

December 4, 2008 *Needham Times*

Rotarians work to improve life in Sironko, Uganda

African Baobab and Needham Rotary, along with Rotary International, have joined forces to accomplish some exciting, groundbreaking-events to improve the community of Sironko, Uganda, which has been deeply affected by the pandemic of AIDS, leaving many orphaned children. Needham Rotarian Ron Shepherd has led the efforts over the last five years.

The first project was to build 400 wooden handmade desks for children who previously sat

on the infested mud floor in the Sironko Public School. The next achievement was to fully equip a maternity ward, the only in the area, including a midwife. Previously women gave birth at home needing the assistance of their older children.

Now Rotary is assessing the construction of a bore hole project that will provide safe, clean drinking water to village residents. The deeply drilled bore hole will improve the quality of life for all in the community.

This area is between two rivers, which carries the main sources of water, and during the rainy season carry all types of impurities, hence, regular disease break out, including cholera and typhoid. Prevalent floods leave breeding grounds for mosquitoes, posing another problem of malaria.

Since fuel is hard to get, water is rarely boiled at home. Diarrhea and other water-borne diseases kill many children annually. Clean water and sanitation could control sanitation. Since women spend

85 percent of their time getting water, this takes away time for education and other productive economic efforts.

A committee of stakeholders will manage the project. Rotarians will make timely visits to the community for mobilization purposes, sensitizing the community on the importance of the water project to health.

Visit www.africanbaobab.org to learn more.