID' programme.

As the name suggests the project is about improving the connection between local communities and support services, and it is within this programme that Self Help Africa will take the lead on the provision of improved linkages relating to agriculture,

food production, and agricultural extension service delivery. A particular emphasis will be placed by the project on the nutritional needs of women and children in disadvantaged households.

One element of UCC will see the establishment by Self Help Africa and local partners of an effective farmer field school programme to support knowledge transfer and training for small-scale farmers. Work is being undertaken in collaboration with a number of specialist sectoral partners including US development specialists FHI360, local development agencies Brac and Vedco, Gulu and Mbarara universities in Uganda, and others.

President praises 'remarkable work'

Rish President Michael D Higgins praised "the truly remarkable work" of Self Help Africa in an address to more than 300 supporters at an inaugural Spring gala ball in Boston.

The guest of honour at the inaugural Self Help Africa Change-Maker's Gala, President Higgins, on his first official visit to the United States since his election late last year lauded all those involved in "fighting poverty and hunger by helping rural African communities to drive their own change and to help themselves."

"Empowering the small farmer in Africa to help themselves to become sustainable food producers is one of the most sensible, efficient and cost effective ways we can help reduce the threat of famine, starvation and malnutrition that currently faces too many of our fellow human beings," the President added.

Farmers are "the backbone of Africa," he said, as he highlighted Self Help Africa's work in the area. "You believe in them and you invest in them. You link farmers with markets. You work with them in improving their practices and building up their capacity for achieving sustainability. There is no better work."

The event raised almost \$150,000, and is the second charity gala now taking place in the United States each year to support the work of Self Help Africa.



Empowering the small farm is one of the most sensible and cost effective ways to help reduce famine, President Higgins tells Boston Ball.

Frontline support from Plant Clinics



Mr. Okwakol Ochom one of the plant clinics doctors' attending to some of the farmers who had come to present some of their problems in Ngora market, Uganda on 30th Sep 2010

Improving diagnostics and ensuring swift treatment of plant diseases can be the difference between a bountiful harvest and crop failure, for a small-holder farmer in Africa. And so it is that Self Help Africa has established a network of plant clinics in rural Uganda, to improve early detection and set in place measures to combat or contain destructive pests and disease before they spread.

"The first step in this process is knowledge," explains Uganda director Tony Kisadha. "The clinics are designed to improve farmer knowledge, so that people who are growing

the crops can identify troublesome pests and diseases before they have really taken hold." The project is being implemented in collaboration with government ministries and research institutes in Uganda. "We are trying to improve the lines of communication between farmers, extension workers, and are setting out to reach up to 80,000 small-holder farmers during the lifetime of the project," SHA's country director added. In the past year clinics have been established by Self Help Africa in nine districts, including locations in the North, West and East of Uganda.



“Diversification into production of fruit and vegetables was the turning point for Benson Irungu, who came to farming late in life when he retired from his poorly paid government job.

Sponsored by Self Help Africa to attend an agricultural training course, Benson quickly set about putting his new knowledge into practice by planting kale, cabbage, onions, butternut squash, papaya and passion fruit around the perimeter of his one and a half acres holding at Visio village in Rongai, Kenya.

"I had to be patient while the plants and trees grew, but after a few years I was earning a lot more than ever before," he says.

Since then Benson has reinvested his earnings in purchasing a dairy cow, a flock of 30 poultry, as well as housing for his livestock. In 2010 he went even further and leased land on which he has planted cassava, sorghum and sweet potato.

School start for new farmer generation

A pilot project that brought education about agriculture into the classroom has been completed in Malawi, with the creation of school vegetable gardens at 18 primary level schools in the Lilongwe district. Developed as a means of introducing students at a young age to the principles of basic crop management and cropping systems, the gardens have also provided school goers with practical, hands-on knowledge of good practice in food production. Food that is being grown in the school gardens is both provided to students as an additional source of nourishment, while some is sold in local markets to generate revenues needed to maintain the school gardens as a sustainable ongoing concern. The Malawi School Gardens project was started by Self Help Africa in 2009 in collaboration with The One Foundation, who in tandem with the scheme supported investment in improved drinking water and sanitation services at the 18 participating schools.

"Children learn about farming in the home but they do not usually learn about it at

school," explains Self Help Africa country director Amos Zaindi. "The gardens have provided a very practical learning platform for students, who also gain the benefits of being able to enjoy the fruits of their work."

A total of 900 students have been involved in the project, which specifically promoted the

production of a range of leafy vegetable crops which can be grown during the school year. Self Help Africa carried out the work in collaboration with Lilongwe District Education Office, Lilongwe District Agriculture Office, and Lilongwe's local district council.



