



# COPA news

Building caring Christian communities

The **AGM of COPA UK** will be held at  
**Wesley Place Methodist Church, Lawton Road,  
Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 2RU**  
on **Saturday, 20th September 2014.**

Full details and invitation enclosed.

4.00pm	Welcome & opening devotions
4.30pm	AGM Business Meeting
5.00pm	COPA Presentation by Bryony Clear-Hill (2013-14 Project Trust Volunteer)
6.30pm (approx.)	Supper
7.15pm—9pm	COPA Social Evening

We would also like to invite you to a  
**COPA service on Sunday, 21st September, 10.30am,**  
**at Wesley Place Methodist Church**  
which will include an Address by Sebert Lane, Founder and International  
President of COPA



A mural on one of the  
classroom walls in  
Bombita

Visit the COPA website: [www.copa.org.uk](http://www.copa.org.uk)

September 2014

## NEWS OF A FORMER COPA VOLUNTEER — Verona Smith

I worked with COPA as an Education Adviser from August 2006 until December 2010. It was wonderful to contribute to the professional development of local staff, Project Trust volunteers and the academic achievement of the students. Living both in Bombita and La Hoya gave me the opportunity to become integrated in village life and become more effective in my role. I thought that when I left to work with an American christian charity teaching English in a small church primary school in another part of the DR that was the end of my involvement with COPA.

However, I returned to cover the maternity leave of an Education Adviser for a further six months. After that I worked in an orphanage opened by Pedro Kery Johnson, chairperson of the COPA DR committee. Being the primary carer of twenty 6 to 18 year old boys, some having lived on the street was my most challenging role. Seeing them make positive changes in their young lives was both humbling and inspiring during our year together.

So now having finally returned to England I'm slowly adjusting to life here. I am now enjoying my work as a Learning Mentor in an inner city Birmingham primary school. My work in the DR prepared me perfectly for this job as I enter this new phase of my life. Part of me will always remain in the DR with the many friends I have made, some of whom I have come to regard as family. As my second home I intend to make regular visits to the DR to maintain and deepen these relationships.

**Teressa writes of the 4 Project Trust volunteers** who have just returned to the UK to take up their places at University. Bryony will be attending the COPA AGM in September when we hope to hear more of their experiences working for COPA in the DR.

'I'm very pleased by the independence they've shown in working towards their project briefs. At both sites the girls have organised folders to pass on to the next volunteers and have also consolidated resources and folders from previous years. They have completed a good handover pack for the next volunteers. In Bombita the difficult preparation for Christmas Cards has been done by a very patient and long-suffering Fiona

– she has seen more cardboard cut-out Christmas trees this year than she cares to look at again! In Bombita the girls have painted a fantastic mural in the COPA office - a beautiful map of the Dominican Republic. Next to the map are business cards they have collected on their travels. We hope this will give next year's PT girls a helping hand when they are planning their holidays outside of Barahona.'



From the left: Alice, Gracie, Ruth, Bryony, and Fiona. Picture courtesy of Gracie Koester who was a volunteer from the USA.

## The new school buildings in Bombita

By the time this Newsletter is with you the new school buildings should be full of excited children keen to work in their new classrooms. On what was an empty field at the beginning of the year there are now 9 new classrooms, a school office and kitchen and dining facilities. The picture on the right shows the dinner ladies cleaning the serving area prior to term starting.



Pictured below is the landscaped area between two of the classrooms which will provide space, and eventually shade, for the pupils. Covered walkways outside the classrooms will also provide shade. We hope to have pictures of the classrooms in use for the next edition of the Newsletter

We believe that La Hoya will be in the next batch of schools to be designated by the DR Government to become 'single tanda' meaning that the children will be attending



all day rather than just the morning or afternoon. We will keep you informed of the developments.

Meanwhile, we send all the students, teachers, local staff and the COPA volunteers our very best wishes for the new school year.



## Vacancies

After 15 years of editing and circulating the Newsletter I have decided to step down from this role at the end of 2014.

Many of the articles and photos used are gathered from reports, 'blogs' and special articles from the COPA volunteers and the Project Trust volunteers working in the Dominican Republic. There are also items about fundraising and projects happening in the UK and I hope that over the years you have found them to be an interesting mix.

Currently, three editions are published each year (May/June, September and December) to coincide with letters and cards from the young people in the DR and also the COPA UK AGM paperwork.

I now feel that the time has come for me to hand over to someone who may have a new approach, new and fresh ideas. Of course, I would be happy to help with any hand over and also with the logistics of the mailing of the Newsletter if that would help my successor.

**Would you, or someone you know, be interested in taking on the role of Newsletter Editor?** Please don't think that you need to live in the Gloucestershire/Wiltshire area to do this as most of the input is from emails and the internet.

Please contact me by email if you would like more information:  
pam.tovey@btinternet.com or phone 01452 301633

*Pam Tovey - Newsletter Editor*



We still have a vacancy for an **Education Advisor** in the DR to work alongside Teresa. The job description appears on our Website but if you would like more information, would like to apply for the job or know someone who might be interested please contact John Youe on copahr@gmail.com



The COPA UK committee is made up of a group of people from around the country with the sole aim of helping to make a difference in the education and health care of the people of La Hoya and Bombita. We meet every couple of months, currently at Cricklade, Wiltshire but this can be varied. We have a wide range of abilities on the committee but would welcome new members to join us. Do you have any experience in insurance, publicity and publications, legal, IT or other administration roles? Are you interested in helping the work of COPA in the Dominican Republic? If so, please contact our Chairman, Geoff Haslam [geoff@gandphaslam.plus.com](mailto:geoff@gandphaslam.plus.com) to find out more.

