



# GLK Namibia 2007



**Girlguiding**  
Greater London Kent

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GLK Namibia 2007 grew out of an idea to run an International Service Project at County level. This is the story.

Helen Beecher Bryant writes

It was a dreary February evening. I was having a meal at a Chinese restaurant in West Wickham, Kent, with a group of people, most of whom I didn't know. I didn't particularly want to be there.

I found myself chatting to someone I vaguely remembered from school. I happened to mention that I had a particular interest in Africa and the issues associated with the continent. She started telling me about her husband's brother-in-law who had worked for a charity in Namibia called Beautiful Gate which works with children affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Suddenly, my mood changed; I wanted to know everything about this place. She told me about the children's centre, the adventure camps, the community outreach projects, the pre-school and the weekly youth clubs.

A picture formed in my mind; a team of young women from GLK could work on a project at the Centre. What an opportunity it could be, both for the children we would meet and for the participants. This was something which had been on my mind for several years, having spent time in Africa previously. That night, I did some research and read up on the situation in Namibia. I was shocked by the stark statistics— '10% of the Namibian population are orphans, 42% because of AIDS'; 'the HIV prevalence rate in Namibia is over 20%'; 'the life expectancy in Namibia by 2010 is likely to be about 40 years'. Obviously, a team of Guiders weren't going to change these statistics, but surely we could contribute in some small way to the lives of those affected.

I e-mailed the charity asking if they ever accepted teams of volunteers. Within hours, I received a reply from the Director of the Centre asking when my team would be

arriving! Soon I found myself presenting a proposal to the County Executive, who agreed that I could take the project further.

## The Process

Flyers and application forms were designed and circulated to local Girlguiding UK members age 16–26. A venue was booked for the selection event and the leadership team chosen. It consisted of myself (Guider-in-Charge), Sue Craven (Health) and Pauline Richardson (Food and Finance).

The applicants were invited to the selection weekend in September. We prepared a varied and dynamic weekend. Activities included a mock World Summit whereby the group represented fictitious countries, all of whom had secret agendas.

The selection panel were



able to see how the applicants thought as individuals as well as how they worked together.

The 'unexpected' descent of 30 eager, over-excited Brownies certainly enabled the leaders to see how the applicants thought on their feet. Their brief was to entertain the Brownies for three hours with limited materials. They came up with an impressive pro-



gramme which included nature trails, painting, as well as a huge campfire at the end.

The Brownies' feedback at their meeting the next day was invaluable— 'I didn't really like her earrings'; 'she had a funny voice'; but it was useful to check that the applicants could communicate effectively with children they didn't know.

A powerful time of reflection was another key component of the selection weekend. The applicants were made to think about why they had applied for the project.



## Training

Our intensive training programme took place over three weekends. As well as preparing us for the trip, it was important for us all to spend time together as most of the group had never met. The project was going to be tough, and we would need to rely on each other in the following months.

We employed professional trainers to teach the group about HIV/AIDS, its history, epidemiology and the reasons for its devastating spread worldwide and particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Another part of the training involved learning about ways of thinking, using the Six Thinking Hats method of problem-solving, a tool which teaches decision-making.

We also learnt about the Six Thinking Hats method of problem solving.

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We designed our exclusive GLK Namibia 2007 logo which combined the Senior Section

logo with the Namibian flag, and had it made into cloth and metal badges.



Cloth badge £1

Pin badge £1.50

These badges are still available and are being sold to raise funds for Beautiful Gate Namibia

E-mail

[international@glkguides.org.uk](mailto:international@glkguides.org.uk)

if you are interested in purchasing badges. They are also for sale on the counter at CHQ until the end of March 2008, or until they sell out.





# GLK Namibia 2007

## Toolkit



## GLK NAMIBIA 2007 ACTIVITY KIT

**ACTIVITY TITLE:** Working Together

**PREP TIME:** None

**ACTIVITY TIME:** 30 mins

**AGE:** All

**EQUIPMENT:** Newspaper

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. To start with, get the whole group to line up shoulder to shoulder and feet together so that each person's right foot is to the right of the person to the right of them.
2. Challenge the group to get everyone to walk forward as a unified group, so everyone moves just one foot at a time.
3. If the group completes this successfully, change the rules to make it harder (i.e. get the group to do this activity without speaking or get some members of the group to turn the other way so some people will have to walk backwards).
4. If there is time, split the group into smaller groups of up to 4 people. Give each group a sheet of newspaper and get everyone to stand on it. When you tell them to, the whole group needs to get off their newspaper, fold it in half then get back on.
5. Repeat this until there is just one team left still managing to keep all members of their team on the newspaper.

### EXTRA NOTES

For the second activity, invent a story behind the newspaper i.e. The newspaper is a island and the tide is coming in, making all the islands smaller.



We wanted to arrive in Namibia with our own activities for the children and young people which could be fitted into their programme. Over the course of our training programme, the GLK Namibia 2007 Activity Kit was developed. Each participant took responsibility for designing an activity we could run in Namibia. The activities were designed with these themes in mind:

- basic health promotion
- moral values
- gender equality
- stereotypes

We also included a number of games and craft activities.