One of the school gardens being cultivated in the Lilongwe district in Malawi

Funds back agricultural innovation



Fisherfolk on Lake Malawi. A programme supporting small scale fishing communities is being supported by the Mtukula Fund in 2012

Innovative new development projects that set out to empower women, foster enterprise and support agricultural diversification are to be supported by a major new development fund launched by Self Help Africa. The Mtukula Fund, which derives its name from a southern African word that describes an action to stimulate household well-being has been launched to support new project activities within, or associated with Self Help Africa's existing programmes in Malawi and Zambia. Close to 20 proposals and suggestions were submitted by country

offices, local partners and local NGOs for consideration in 2012, before the funds grant making panel awarded its backing to two new project activities in each of Malawi and Zambia.

Self Help Africa's Head of Innovation and Learning Jenny Rafanomezana said that the four chosen projects had been selected in recognition of the benefits these activities could have in improving farm enterprise and agricultural diversification, in developing profitable market opportunities, and also because they each had the capacity to

support and empower rural women. The chosen projects for 2012 include activities that look at the enterprise potential of banana production, that support conservation fish farming, that add value to mango production, and that link broiler hen rearing and amaranth grain production within a single project. Self Help Africa's Mtukula Fund is a sister fund to the Maendeleo Agricultural Enterprise Fund (MAEF), managed by FARM-Africa in East Africa. Self Help Africa and FARM-Africa are working in partnership to scale up this successful initiative.

The four new project activities that are receiving support from the inaugural Self Help Africa Mtukula Fund are

1 Banana Enterprise Development (Zambia)

The Banana Enterprise Development initiative is assisting Nyimba District Farmers Association (NDFA) in efforts to improve banana processing and marketing in Zambia.

Fund support is designed to enable banana producers in an area with an established trade to develop the commercial potential of production and processing. The introduction of technology to assist with the processing, and the assured availability of a market through project partner Silver Food Solutions gives this initiative a high chance of developing into a viable, sustainable agricultural enterprise. The project will benefit many farmers in the area who are banana producers, and also has the potential to benefit rural women, who are the main growers and vendors of banana in Eastern Zambia.

2 Kariba Women's Fishing Project (Zambia)

The Kariba Women's Fishing Project is an aquaculture enterprise that seeks to develop the commercial potential of fish farming at Lake Kariba on Zambia's Zambezi River. The backing of the fund for Kariba Women's Fishing Project will assist the group with the marketing of produce, accounts and book keeping, and further entrepreneurial development.

This assistance will be facilitated by locally-based NGO Siavonga Nutrition Group (SGV), and will also seek to improve the natural resource management in Zambia by increasing fish catches and reducing over exploitation of lake fish, as well as economically empower women.

3 Mango Production and Marketing (Malawi)

The Mango production and marketing project in Malawi will improve the existing stock of mangoes, encourage the planting of new fruit, and improve the production and marketing of the crop for farmers.

Facilitated by the Agriculture and Natural Resources Management Consortium (ANARMAC) and supported through additional partnerships with the Horticulture Union of Malawi (HORTICUM) and Malawi Mangoes Ltd, the Mango Production and Marketing project provides technical and marketing support to participating farm families. There is a government commitment of support for the project, while juice processors Malawi Mangoes have agreed to provide technical training and transport to growers.

4 Broiler and Amaranth Development (Malawi)

The Trustees of Agriculture Production Promotion (TAPP) and the Bunda College of Agriculture launched the Broiler and Amaranth Value Chain Development initiative in 2011 to promote broiler production and processing and amaranth seed multiplication among small-holder farmers in Malawi. Participating farmers have already constructed structures for chicken housing, and have the benefit from a close nearby market and good road access for their produce in the capital, Lilongwe. Working with TAPP gives the project great potential due to the organisation's team of well qualified and experienced experts, while the familiarity that farmers have with the organisation due to its previous work in the area also establishes this enterprise on a firm footing.



DISCOVER Malawi's climate challenge

Self Help Africa has teamed up with development agencies from the UK, Italy and Ireland for a major new programme that is seeking to support almost one million people in rural Malawi to cope with the effects of climate change.

The project is a collaboration between SHA, UK-based Concern Universal, GOAL and Italian agency Cooperazionale Interazionale (COOPI), and will also see the organisation working with a number of local partners on a range of programme activities that are designed to support agricultural diversification and other measures to help farm households to mitigate, and adapt to the effects of a changing climate.

