



COPA news

building caring Christian communities

September 2010

News from the Guernsey branch of COPA

Please can I remind everyone about our **AGM and Speaker evening, together with a buffet supper, on Tuesday 28th September at Les Cotils** - if you haven't already done so please return your forms to Peter Keeling asap! Sebert Lane, founder of COPA, and Geoff Haslam from the UK Committee will be coming to give us an update on what is happening to the communities you are supporting.

The Partnership School initiative is progressing well and we are particularly pleased to be helping a new school for very disadvantaged and handicapped children, founded by Germana, the ex Principal of La Hoya School. Some of you may remember Germana from her visit to Guernsey a few years ago when she visited some of our island schools. She was particularly inspired by the special needs support at the former St. Sampsons School and has had an interest in learning difficulties ever since.

I am retiring from my position as Chairperson, having been involved for many years with COPA since my daughter, Louise, went to La Hoya as one of the first volunteers. I would like to thank you for your support and generosity over the years. I have really enjoyed giving talks to schools and women's groups, and also hosting educational visits by Germana, Maribel (Principal Bombita) and Sumyra (university

student). It has been really interesting to watch two communities grow and progress - I still remember standing in a sea of mud in Bombita in 1996 thinking I had come to hell on earth. In 2002 it was wonderful to meet some of the children sponsored by Guernsey families and seeing what a huge difference we were making despite living on an island only five miles by eight!

However, the really good news is that Gill Syvret Berboda has volunteered to take over! Gill, a Committee Member has been involved with COPA almost as long as I have. Married to Junior, a Dominican, she has visited the Dominican Republic many times and has a wealth of knowledge about the country and its people. She also visited La Hoya a few years ago and was very impressed at what had been achieved. Our Dominican visitors to Guernsey have always enjoyed a real Dominican meal with Gill and Junior. I know she will be an excellent Chairperson as she is so committed to the Dominican Republic and has always arranged our excellent flag days. I can't thank Gill enough for taking this on and hope that you will all continue to support COPA Guernsey Branch where the needs are still great.

Jenny Benjamin

Chairperson, COPA Guernsey Branch



You are invited to the COPA UK—Annual General Meeting

to be held on the afternoon of **Saturday, 9th October 2010 4pm for 4.30pm at Cricklade United Church, Calcutt Street, Cricklade, Wiltshire SN6 6AZ followed by a "Concert for COPA" at 7.30pm (see below)**



"TEN IN A BAR" has established itself as one of Swindon's premier singing groups. It is famed for its eclectic mix of music and quirky arrangements, from popular modern classics to serious contemporary works. As well as its reputation for high quality singing, they are also renowned for their zany sense of humour. The closeness of their ensemble work endows them with a distinctive sound which is unique to the local area. TEN IN A BAR's wide repertoire has included; Mama Mia, Mad World, Pretty Woman, Born Free, and Jai Ho from Slum Dog Millionaire and many others. Their "**CONCERT FOR COPA**" at St Sampsons Parish Church, Cricklade at 7.30 on the evening of 9th October will be a delightful, enjoyable and unique occasion and which should definitely not be missed on any account. It is expected that tickets will be in great demand and therefore should be obtained as soon as possible from any COPA UK committee member or from Geoff Haslam on 01793 750785 (£6 if bought in advance or £7 on the door). It is worth travelling many miles to see and hear this group of outstanding musicians.



We welcome this year's Project Trust volunteers to COPA in the DR

Another school year has passed and it hardly seems possible that we are welcoming our new Project Trust volunteers to COPA. Their thoughts as they first arrive to start a year's work with us are always interesting as it brings home the differences between the UK and the DR which they will be encountering for the next twelve months. Here, Sadie Kinnaid and Catherine Rogers give their first impressions as they arrive to work in La Hoya.

We've been here over a week now and everything has flown past so quickly. We arrived at the airport of Santo Domingo all very tired and jetlagged. Excited, but it still hadn't quite hit home. The language barrier was the first thing we noticed – a friend's bag didn't arrive and we were all struggling to get anywhere in conversation other than ¡no entiendo! They all speak far too fast for such a relaxed culture. It felt really strange to be in the minority for once – no one speaks English.

Met the staff from COPA in Barahona – so lovely and relaxed. The way I like my employers and colleagues. I think this is the point I stopped being a bag of nerves! Sitting in Barahona I realised how *hot* it was. And it's like this all year? I was surprised to find it didn't bother me much – my body had weeks of warning – it just accepted it – thankfully.

Shopping for the first time was an experience – we did *something* wrong. Still to this day do not know what it was. Really need to "absorb" the language to avoid being arrested I think.

Our apartment is lovely, though there are a lot of insects and everything seems to get dirtier faster because of the heat – made me really miss Scotland, where you can visit the toilet in the middle of the night and not find out the hard way that cockroaches come out at night.

The main aspect of La Hoya that makes it so unique is the people – both Dominican and the COPA staff from overseas. We have been welcomed so quickly into the community by them – Catherine and I are slowly working our way around our invitations and spending time with the locals making (bad) Spanish conversations. And the children.....great. (¡AMERICANOS; AMERICANOS!) Full of energy and spirit – worries me having to teach a class of 30 at a time!