We put a lengthy wish-list of materials in the GLK County Newsletter and wrote to companies asking for donations. We were overwhelmed by the response and thanks to Air Namibia, we were able to take 30kg of equipment for free. Numerous Guiders rummaged through their storage cupboards and donated brand new scobie string, powder paint, felt pens, sticky labels etc. Various

companies donated toothbrushes and dental hygiene posters. The Salmagundi Gardeners Cricket Club and Hayes Hurricanes Cricket Club kindly donated Kwik cricket equipment, and Trace-mark enabled us to purchase a parachute which we had emblazoned with our Trefoil.

## Fundraising

We kept the cost of the training low, but each participant had to raise £1,000 to cover flights, insurance, training, transport, board etc. We were grateful to the County who sponsored the group, and to our individual Districts and Divisions, meeting places, Trefoil Guilds and churches made donations. We also received a large donation from the Leslie Sell Charitable Trust for which we were extremely grateful.

The participants found ingenious ways to fundraise. These included dressing as a Pink Fairy and walking part of the Green Chain walk, running a sponsored silence, hosting band nights and cake sales.





# GLK Namibia 2007



## GLK Africa Challenge



You may well have heard of the Africa Challenge. When the Namibia project was being planned, a member of the County team suggested that we write some sort of Challenge so the whole County can feel involved with the project, not just the participants.

We put some ideas together at one of our training weekends, then we turned the ideas into a

Challenge whereby all Units were invited to complete 5 clauses from Africa-themed categories including food, geography and real life. Then the Units had to raise a minimum of £20 for the work of Beautiful Gate Namibia, and send off to receive the special edition 'GLK Africa Challenge' badge. I had hoped that a few hundred pounds might be raised in the County, which we could contribute to Beautiful Gate.

In March 2007, Girlguiding UK invited groups across the Country to apply to attend the Association's Annual Event in Edinburgh. We submitted a proposal in the hope that we might be able to promote our project. We were delighted to be informed that we had been selected to attend the prestigious event and immediately set about preparing display materials and booking transport; we were the only group in the London and South East England Region to be invited, and were supported by both GLK and the Region.

The organiser of the Annual Event asked if we needed any photocopying to be done for the event. I thought it was worth asking if they would do 600 colour copies of the Africa Challenge on thin white card. I had also e-mailed the Africa Challenge to Guiders nationwide, and put it on some Guiding websites. The Africa Challenge total is over £12,500. Over 350 Units have taken the Challenge and I have run out of badges twice! Many Guiders have had to wait a very long time for their badges. We are sorry for that, but we never envisaged that so many Units would take the Challenge. Badge orders have come from across the Country, from Orkney, to the Isle of Man, to Cornwall, from Rainbows, Brownies, Guiders, Rangers and Trefoil Guilds. Beautiful Gate Namibia is thrilled at the amount of money we have raised. Thank you to those who took the Challenge. We hope that your Unit enjoyed the different activities and that they learnt things they never knew about Africa. We have enjoyed seeing pictures of the activities.

Beautiful Gate Namibia are going to use the money to help refurbish the Youth Centre at Beautiful Gate. Beautiful Gate is based in Katutura, a township in Windhoek, widely considered to be 'Namibia's Soweto'. Breakdown of the traditional family unit has had a devastating impact on the community. It is quite usual for a grandmother to be responsible for several children who have been orphaned by AIDS. Crime and alcoholism are rife. Beautiful Gate is working to provide support, education and a safe social space for these young people who have very limited opportunities. It runs weekly youth clubs, discipline groups, a pre-school for young children, as well as community outreach projects. During the holidays, Beautiful Gate runs adventure camps, and we ran three such camps when we were there. We combined health activities with songs, games, craft and sport, using the donated equipment.



Beautiful Gate is going to use the money to help refurbish their youth centre; they want to equip their new library, to purchase equipment for their youth club and to build a home work room. The children and young people often live in very over-crowded homes where they do not have space or resources to do their schoolwork.



## In Namibia

The activities we ran were designed with a specific purpose. With the younger ones we did a 'trust trail' whereby the children had to lead a blindfolded friend round an obstacle course carrying a cup of water which had to be deposited in a bucket at the end. This encouraged the children to listen to specific instructions and to trust each other.



We gave each of the children a piece of foam to decorate with pictures of things which make them happy. Then at the end of the two weeks, we sewed them into one big mat which is now hanging on the wall of Beautiful Gate's youth centre.



The oldest age-group enjoyed the 'pebble people' activity, whereby they were each given a large pebble which they were encouraged to turn into themselves or someone they respect. The variations were fantastic and prompted a talk about identity, which explored how the young people view themselves, and those they look up to.



We continued the theme of identity and gave the children and young people the opportunity to draw self-portraits.



We took several hundred CDs with us for the children to make jellyfish as part of an 'under-the-sea' activity. The children decorated circles of card and strips of crepe paper and turned them into jellyfish. After the session, some of the children ran off to find the nearest CD player to test it!



The older children loved tie-dying the squares of material we gave them. They were able to personalise their own square and choose which colour they wanted. They left the centre wearing beautiful bandanas, scarves and hats.



Local Guiders donated hundreds of Scoobie strings which were made into friendship bracelets. In January 2008, some of the children were still wearing their bracelets.



Thank you for supporting the Namibia project  
With love from the GLK Namibia 2007 team:

(l-r): Helen Beecher Bryant, Pauline Richardson, Jo Puddle, Gemma Dawson, Nicola Wright, Emily Thoroughgood, Claire Whitmore, Sophie Woolley, Vicky Storey, Hayley Cruikshank, Claire Bradnam, Louise Jansons, Sara Kassam, Gemma Hollands and Sue Craven.