DISCOVER, an acronym for 'Developing Innovative Solutions with Communities to Overcome Vulnerability through Enhanced Resilience' aims to contribute to reducing poverty and vulnerability of 900,000 people, and is being funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), with additional resources provided by the Norwegian Embassy of Malawi, and Irish Aid. The purpose of the work is to increase the resilience and improve the lives of 900,000 vulnerable people by enhancing the capacity of local government to plan, prepare and respond to climate variability, and enhancing the adaptation capacity of vulnerable



Programme aims to reduce poverty and vulnerability of 900,000 people

Mercy Amos with baby Monica draws water from the dambo wetland, which is also used for planting maize. Optimising the use of the wetlands is vital in Malawi's efforts to adapt to climate change.

communities through a series of targeted, practical actions to improve livelihoods and food security funded by donor funds from the UKAID, Irish Aid and Norway but managed by UKAID. Together with supporting agricultural diversification, the five-years project will seek to increase household incomes, increase

smallholder crop and livestock production, and promote sustainability and adaptive agricultural technologies in the targeted areas. Self Help Africa will carry out most of its work under DISCOVER in the Karonga district of Northern Malawi, close to the shores of Lake Nyasa.



KOLANI DUNGA

“ I have been digging for nearly 50 years,” says Kolani Dunca, her calloused hands a testimony to a life-time of hard work.

Aged 56, this mother of nine says that training and successful crop rotation has meant that she produces crops of food year on year, on her one and a half acre plot at Malugu village in Northern Togo.

“Some of the time I grow maize or sorghum, and sometimes it is rice, or groundnuts, or haricot beans. Mix them up and they grow every year, and also keep the soil fertile.” Kolani speaks of the barren years when her yields were tiny, but credits the training she received for enabling her to continue producing food for her family, season after season.

Water project combats Sahel drought

Burkina Faso is facing a grave humanitarian crisis as poor harvests, high grain prices, environmental damage and growing numbers of refugees are combining to put huge pressure on the West African country's ability to cope.

Self Help Africa's regional director in West Africa Zarina Douglas-Sori says that many small-scale farmers have already eaten the seed that they should have kept in reserve for the next planting season, and that communities across the country are at risk.

“The current drought is the third to have affected the region in the past decade, and latest figures estimate that up to half of the rural population is affected,” she said.

The rains only come once a year in the African Sahel, and following a season where rainfall was both patchy, and late, many harvests have failed, animals have died, and many have been sold by households to buy food.

Self Help Africa recently initiated a major new West African programme that will improve access for up to 30,000 people in Burkina Faso to safe, clean drinking water.

The EU backed project combines the provision of clean water with steps to

improve basic household sanitation. The project has also incorporated a food production dimension that is designed to enable small-holder farmers to develop new opportunities to produce food crops under irrigated conditions.

“Delivering clean water to communities must go hand in hand with ensuring that there is a proper level of sanitation. Water points cannot be allowed to become contaminated from effluent run-off,” Self Help Africa's director said.

SHA is working in collaboration with a number of local partners on the provision of drinking water in three semi-arid regions of the country, and on the provision and installations of improved pit-latrines and 'ECOSAN' toilets in each of the target areas. ECOSAN latrines manage human waste in a way that will allow it to be used safely as a means of natural fertiliser.

In conjunction with the provision of drinking water and sanitation, the project is supporting rural communities in the three areas to establish new irrigated horticulture and food production activities on their farms and at community level.

Cooperative boost for Ethiopia

The earnings of thousands of farm families supported by an agricultural cooperative development project in Ethiopia have more than doubled as a result of the scheme, a recently published evaluation has concluded.

Backed by a €1.5 million EU Food Facility grant, Self Help Africa's two-year Agricultural Cooperative Development Project (ACDP) set out to support 17,500 small-holder farmers in Ethiopia's Oromia and SNNPR Provinces to increase food production, and indirectly improve the lives of close to 100,000 rural poor people.

A post-project independent evaluation has reported that Self Help Africa's scheme has substantially increased food production, incomes, and the ability of farmers cooperatives to support their members, and 'has positively impacted on the lives and livelihoods of the target community.'

As a result many farmers have improved their houses, bought assets like oxen and crossbred dairy cows, begun trading enterprises, and have been able to send their children to schools, pay college fees, and purchase household items like televisions and bicycles. Some have even built homes in urban towns that they were renting to increase their income further.

"Farmers have improved their houses, bought assets and begun trading"

Conducted by consultants from the Dynamic Institute of Consultancy and Training (DICT), the report to the EU was compiled following household surveys with 295 randomly selected beneficiaries; focus group discussions with 12 groups from different segments of the community; and interviews with 34 executives of cooperative unions and other key informants.

Self Help Africa's Agricultural Cooperative Development Project (ACDP) was one of 13 proposals selected by the EU Food Facility for funding support from a one-billion Euro fund created to address developing world food shortages in the wake of the 2008 global food crisis.

The project built on close to a decade of work by Self Help Africa with cooperative unions in the Oromia and SNNPR Provinces of Southern Ethiopia, and set out to increase production and productivity of food crops, vegetables and livestock for 17,500 cooperative members. It also sought to strengthen farmers' cooperative unions, primary cooperatives, and government services, so that they could improve the support services provided to members and the wider community. Work was carried out amongst farmers in 12 districts including the Mareko, Sodo, Silti and



Members of Jolle Co-operative in Oromia, Ethiopia, are pictured outside their offices.

