

Chick Challenge - Easter Eggs with a Difference

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Eleanore Frey, Andrew Garlick and Amy Tew have launched Challenge Africa – an NGO aimed at alleviating poverty and improving the lives of villagers in Wagusu and Abimbo in rural Kenya. As part of the project, the pair have built a poultry farm aimed at providing food to the 200 plus orphans who eat just three or four times a week.

The students are asking for people to buy a chick and help populate the farm. Each bird costs £1, including vaccinations and feed – and everyone who donates gets to name their fluffy friend. The chicken eggs will provide the children with much needed protein in their diets. Excess eggs will be sold, allowing the poultry project to sustain itself.

Eleanore said: "Every chick we can buy really will make a difference to these children. We hope that people will think about buying Easter eggs of a different kind this year and dig deep to change the lives of hundreds of villagers."

The farm is just one of several measures designed to help the villages, which are also blighted by the risk of HIV. Girls as young as 13, head of their households, are having sex with fishermen in return for food to keep their families together, and are contracting the virus.

Yet Eleanore says the village life is starting to change. With the help of villagers a community centre has been built in the centre of Wagusu where people can gain information on HIV and free contraception. It provides a safe meeting place for other organisations within the community and acts as a central place where the orphans can be fed.

Challenge Africa's priority is to make every project sustainable. As Eleanore explains: "We have set up a training centre. We've got eight sewing machines so we can train seamstresses and typewriters so villagers can develop keyboard skills."

Eleanore says all they need now is help: "This is such an important project. We feel that we can really make things change. The recently launched volunteer programme gives other students the opportunity to offer their practical support. Together we can help Wagusu and Abimbo to flourish."

Anyone wishing to donate a chick or two or can do so by visiting www.challengeafrica.org

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Eleanore Frey, 23, from Bath, Andrew Garlick, 23, from Beckinsfield, Buckinghamshire and Amy Tew, 22, from York, are third year African Studies students in the Centre for West African Studies at the University of Birmingham. They are studying African Studies with Development.

Eleanore is available for interview. Please contact her on: 07900392345

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