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MAMA WIMBI



School Uniform Appeal

Our heartfelt thanks to the Salvation Army in Cooma, which has donated about 30 school uniforms for the new school year, to start September 1st.

Plain white button-up shirts and dark blue shorts, long pants or skirts are the uniform of nearly every school in Goma from the smallest beginner to the nearly-grown-up ones.

Children are not allowed to attend school without a uniform, so more donations are very, very welcome! The address is SBV, Bp 127, Gisenyi, Rwanda.



School-in-a-Bag

This is the wonderful Luke Simon, founder and CEO of **School-in-a-Bag**, with his team in England.

School-in-a-Bag provides bags of school supplies to needy children all over the world. SIAB prefers to buy items locally, to reduce the carbon footprint and stimulate local economies. Luke was surprised at how expensive school supplies are in Goma, but that is just one of the realities that makes everything harder there. All bulk goods come by sea, and we are as far from the sea as one can be in Africa. We can buy things in Uganda, but we still have to pay to transport them to Congo, and pay import duties. C'est la vie!

There is a standard list of contents but it can be varied for local needs. We decided to skip the usual lunch box and water bottle, in favour of more exercise books. For one thing, our kids need them less; the temperature is usually 21 degrees (on the equator but at altitude) and often misty.

Also, armed militia dissuade about 2 million people from living far from the centre of a town equipped for 100,000. Inputs for industry are so expensive that selling education is a very attractive option. Since the government stopped paying teachers there is no free, or cheaper, alternative than what they can all provide. The up-side of all this is that our children don't have far to walk!

The downside is that, in the absence of computers, books and printed or concrete teaching materials, a child who has run out of paper to take dictation, or copy from the

board, can scarcely participate at all. So, we are getting more exercise books. Thank you, Luke!



Mama Wimbi Buntings at SLAB Headquarters :-)

Computers For Congo and The New Venture

The Mama Wimbi team has used up its fabric supply and is now gearing up for a new challenge - making schoolbags.

By this time next year, we hope to be able to supply good quality bags both to School-in-a-Bag and to local schools, who will be able to add a dollar to the price of each one and still sell them on to parents for a dollar cheaper than they are currently available.

Tarps for Africa has offered us a charity discount on a suitable fabric in red and blue.

The team is currently practicing making [this bag](#) in order to develop skill and confidence to make the SLAB reliably, once they have a pattern or an example of a SLAB to copy.

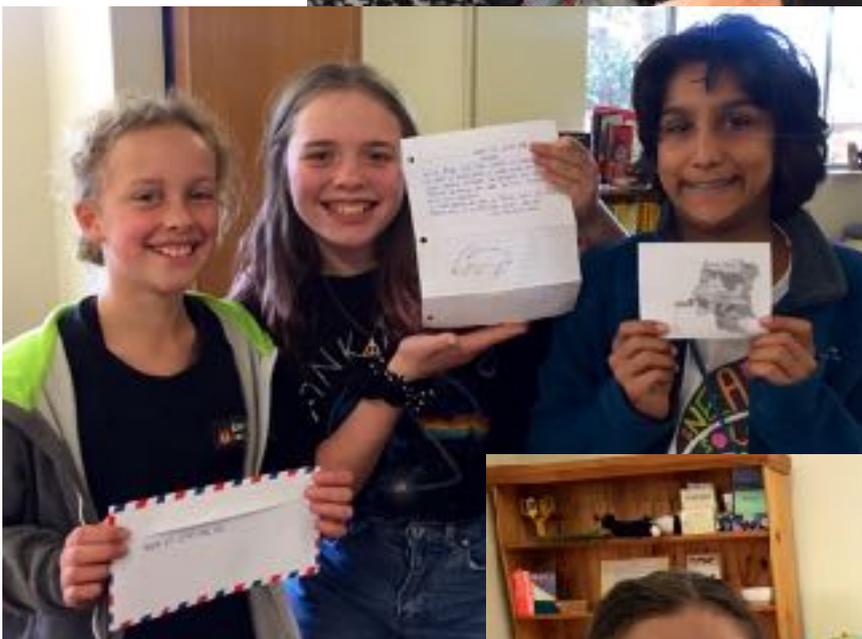
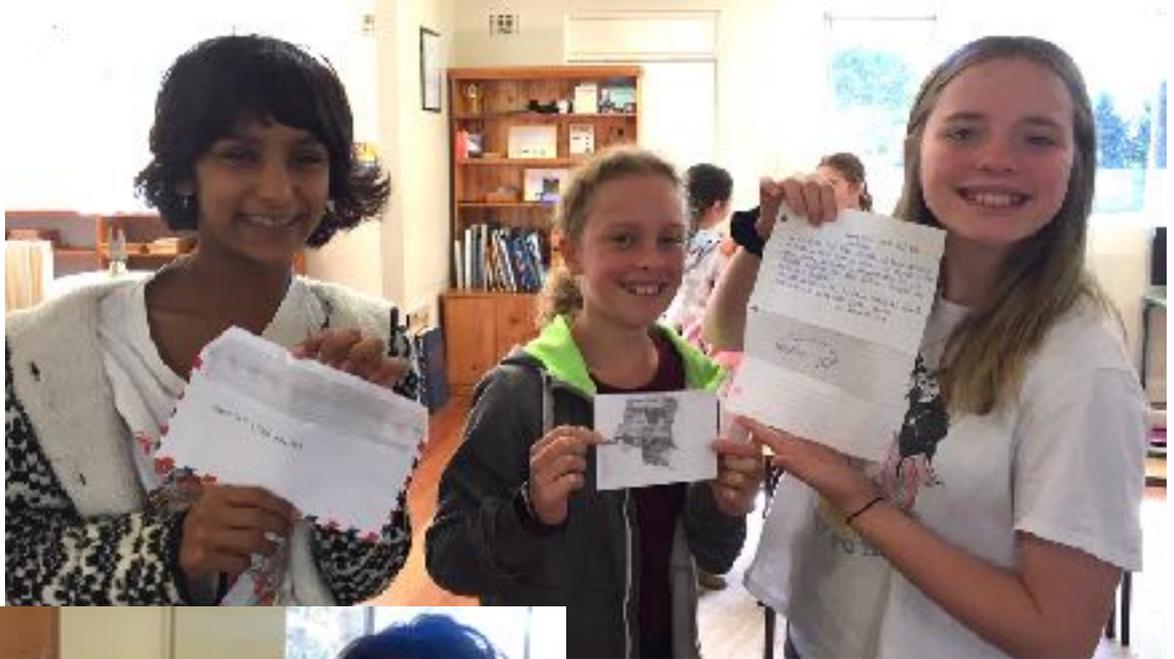
We asked Tom Cecil of **Computers for Congo** for a computer that the team could access anytime to gain access to instructional videos to expand their repertoire of sewing skills. Tom said, "I would absolutely like to do what I can to go out of my way and help your sewing centre". What a lovely bloke he is :-)