Lanfuro areas of SNNPR, and in districts of West and East Shewa, Zeway, West Arsi and Bale in Oromia Province.

The project was implemented in partnership with seven agricultural cooperative unions,

and undertaken in collaboration with the local Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Cooperative Promotion personnel, and with agricultural research institutes.

Creamery suppliers backing is vital

- 'The Grow Fund' has been a powerful mechanism that has allowed 'farmer to farmer' support for co-operative development to flourish in Self Help Africa's programmes, for 20 years.
- Established in 1991 as a means whereby farmers could contribute to African rural development projects as a small deduction from their annual creamery cooperative payment, the Self Help Africa Grow Fund is supported by approximately 4,000 milk suppliers to this day.
- Members of cooperative creameries from across Ireland loyally support the scheme, which raises upwards of €160,000 annually to support agricultural development projects in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Because of the strong links to the agricultural cooperative movement of the benefactors, Self Help Africa seeks to invest Grow Fund support into the areas of work which seek to strengthen farmer organisations and improve collaboration between Africa's small-holder farmers.
- The organisation's Agricultural Cooperative Development Programme in Ethiopia has long benefitted from the public support received through the 'Grow Fund'.
- The Self Help Africa Grow Fund receives the backing of members from 19 different co-operative creameries in Ireland, including large agri-business companies such as Glanbia and Kerry Agri-Foods, and of smaller community based co-ops such as Town of Monaghan Co-op, Lee Strand in Kerry, and Mullinahone Co-op and Dairy Society in Kilkenny.



4,000 milk producers support the scheme



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Local transport
Burkina Faso

Farming Future
Uganda

Peanut processing
Zambia

Beautiful braiding
Togo



CALENDAR

Self Help Africa
is a signatory to
the Dochas Code
of Conduct on
the responsible
use of images and messages.

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Drinking water
Togo



Irrigated vegetables
Malawi

Farm couple
Malawi



- Feb 20 World Day of Social Justice
- Mar 8 International Women's Day
- Mar 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Mar 22 World Water Day
- April 7 World Health Day
- June 17 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- June 20 World Refugee Day
- Oct 16 World Food Day
- Oct 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- Nov 20 Universal Children's Day & Africa Industrialisation Day
- Dec 1 World AIDS Day
- Dec 10 Human Rights Day

Runners step out in Africa



The beginning of the 2011 Great Ethiopian Run, when a Self Help Africa team joined over 30,000 competitors in Africa's biggest road race. Photo: Andrew Downes.

Self Help Africa supporters will build on the success of 2011 when a team of 30 runners and walkers line up at the starting line for this year's Great Ethiopian Run, in Addis Ababa in November. Joining more than 30,000 competitors from around the globe, the SHA squad have each raised a minimum of €3,000 prior to the trip, with over 50% of all money raised going to support programme development activities in Ethiopia. The long established Great Ethiopia Run takes place this year on Sunday, 25th November,

and is Africa's biggest race. It coincides with this year's Kampala Marathon, an event to which a group of 10 UK supporters of Self Help Africa will travel to compete. It is the first time that Self Help Africa has entered a team in the Uganda event, with those taking part raising £2,500 to join the race. Together with a programme of run related activities and sight-seeing, the supporters who visit Uganda and Ethiopia will also be brought on a fact finding visit to see Self Help Africa's work in the two countries.

Gala events will mobilise public backing for Self Help Africa

This Autumn is shaping up to be a busy one on Self Help Africa's social calendar, with no less than five separate gala events being staged in three countries to support our work. Upwards of 450 friends and supporters are set to attend the third annual 'Change-Makers Ball', a black tie celebration to be held once more in New York's fashionable Manhattan district in late November. The event is preceded by the 'One Night in Africa' celebration party in trendy East London, a fun filled night to celebrate our work in Africa. On the same night the West of Ireland will awake for SHA, when the four-star Meyrick Hotel in Galway play's host to 250 guests for the city's inaugural Self Help Africa Gala Ball. Prior to these, Self Help Africa will benefit from a one-night-only 'pop up' return by

popular 1990s Dublin eaterie 'Tosca', which will see proprietor Norman Hewson, brother of Bono, reunite with his staff and clientele for a charity bash at Smock Alley Theatre on Dublin's quays on 26th October. And a few weeks later Self Help Africa will be one of the main beneficiaries of a national Media Gala, which will bring together the worlds of print, broadcast and online journalism at Guinness Storehouse for a function to be attended by New York Times columnist David Carr. Meanwhile, a supporting programme of activities is being arranged in Ireland and the UK to support our work, surrounding World Food Day on October 16th. You can check out details about all of these events by visiting our website, or contacting one of our offices.

