Background

The Chicken Project began when a link, established through BEFSA (a charity working to reduce poverty through education) was made between the Cherwell School, Oxford and the Gcato School, South Africa. This inspired some students at Cherwell to develop the link into something beneficial and sustainable for students at both schools.

In South Africa children must choose between following careers options in business or agriculture; the Chicken Project enables children to sustain skills in both fields. By providing them with chickens the children are able to study agriculture as well as develop business skills in the running of the chicken farm.

It is also sustainable as the profits made from the business are all returned to the school, giving them more long term financial funding. We have spread our Chicken Project work to Cameroon, in small chicken pods and a chicken business in Douala.

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**Latest news:**

**Visits**
Our team was recently invited to ring the bell which opens the London stock exchange. As of 2015, we are the reigning European and Middle East champions of the teach a man to fish global business competition. We won $1000 for a business plan which our team produced in September 2014. A small group from our senior Chicken Project team travelled to London to ring the bell on Wednesday 16th March to celebrate British entrepreneurship as part of a larger, global money week celebration.

**Furniture**
In terms of current projects, our team is raising money to fund the completion of our project supplying furniture to the classrooms of the Adelaide school in South Africa. When the school was initially built the funding was exhausted before they could furnish the classrooms. Consequently, we are fundraising to provide the school with tables and chairs, so that the students can learn effectively. We have already sent half of this furniture to the school and are raising funds for the remaining half to be bought and shipped.

**Libraries**
Additionally, we are currently in the process of placing a large order of books from Oxford University Press (where we receive a generous 50% discount for books for our libraries). This will enable us to establish a new library in a South African secondary school with BEFSA – our link charity in South Africa. We are in the process of deciding on the location of the new library as there are several deserving candidates in need of the resources. As well as establishing the new library we will be replenishing the eight libraries that we have already set up.

**Fundraising**
In recent years, our numbers at the Chicken Project have been steadily increasing, resulting in introduction of the Chicks: a fundraising group set up for keen, interested KS3 students in school. With this new group, and our increased numbers, everyone’s individual efforts lead to the fund fundraising, often to help our fundraising goals.

With our weekly meetings, we ensure that we utilise all possible opportunities to raise money, as well as many careers evenings. Topical ideas particularly lead to some superb fundraising opportunities. For example, every year the Chicken Project sell roses at school to celebrate Valentine’s Day – this is very popular among the students. The Chicks group also often hold many cake bakes, which is also greatly favoured by many students, and so have proven to be very successful over the years.

Sponsoring as many books as possible, which we send to the schools, is also one of our goals. Not only is this an easy method of raising yet more money, it is a special personal touch for the children at the schools.

**Future plans**
Additional to our new library, we have several projects that we have planned for the near future. Firstly, we will be expanding our microfinancing scheme, which supports women in South Africa. The women are organised into small groups and each receive loans of around £80. These initial loans help them to launch new businesses which they have independently planned. The programme also funds business mentors to provide assistance and advice, when the women are establishing their businesses and on an ongoing basis.

Another project that our team is considering funding is fish farming in Cameroon. Recently we were asked by the Chaîne des Foyers Saint-Nicodème (a children’s home in Douala, Cameroon) if we would be able to contribute to the resources necessary to farm fish in the river which runs through their land. This would be our second programme set up with this establishment, as in recent years we aided them in starting their own Chicken Project, providing the start-up funds for an egg-selling business with 800 chickens (our largest ever eggscapade!).

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