

By Amelie Magnin

Helping Africa to eliminate poverty is a concern that torments politicians, intellectuals and economists for decades. This question is crucial in reducing rampant global inequalities. Camara Education is a charity which believes that a major part of the solution to solving African poverty is education; as a consequence a small 'Camara' staff and 150 volunteers have been working hard for over two years to refurbish secondhand computers, mice and keyboards and sent them to schools in Africa.

More specifically Camara has three main purposes. The charity collects second-hand computers from Irish organisations or persons to refurbish them and send them to schools and colleges in Africa. We also configure all computers with open source Linux operating system, office software and various free educational software packages; then we send groups of volunteers to train African teachers and children in basic computer literacy and more specialised technology areas.

Camara was founded in 2005 by Cormac Lynch while he was doing an MA in Development Studies at UCD. Visiting Ethiopia he became aware of a huge desire to gain access to technology but saw that obtaining PCs, even in teacher training colleges, seemed an impossible goal in a region where the per capita income is only one dollar a day!

Cormac is keenly aware that computers can be a precious tool for Africans everyday educational programme and provide a huge

Camara Education



The benefits of Camara Charity



amount of information for African children. He also says: 'education is the key to helping Africans pull themselves out of the cycle of poverty they find themselves in'. An illustration of this principle could be given by the Chinese proverb: 'give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime'.

Camara is gaining support from people, companies and celebrities thanks to its impressive achievements. Since its birth the charity has sent out nearly 4,000 computers that previously would have been consigned to landfill somewhere in Ireland. 90 Camara volunteers have traveled to five countries in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda and Zambia) to teach basic computer literacy skills to children, teachers and community leaders. Finally, the charity has set up computer labs in 67 different African schools. Will you help Camara send computers to Africa? Please visit our website www.camara.ie and at this time of year please have a look at our online Christmas catalogue. Or Visit us at our Dublin workshop: Camara, 15 Castleforbes Road, North Wall Quay, Dublin 1, tel: +353 (0)1 681 1111.