Harvesting good will

Hundreds of churches across the United Kingdom will once again lend their support to Self Help Africa with a series of events and activities to celebrate Harvest thanksgiving. A popular event on Self Help Africa's UK calendar for close to a decade, this year's Harvest Campaign, on the theme 'Small Miracles' is set to be bigger than ever before, with congregations across England, Scotland and Wales lending their backing. In 2011 Self Help Africa's Harvest Campaign raised more than £30,000 to support our work. A special mention here to Keyworth Methodist Church near Nottingham, which has raised an amazing £55,000 since its first donation in 1995.



Donations doubled by 'Big Give'

A remarkable Christmas fundraising campaign that has netted more than a quarter of a million pounds to support our work returns again this year, when The Big Give's 'double your donation' will allow us to raise up to £20,000 to support our African programmes. The scheme sees all donations made to designated charities through The Big Give website being doubled on designated days. In 2012 SHA supporters can make contributions large or small, with all sums up to a total of £20,000 being eligible for matched funding. 'The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2012' will take place over three days, on December 6th, 7th and 8th next, and is open to all supporters to make online contributions. Self Help Africa has been a beneficiary of the challenge since it was first established by The Reed Foundation more than four years ago, and has seen contributions totaling close to £130,000 being doubled as a part of The Big Give challenge in that time. Since its inception the initiative has contributed close to £30 million to almost 10,000 charities in the UK. **To find out more about how you can support Self Help Africa at The Big Give Christmas Challenge this year visit 'thebiggive.org.uk'.**

Global Adventurers



The word “adventure” scarcely describes the epic journey that Self Help Africa supporters Maghnus Collins Smyth and David Burns have embarked upon, this year. The 27-year old pair set off in March on a nine-month endurance test that has already seen them cycle through some of the world’s hottest deserts, and run a staggering 30 marathons in as many days over the highest mountain range on earth. And when they complete their 15,900km ‘Sand2Snow Adventure’ when they finally paddle in to Shanghai, at the mouth of China’s Yangtsee River this Christmas, they will justly be lauded by friends across the globe for the grit, determination and athleticism that have made it possible. But the 15,900km expedition is only a part of the story for Limerick born Maghnus and his Northern Irish companion David’s exploits, for the duo have also, in tandem with their extraordinary expedition successfully orchestrated one of the most successful fundraising efforts

of recent times. Indeed, amidst the fitness training and logistical preparations for ‘Sand2Snow’ the two men brought together more than 400 friends and supporters to a Gala St. Valentine’s Ball that was one of the largest such events staged in Dublin, took to the streets to sell Valentine’s roses to support their effort, and staged school talks, visits and a host of other activities - all in aid of Self Help Africa. Having funded all of their travel and subsistence costs for the expedition out of their own pockets, ‘Sand2Snow’ has to date netted an incredible €30,000 for Self Help Africa. And more is set to follow, with plans afoot for yet another fundraising event, once the boys arrive, wet and weary in Shanghai, following a 5,000km rafting expedition down the entire length of one of the world’s longest rivers. **Visit: www.sand2snow.com to find out more.**

Millennium book

Self Help Africa’s schools programme is currently working with a network of Loreto Secondary Schools on the third in our series of award-winning publications on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) The book, which included the views of students and figures in public life on MDG 3 – the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, will be launched this Autumn. Once completed, our schools unit will begin working with students on a publication on Millennium Goal four, the reduction of child mortality.



The first two books in the MDG series



Harvest record

A group of cereal farmers who broke a world record and raised hundreds of thousands of euro for charity returned to their winning formula this Summer, when they staged their second ‘Combines4Charity’ fundraising event in rural Ireland. Close to 300 harvesters from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland convened for the event, which attracted thousands of spectators to County Meath in early August. The ‘Combines4Charity’ organisers reclaimed the Guinness world harvesting record that they had lost to cereal farmers in Canada with the effort, and netted valuable funds to support their designated charities – Self Help Africa, Barnardos, Gary Kelly Cancer Centre and the National Rehabilitation Trust into the bargain.

School partnership

A school partnership that promises to raise €250,000 to support Ugandan development programmes has been forged with one of Ireland’s leading summer time language schools. Coláiste Lurgan in Inveran, Co. Galway has thrown its support behind Self Help Africa work, and will donate all profits from its school tuck-shop, and host a series of student and teacher events to support the cause over the coming five years. Self Help Africa received the first fruits of its new partnership with a cheque for €50,000 from the Irish language summer school recently, while more will follow when upwards of 2,500 students descend on the popular school, next summer. Self Help Africa’s West of Ireland fundraising organiser Ronan Scully paid tribute to Coláiste Lurgan principal Mícheál Ó Foighil, his staff and students for their incredible support, and said that the backing would transform the lives of thousands in Uganda in the years ahead.