It will be a new experience for the women on the sewing team to have access to a computer and Alphonse and Jacques will be ready to help them use Pinterest and YouTube to start getting comfortable with the technology.

Soon we will start looking for help to get a couple more heavy-duty sewing machines to deal with the thick parts of the design. Perhaps the Rotary's **Sew-Aid** will be the answer!

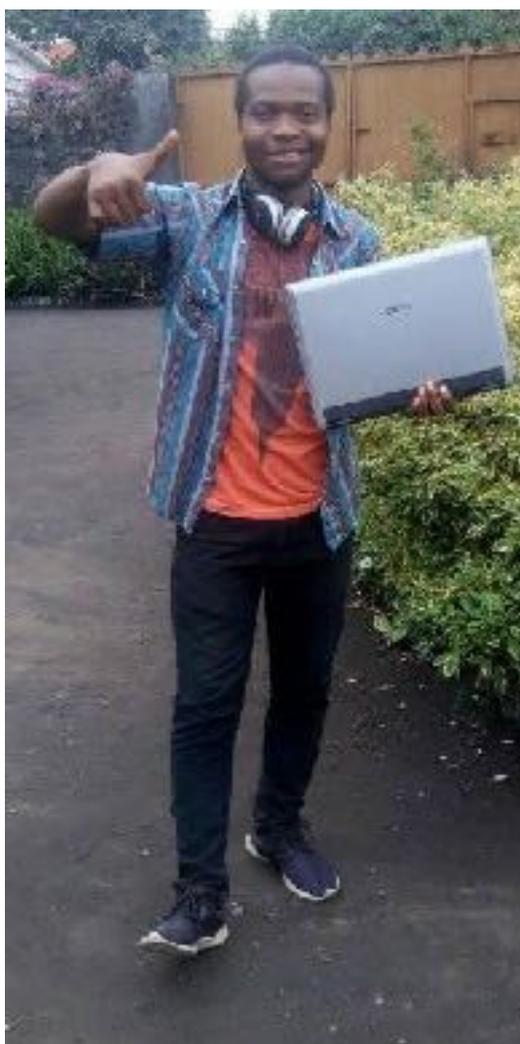
Elonera Correspondence Project

Amy Vos's class of 9-12 year old kids at **Elonera Montessori School** in Wollongong are delighted with their letters from Congo! Thanks to Eric and Amy for their





Eric's Computer has arrived Safe and Sound



It took a while but the postal system eventually delivered Eric's laptop with engineering software, kindly donated by Geoff and Derek at **Go Engineering** in Cooma, NSW.

The **Cooma Presbyterian Church** helped with the postage costs and now Eric is equipped for the new university year.

Eric can study only due to Geoff's sponsorship. His younger brothers and sisters are also good students and stay in school with Penny's help.



Bunting Sales- Zonta- Marketplace

This month I visited **Zonta** in Canberra. They do a lot of good work both in Australia and overseas, even in Congo, near Goma. I showed them photos of our projects and they offered some good advice about marketing.

As a result, I listed the buntings on a dozen or so Australian on-line Marketplaces including various Facebook areas and specialties and Gumtree.

We have received 6 orders so far, but they evaporated before they got around to paying, except for one who is happy to wait for delivery because she's interested in knowing more about the project.

Winter seems to be bad for business, I wish we didn't need the fees before Aussie summer!

Zonta is considering buying a block of buntings to give to a deserving Australian group who can sell them for their own cause, thus supporting two causes with the same money.

The **E-Club of Greater Sydney** is also considering that model or another. It might be suitable for able-bodied, well-connected youngsters like RYPEN and RYLA candidates.

September is getting close. I hope we find a way in time.

If you know any organisation with something to celebrate, publicise, or decorate, please recommend our buntings and help get all our teenagers back to school in September.

If sponsoring the education of a teenager for a year (US \$250, on average) works for you, your workplace or church group, that would also be wonderful. You can choose a particular sponsor-child, if you have a preference for gender or religion or interests, and correspond with them, if that appeals. There are still 38 young people awaiting funds from sales or sponsorship



Thank you for reading our newsletter, we hope you enjoyed it.

Please share with your friends.

Happy August from all at Mama Wimbi!

Penny Vos