

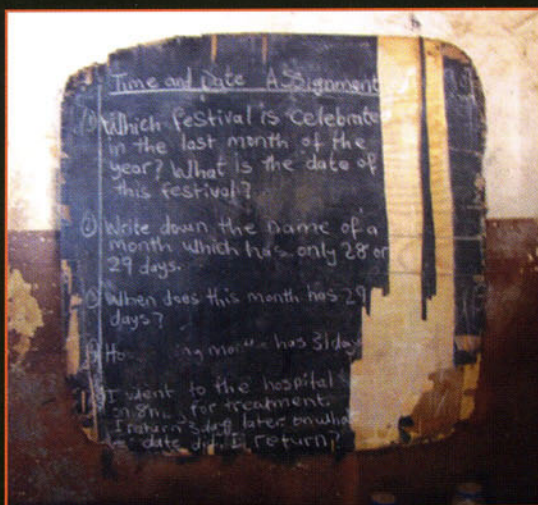
# Hope & Optimism for Africa

## Let's help this school refurbishment!

Staff of Toyota Gibraltar Stockholdings first came across Regent Primary School, located near Freetown, Sierra Leone, in September 2006, when they visited the country to give a course on 4x4 driving and maintenance to international and local aid and charity organisations.

**H**aving donated books and other educational materials to Regent Primary School on that occasion, on their return to Gibraltar they organised the collection and delivery of various items to the school, the items being shipped inside the 4x4 vehicles supplied by TGS and destined for the Sierra Leone Red Cross. Local businesses, including Beacon Press, Trico Printers and Sacarello's Newsagents, donated a variety of goods, and in addition to the donated items, the TGS staff also purchased large quantities of crayons, pens, pencils, books and stationery, and also sent many other things, including a TV and a DVD player (both donated by Hammonds), a scanner, a printer, sports equipment and a new computer, as well as an electricity generator to power everything up. In addition to its educational aspect, the school acts as a feeding point for needy children in the area, and equipment sent has included a microwave, kitchen equipment and many sets of plastic plates and utensils.

Two Spanish NGOs that are currently working in Sierra Leone have also agreed to assist in the refurbishment project. Massimo Salvadori, the 'Medicos del Mundo' Programme Manager, is liaising with the school headmaster and the local Regent Community Council and with construction companies. Natxo Garcia, a Spanish Red Cross water and sanitation expert known to the TGS staff through their visits to the country, is providing invaluable help. Having the support of 'Medicos del Mundo' and Sr Garcia will assist AKIN and the



TGS staff in making the right choices, thus ensuring the best outcome for the refurbishment project.

Regent Primary School, officially known as the Rural Education Committee School in the Regent Mountain District, was founded by the Church Missionary Society in the mid-19th century. It is said to be the oldest school in coastal West Africa, the birthplace of education in the entire West Africa sub-region. It is here that the first secondary school for boys and girls emerged and later gave birth to the country's first university. Regent Primary School is government-assisted, but in common with many of Sierra Leone's schools, experiences crowded



class rooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and in addition it lacks the right type of toilet facilities to suit the village setting and the low take-home pay of the pupils' parents. The school's objective is 'to create oneness whereby all children realize their full potential in a society which respects people's rights and dignity.' It also aims to eradicate gender-based inequalities in educational and life opportunities.



Now in conjunction with local charity AKIN, staff at Toyota Gibraltar Stockholdings have launched another appeal to help the school, which educates 450 children in what is a very poor country. The fabric of the buildings is in a dilapidated state, and the goal now is to refurbish the school so that the children can be educated and, if necessary, fed in a safe and clean environment. Major works needed include the installation of new toilets, ceilings, roof, doors and windows, electrical refurbishment and decoration. Fundraising events for this project began last year at Christmas time, with AKIN members and TGS staff selling chocolate figures of Father Christmas, which raised around £1500. Last month more funds were raised by a charity bingo event, which took place at the Senior Citizens Club in Town Range on May 21st. However, with an estimated cost for the school refurbishment of around £15,000, AKIN and the staff of TGS are



appealing to both businesses and individuals to help them raise additional funds to help to complete this very worthy project.

Apart from the donation of cash and goods, both individuals and businesses are asked to get

involved and help with the fund raising. Currently, the charity and the TGS staff are also appealing to local businesses such as retail outlets and restaurants to supply vouchers and goods that could be raffled to provide additional funds. If you would like to donate either your time or your money (or both!) to this very deserving project, contact either Jimmy Bruzon of TGS by phone (5763 1000) or AKIN by e-mail ([donations@akincharity.org](mailto:donations@akincharity.org)) or by telephone (5742 1000). You can learn more about AKIN's work on their website, [www.akincharity.org](http://www.akincharity.org). AKIN, The Association for Kids In Need, is a registered charity and foundation based in Gibraltar (Reg. Nos. 160 and 161), and it is also established as an 'Asociacion Cultural' in Spain. AKIN's goals are to provide personal, long-term care and education for every child it comes into contact with, and to secure a happy future for as many of them as possible. AKIN believes in keeping administrative costs to an absolute minimum, ensuring that all funds collected are directed to where they are needed most - to the children.

See more pictures relating to this feature in 'Insight Extras', on our website, [www.insightgibraltar.com](http://www.insightgibraltar.com).