“ A handmade wooden plough that stands against the wall in her living room is one of 35-year-old Kalemwu Adunya’s prized-possessions. Kalemwu credits the implement with her good fortune, although the success that the mother-of-three has enjoyed is more a testimony to her own enterprise and hard work. A founder member of a village savings and credit cooperative established with support from Self Help Africa in 2006, Kalemwu can list the loans that she has taken since then, and the results that she has seen as a result of each of her borrowings. She has used loans to hire labourers, buy an oxen, and to rent additional land. Eventually she wants to buy more land for farming. ‘We built a new home last year, bought a bed, table, chairs and a dresser. My sons now go to private school, and I hope that my eldest boy will be the first in our family to get to university,’ she says.

Electric Aid powers African programmes

For nearly a decade Electric Aid (EA) has supported the poverty eradication programmes of Self Help Africa (SHA).

investing close to €150,000 in more than a dozen development projects in sub-Saharan Africa in that time. EA, a staff fund of the Irish electricity board has backed micro-projects implemented by Self Help Africa in Ghana, Togo, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Malawi, with funds enabling tens of thousands of Africans to grow more, earn more, and have the funds to invest in healthcare, education and better living conditions for their families. Electric Aid support has assisted a number of rural communities to develop horticultural projects. These have provided rural poor families with water to grow vegetables and other irrigation dependent crops on their homesteads, has provided communities with backing for beekeeping as an income generating activity, and has supported work that has allowed small-scale farmers to have better access to good quality planting seed to grow their crops.

A project that was supported by Electric Aid in Togo, West Africa, in 2010 assisted a number of womens' groups in the remote and disadvantaged North-East to develop a programme of conservation agriculture activities that enabled participating farmers to conserve a five-acre area of local wetland, develop income generating enterprise, and improve their household food production. Participating women were provided with training and technical support, and received seed so that they could grow a range of new food crops in their community including rice, groundnuts and vegetables.

A member of the Mandime Women's Group, Kolane Dounwague began producing and selling aubergine and other vegetable crops on her small homestead.

"It was difficult at first, as we had to prepare the land and tend to my new crops, but I have seen the benefit in my pocket, and am happy that the efforts have paid off very well for me," she said.



Workers have backed over a dozen projects

Kolane Dounwague began producing and selling aubergine and other vegetable crops on her small homestead, as part of the Mandime Women's Group in Togo, supported by Electric Aid.

Across the continent in Malawi more than 100 farmers linked to five irrigated horticultural groups have benefitted from training, technical support and the distribution of treadle (foot) pumps, which have enabled them to commercially produce cabbage, onion and tomato for sale in local markets. Up to 1,000 local people have in-directly benefitted from this Electric Aid supported project in the Balaka district in Southern Malawi.

Rufina Jesmere, a separated mother of four says that the income she has earned as a member of the Chanika Horticulture Group in Balaka has allowed her to put a tin roof on her home, and has helped her to pay to send her children to school.

And in Burkina Faso, Sawadogo Aminato from Nioliopalga, a village group affiliated to Wend Yam Beekeepers Federation says that she earned €100 from the sale of honey last year, and used the income to buy footwear, clothing and school books, so that her children could attend school. This project also received backing from Electric Aid.



“ Villagers call to the fields to buy vegetables from Betha Manza. “They come to me because I don't have time to go to them,” explains the 30 year old mother of three.

Betha and her husband Emmanuel farm a five-acres 'damba' (wetland) plot at Katinta village in Eastern Zambia. They grow tomatoes, cabbage, onions, garlic, and pumpkin leaves, and lease other land nearby to grow maize. “I am in the fields six days a week planting, weeding, watering or harvesting. People know that I am here, so they come here to buy from me”.

Betha and Emmanuel are members of one of a horticultural groups in Katinta. “We coordinate our work so we can share the costs of transport and get to market together, and also so we don't produce the same crops, and bring down the price”.



Beekeeping development work in West Africa has been supported by Electric Aid.



Sawadogo Aminato from Nioliopalga, Burkina Faso, is a member of a beekeeping group that received backing from Electric Aid.

Bloggers shine light on rural Kenya

A month in Africa isn't exactly life changing, but it is long enough to get a feel for the place. Especially if the place is a rural townland in eastern Kenya and the time is spent living in the home of a former village chief who has since turned his brawny hands to farming.

That's what London and New York based young journalists Dan Griffin and Conor Finnegan did recently, when they set off to Africa to peel back the curtain, and attempt to provide some greater insight and understanding of the lives of a rural African community.

The assignment saw the pair file daily blog reports that were picked up by various outlets including the prestigious Huffington Post web-site, and seek to provoke debate, discussion and give readers a new understanding about the issues that affect life in rural Kenya.