Although it's only been a week – I've had so many ups and downs and Catherine has been amazing for me. Couldn't be doing this without her. But it's only the first week and there *are* another 45 of them!

◆ ◆ **Sadie** ◆ ◆

¡Hola! I have been in La Hoya a week now and I am going to aim to give you a summary of my first impressions of this

village and my life so far in the D.R.

As you can imagine the whole place is utterly different to my hometown, Cambridge in England, U.K, and I find myself creating in my head three lists.

- One, things I don't enjoy having to get used to,
- Two, things I surprise myself in not minding having to get used to, and
- Three, things I love having to get used to.

For example. I thoroughly dislike the amount of cream I find myself needing to apply. I come out of the shower all fresh and on goes the mosquito repellent (thick oozing layers of the stuff, because they appear to love "fresh new meat") and then the sun cream. However I surprise myself in really not minding the noise, In fact I quite like it, the way you can always hear something. I mean, don't get me wrong, the de-muffled motor-bikes can be frustrating at 2am, but they move on pretty fast, and nothing really beats the cockerel alarm clock!

"The things I love" is the best list though. Obviously the fresh fruit is way up there, but also the way the youth in the church appear to have no inhibitions and will stand up in front of their peers and praise God (whether or not they have been gifted with a singing voice). The way everyone says ¡Hola! to you as you walk down the street and grant you a friendly smile. The way the children will run up and hug you, and this morning when I was greeted by a massive toad outside my art classroom (seriously it was the length of my foot!) and I screamed "frog!" "frog!" the children in the playground rushed to my aid and poked it away with a stick, not at all, unlike me, bemused by it!

Although La Hoya has a lot less money than Cambridge, The village appears a happy place. Olivia said to me on my first day here "we're not human doings we're human beings" and I feel that this little corner of the earth has got that just right.

◆ ◆ **Catherine** ◆ ◆



This August and September we have a medical student, Kate Craufurd, from the UK working with us in our Bombita clinic. Here are her thoughts about working and living in Bombita.

◆ As part of my medical training I have 8 weeks to do a placement in the clinic or hospital of my choice. When I arrived here in Bombita the local doctor had just left, leaving the clinic empty-handed. So for the four weeks between doctors I saw the patients, treated common problems and sent more complicated cases to the local hospital where more tests are available. As even fully qualified doctors are heavily supervised in the UK, this was really quite scary to begin with!

◆ Now that the new Dominican doctor, Roberto, has arrived, I am focusing more attention on increasing the number of women coming for cervical cancer screening, and other women's health problems. We are also planning to formalise the public health teaching given by the clinic's promoters, so that it can continue after Roberto and I have left. This way the improvements we make can be continued by following doctors, with the support of Nani, the clinic nurse, and Amy, the Health Advisor.

◆ I am enjoying the experience of living in Bombita, and making the most of the short time I have here. I give English classes in the evenings and cook Dominican food with people from the village. I also ask for recipes from home to try here and share with everyone!

Summer activities at the COPA Schools

Trade Training Rooms in Bombita

Refrigeration class began with few attendees despite a full roster but additional advertising and the efforts of those that did attend brought in the rest of the 21 students. Collecting the required documents and nominal inscription fee was also an uphill battle. However, the students were very excited to finally have a running course and began scouring the village for broken appliances on which to work. The first weeks' focus on electricity was quite timely as problems with one sector of the village's electricity, compounded by badly wired housing and appliances, caused the tragic death of a man and several others to be seriously shocked. While many in the village were afraid to connect their houses to the main lines, students were able to identify flaws, rewire, and improve the safety of their own homes as well as advise their neighbours. In the following weeks the class seems to have progressed quickly as refrigerators appear from the community to be repaired.

The baking class continues to run strongly as they shift into the second half of the course. Pictured right, the students work with the professor to prepare a pizza.



❖ Training for the COPA teaching staff ❖



The relationship between our schools and the private University Iberoamericana (UNIBE) in Santo Domingo continues to grow. A group of their lecturers held a two-day training session in La Hoya for the COPA and partnership schools teaching staff covering the areas of Mathematics and Social Studies. One of the officials from the Tamayo district office attended along with another teacher from Vicente Noble, a local town. They were invited by Maribel with the view of keeping the Education department informed of what is happening in our schools and how we share the benefits that we are receiving.

Many practical ideas were shared and each participant received a substantial booklet for each subject and the all-important participation certificate. It was a great time of interaction both professionally and personally between all the schools and the facilitators and it was excellent to see the capacity of Dominicans to facilitate their own professional development to a high standard. This was definitely the first but not the last of this type of encounter. We hope that this will be a great motivation for our staff and that they will incorporate what they have learnt into their teaching.