Trading the well-trodden pavements of the Edgware Road and 5th Avenue for the red mud paths of rural Kenya, Dan and Conor spent their time as guests of retired village headman Samuel Yator in

the remote rural settlement of Legetio, 10 kilometres outside Rongai, a small market town and district where Self Help Africa has been working on a rural development project since the mid-2000s.

The pair wrote on all aspects of community life – covering topics as diverse as land reclamation, mental illness, poverty, HIV, prostitution, gambling, street cleaning and religion. But it was an assignment that trained its attention most on agriculture, an activity that Dan Griffin reported was the essential provider for the vast majority of people in the district.

The many faces of farming featured in the postings too – as Conor and Dan spoke with dairy farmers, fish farmers, maize producers and vegetable growers, attended an early morning community cattle dip, visited the regional agricultural show, and spoke with women, young and old, who were also seeking to carve a living from the hard, dry soil.

Conor Finnegan says that the issues affecting farmers are too numerous to list here, but singles out one challenge that they heard about, and which Self Help Africa has been working with farmers to try to



Dan Griffin speaks to teachers in a rural school close to Rongai.



Bloggers Conor Finnegan (left) and Dan Griffin (right) set out to tell a western audience what life was like for millions of rural African smallholders.

remedy. "People complain a lot about 'the middlemen' – the guys who call to the farm and buy produce for a pittance, only for them to sell it on for export and to local supermarkets at an enormous mark-up".

"We saw how Self Help Africa trains farmers to take control, enhance their yields, come up with viable applications for loans, and encourages them to work together to cut out the middlemen," he adds.

Both young journalists are in little doubt that their month in Kenya will live long in the memory.

"The stories did generate quite an amount of debate and discussion on the various online platforms, and it gave us a great insight into life amongst these people," says Conor. "If it gives others a better understanding, or merely makes them more curious to find out more themselves, then we think it will have been worth it," he concludes.

"We saw how Self Help Africa trains farmers to take control"



“ 50-year-old Gideon Okello didn't give up when rebels forced him off the land, killed his livestock, and burned his crops in Northern Uganda, over six years ago. Instead, he set out to turn his life around when Self Help Africa gave him a 20kg bag of peanut seed to plant, when he returned to his ravaged holding, two years later. A member of a village farmers group in Amuria, Gideon now produces more than 400kgs of peanuts on his land each year, grows cassava, and has invested in livestock. He sells half of his crop for profit each year, and uses the money to buy livestock, and for household improvements. "I've built a permanent house for my family, and am sending my two children to school," he says.

Bridges built to international markets

Supporting Africa's farmers and manufacturers to meet the standards required by international buyers is one of the key objectives of Partner Africa, a newly launched social enterprise established by Self Help Africa. The new not-for-profit company has been formed to provide training and support to African businesses wishing to trade internationally and meet the necessary standards, while at the same time offering auditing and other services to socially responsible western firms who wish to do business on the African continent. With a focus on bridging the gap between Africa and international markets, the new company utilizes a team of auditors and trainers across more than 20 African countries to provide a range of innovative ethical trade consultancy services designed to support African companies, including growers, and agri-food producers, manufacturers and trade organisations to meet international trade standards. Providing training and support in areas such



Factory workers at a Partner Africa training meeting in Nairobi



as workplace safety, health and hygiene, employment conditions and management systems, Partner Africa's team also provides consultancy to African suppliers seeking to attain valuable internationally recognised accreditation, including Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance certification. The company is operating in a broad range of industries including cut-flowers, tea and coffee growing, food processing, fruit production, sugar, glass bottling and textile manufacturing. The company has provided

a range of auditing services to leading international brands including Cadbury, Coca-Cola, Diageo, Finlays and Sainsbury, and has also provided community impact assessments that enable international brands and retailers to understand and report upon the benefits of their socially-responsible investments in Africa. All surpluses that are generated by the training and consultancy work of Partner Africa are to be reinvested in the development projects of Self Help Africa.

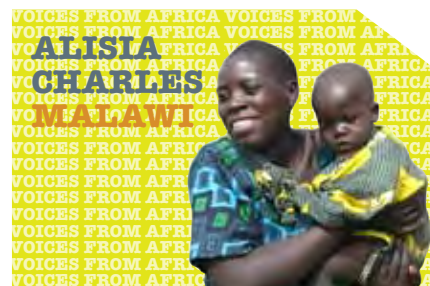
Accessing carbon markets



Local villagers preparing the fuel-efficient stoves for use

Rural Africans who are least to blame but most at risk from the effects of global warming are in line to benefit from an enterprising new project that will allow them to indirectly access valuable international carbon trading markets. Under the innovative new scheme, rural African communities who reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions will be able to reap a carbon trading reward, with a proportion of funds that are raised from their efforts to be reinvested in activities that will help poor communities to adapt to climate change. Self Help Africa partners in Malawi, Hestian Innovations are behind the project, which is earning carbon offset funding 'credits' for the reduced greenhouse gases that are emitted by African families who use fuel-saving cooking stoves. Hestian are training

and supporting village groups across Malawi to manufacture, produce and sell the new fuel-saving mud-stoves in their communities as an income generating enterprise, and are measuring and auditing the 'carbon savings' that are being accumulated by households who use the new stoves. The company hopes to support the production and distribution of up to 50,000 fuel-efficient stoves as a part of the new DISCOVER climate change project in the country (see story, page 6), and are committed to re-investing a proportion of revenues raised in Self Help Africa's climate adaptation work with small-scale farmers. The improved stoves benefit communities in several ways – by reducing fuel needs and smoke generated, and by providing a source of income for villagers.



“ A young mother of three children, Alisia Charles plans to improve her home when her husband returns from his work in the mines in South Africa, next year. But it's not only the money that he will bring back that will make this possible, for Alisia is already planning to breed and rear a litter of piglets in the coming months that will give her the finance that she needs to pay for the building materials. A member of a pig-rearing group in Mabwera village in Central Malawi, Alisia has already 'repaid' the initial start-up piglets that she received so that another household can benefit from the scheme, and is planning to fatten and sell four pigs from her second litter, to boost her income. "Pig breeding is a good activity for me," she says. 'Because I am rearing my three children on my own I don't have as much time to work in the fields. Rearing livestock is profitable, and I also use the manure to fertilise my fields and my vegetable garden".



Leave a legacy for the future of Africa.

If you could do one thing to make the world a better place, what would it be? Would you help to feed people, not just for today, but for tomorrow?

For too long, people in Africa have been dying for want of enough to eat.

For too long, they have been unable to earn enough to protect their children from diseases that do not need to kill.

For too long, they have struggled while the rest of the world has prospered.

Africa's land is the key to ending hunger and poverty – permanently. Most farm land in Africa can grow much more, and farmers simply need advice and support to unlock this potential. By remembering Self Help Africa in your Will, you can help to make the world a better place for Africa's poorest people.

Legacies help us to expand our work

A modest sum that is left to Self Help Africa will allow us to invest more in the tens of millions of farming families who are the future of Africa. A small sum left to us in your Will allows us to replicate again and again some of the stories of progress and success that you can read about in this newsletter.

What to do next

Legacies have helped us to achieve incredible things in the past. Yours will too. Speak to your solicitor and get his advice on making a provision in favour of Self Help Africa in your will. Alternatively call our offices and we will assist you further. A bequest to Self Help Africa is also exempt from Inheritance Tax.

Find out more

To find out more contact us at our offices in Ireland (1850) 757678 or in the UK (0) 1743 277170, and speak to one of our advisors. We will be happy to send you our legacy information pack.



Self Help Africa

www.selfhelpafrica.org

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Originators Reference: **SELF HELP**



Please complete the form, to instruct your bank to make payments directly from your account, then return the form to Self Help Africa, Kingsbridge House, 17-22 Parkgate Street, Dublin 8.

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Account Holder _____

Bank Sort Code Number _____

Bank Account Number _____

(Please complete your bank details in spaces above)

UNITED KINGDOM

Instructions to your bank to pay Direct Debits

Originators Identification Number (O.I.N.) **430015**

Reference number (for SHA use): _____



Please complete the form, to instruct your bank to make payments directly from your account, then return the form to Self Help Africa, Westgate House, Dickens Court, Off Hills Lane, Shrewsbury, SY1 1QU.

Bank Name _____

Branch _____

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Bank Sort Code Number _____

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Tick here to make every £1 worth £1.25 at no cost to you. Please claim back the tax I have paid against all donations made in the past 4 years, and any future donations made to SHA, until I notify otherwise.

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Your instructions to your bank:

- I instruct you to pay the direct debit specified above from my account, at the request of Self Help Africa
- I confirm that the amounts are variable and may be debited on various dates
- I shall duly notify the bank in writing if I wish to cancel this instruction
- I shall also notify Self Help of such cancellation.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

This is a guarantee provided by your bank, as a member of the Direct Debit Scheme, in which banks and originators of direct debits participate. If you authorise payment by direct debit then:

- Your Direct Debit originator will notify you in advance of the amounts to be debited
 - Your bank will accept and pay such debits, provided your account has sufficient funds
 - If it is established that an unauthorised Direct Debit was charged to your account you are guaranteed a prompt refund by your bank of the amount so charged
- You can cancel the Direct Debit instruction by writing to your bank.

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Simply send your cheque in an envelope addressed:

Freepost, Self Help Africa, Kingsbridge House, 17-22 Parkgate Street, Dublin 8. Or
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**There is a solution
to hunger and poverty
in Africa.
It's called farming.**

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