These pictures show the COPA teachers with the training team from the University



Aimee, our Health Advisor, writes about a Drugs Class which she organized for Bombita

People had come to me with concerns of the drug problem in Bombita. We set up with Consejo Nacional de Drogas in Barahona to come out to Bombita and give a presentation on drugs, its effects and consequences. It was geared for adults and in the autumn when school starts we will arrange for the advisor to come back and do one for teenagers. There were about 26 people who came, mostly young men. The professor brought a projector and had a great presentation full of pictures and videos which captivated the people and impacted on them. They didn't talk about specific drugs, just more in general and did talk about nicotine, caffeine and alcohol and their effects also. He is willing to come to Bombita and have sports clubs or events so young adults can have another outlet.

Remember COPA in your will: Legacy giving

We all want to make sure family and friends are taken care of in the event of our death but if you are in a position to also make a contribution to the work of COPA, there are three main ways to do this.

- **A pecuniary gift** is a specific sum of money for a specific charity or charities.
- **A residual gift** is when all other gifts have been distributed from the estate; the remainder or a proportion of the remainder is pledged to one or more charities.
- **A specific bequest** is a named item left as a gift, e.g. a piece of jewellery or furniture.

It is not enough to inform family or friends that you would like a gift to go to COPA after you are gone. You will need to make a will or add a codicil (a short amendment) to your existing will that mentions the type of gift and COPA's full name (Community Partners Association) and charity number (1027117). It is important that you consider which of these approaches is most appropriate to you and that you seek independent legal advice.

Benefits to you

The financial benefit to you or your estate is that legacies are exempt from inheritance tax (which at the time of writing is 40%), so it may help reduce the amount of tax payable if the estate is over the exempt threshold. At the time of writing (2009/10), the inheritance tax threshold is £325,000 for an individual or £650,000 for married couples or civil partnerships. Up to date information on tax rates and thresholds can be found at:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/iht-thresholds.htm>

Leaving a gift to COPA in your will allows you to leave a footprint in the future. Your money can make a significant difference to our projects, even after you have gone.

Suggested wording to make a gift to COPA

For a pecuniary gift:

I give to Community Partners Association (COPA) care of Cricklade United Church, 9 Calcutt Street, Cricklade, Swindon, Wilts, SN6 6AZ, Registered Charity Number 1027117, absolutely, the sum (amount in figures, amount in words) to be applied by COPA for its charitable purposes, and I further direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or any other proper officer of COPA for the time being shall be sufficient discharge to my executors.

For a residual gift:

I give all/a share of (please state fraction/percentage) of the residue of my estate absolutely to Community Partners Association (COPA) care of Cricklade United Church, 9 Calcutt Street, Cricklade, Swindon, Wilts, SN6 6AZ, Registered Charity Number 1027117, to be applied by COPA for its charitable purposes, and I further direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or any other proper officer of COPA for the time being shall be sufficient discharge to my executors.

For a specific bequest:

I give to Community Partners Association (COPA) care of Cricklade United Church, 9 Calcutt Street, Cricklade, Swindon, Wilts, SN6 6AZ, Registered Charity Number 1027117, absolutely, (write in here whatever you wish to give) to be applied by COPA for its charitable purposes, and I further direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or any other proper officer of COPA for the time being shall be sufficient discharge to my executors.

This information can also be found on the COPA website:
www.copa.org.uk

For further information:

<http://www.tax-effective-giving.org.uk>

<http://www.rememberacharity.org.uk>

Contact names and addresses for COPA UK:

Treasurer:

Mr David Rush
Flat 98, Block B,
The Paragon,
Boston Park Road,
BRENTFORD,
Middlesex, TW8 9RP

Sponsorship Secretary for both La Hoya and Bombita:

Mrs Sandra Samways
57 Pauls Croft,
CRICKLADE,
Wiltshire, SN6 6AJ

Treasurer: COPA Guernsey

Mr Peter Keeling,
Les Poplairs,
Rue du Felconte,
ST SAVIOURS,
Guernsey, GY7 9QD

Guernsey Sponsorship contact

Mrs Margaret Keeling
Address as above

STOP PRESS:

Lights for Learning

Connie writes: "Sebert and his group arrived on Monday, the 30th August and are well on their way to complete their solar lighting project. It is rather ironic that since the first two units were installed we have had electricity each evening! But we know this will not be a permanent condition and we will really appreciate the new lighting."

Sponsorship Letters and Cards

The address for your letters and cards is:

Child's name and sponsorship number
Escuela de COPA (La Hoya or Bombita)
Apartado 42
BARAHONA
Dominican Republic

Please could you write your name and address on the reverse of the envelope. This will help the volunteers when they are delivering the letters and cards to the children. The volunteers have asked that messages to the children be kept reasonably short as each one needs translating into Spanish. Thank you.

Recruitment

COPA is currently recruiting for an Education Adviser and a Health Adviser. These positions are for two years and a local wage is paid. Accommodation, a return flight and health insurance is covered by COPA.

A job description, person specification and application form can be found on the COPA website www.copa.org.uk

If you, or anyone you know, would like to be considered for either of these positions or would like to receive more details please contact Christoph Courth (COPA Staffing and Recruitment Officer) at copahr@gmail.com

Have you bought your tickets for the "Concert for COPA" yet?

See front page for details.

Hope you can join us for an enjoyable evening!