### **Nomination of members to serve on the Executive Committee**

*The COPA constitution stipulates that the Executive Committee shall comprise not less than 5 or more than 15 members and that the committee shall be elected annually at the AGM.*

*When elected, the committee has powers to co-opt additional members.*

*The members currently in office are listed on page 5 of the September 2014 COPA News.*

*The constitution also requires that nominations of Honorary Officers and Committee Members must be made at least 14 days before the AGM. Nominations should be sent to Geoff Haslam (COPA Chairman) either by post or e-mail to arrive by 6th September 2014. In the event that nominations exceed vacancies, a ballot will be held at the AGM.*

## COPA UK AGM

As you will have seen from the front page of the Newsletter and the invitation to the AGM, this year's COPA UK Annual General Meeting is being held in Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent. We try to take this meeting to different parts of the country where we have large numbers of sponsors enabling more people to hear first hand about the work of COPA in the DR.

In an effort to save costs (and the rainforests!) we are not issuing a separate Annual Report booklet. This and the following two pages contain extracts of the Annual Report. The full report will be available at the Annual General Meeting and on request.



### **PRESIDENTS**

Sebert and Doreen Lane

### **TRUSTEES & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Geoff Haslam [Chairman]

Paul Samways [Vice Chairman]

Pam Tovey [Secretary]

David Rush [Treasurer]

Paul Arthurs

Marilyn Chunn

Peter Gardner

Pam Haslam

Elizabeth Robertson Co-opted 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014

Ian Robertson Appointed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013

Helen Samways Appointed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2013

Sandra Samways

Gill Syvret-Berboda

Roger Tovey

John Youe

### **Sub-committee chair / Specific Responsibility**

Marketing  
Newsletter

Fund Raising

Education advisor

Minute Secretary

Sponsorship  
Representing Guernsey  
Finance  
Personnel

### **Community Partners Association - Chairman's Annual Report 2014**

2014 has been an exciting and successful year as the work of COPA continues to flourish and grow. This year will turn out to be one of the most significant years since COPA was established by Sebert and Doreen Lane 23 years ago. Closer cooperation with the Government in the DR has led to a doubling in size of our Bombita campus and the creation of "Full day schooling" for nearly 500 students. 9 new classrooms, offices, toilets, assembly/ dining room and kitchens have all been constructed, at a cost of 24 million pesos (approx £350,000), in the past 10 months.

Teresa Cornish, our one and only, Education Advisor flew out to the DR in August and in October Bob Hampton took up his position as COPA Project Director. In December Cathie Weir took over as Health Advisor. All were thrown

**Community Partners Association - Chairman's Annual Report 2014  
(cont.)**

in at the deep end due to the many changes taking place. Teresa quickly became involved in negotiations with the Government regarding construction of the new buildings, naming of new staff, and changes to the age structure of the new Bombita school – all work additional to the routine work as Education Advisor.

The success of COPA has always been a product of the volunteers (both long and short term), the school staff, parents and other agencies. The skills, enthusiasm and commitment of all the volunteers in the past year has been truly incredible. We are greatly indebted to them all and they have made a huge difference to the lives and education of all the young people that we serve. I would specifically like to thank all four Project Trust volunteers who have been amazing this year. We hope they will keep in touch with us as they progress on to university.

After many months of costly advertising we are still seeking to recruit a second Education Advisor and also an Administrator. Do you know of anyone who would like to join us in making a difference? We are extremely grateful to Alison Hampton (Bob's wife) who has willingly and voluntarily undertaken all kinds of jobs to help cover for the gaps caused by an absence of long term volunteers.

Over the past year many presentations and talks have been made to various organisations. The number of new sponsors coming forward, however, has been disappointing and is a cause for concern. As a result the Annual Accounts show that expenditure exceeds the income. Our reserves are limited and cannot continue to be used to balance the budget. Fundraising, however, has increased. We are particularly grateful to all those who have undertaken sponsored marathon runs, treks, coffee mornings and a Big Breakfast! In the next few months we hope to establish ten regional 'Friends of COPA' groups who we hope will get together to organise their own fundraising.

Finally as Chairman I would like to thank all members of the Executive Committee for their encouragement and support. I particularly thank Paul Samways, who regrettably, is relinquishing his position on the Exec. Grateful thanks also to COPA's Auditors, Kingscott Dix who have provided their services free of charge.

Geoff Haslam  
*Chairman COPA UK*

**Abbreviated Annual Accounts 2013/14**

The detailed annual accounts, including the Trustees' and Independent Examiners Reports, will be available at the Annual General Meeting. The following is a summary of those accounts.

<b>STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>		
Regular income from sponsors	52,053	50,600
Gift Aid on sponsorship income	7,071	7,868
Contributions from COPA Guernsey	0	5,000
Donations for specific purposes	1,926	3,133
Donations for general purposes	3,593	7,718
Promotional and fundraising income	4,486	0
Interest received	15	15
	<u>69,144</u>	<u>74,334</u>
<b>Resources expended</b>		
Support for our work in the Dominican Republic	63,969	60,323
Promotional and fundraising costs	1,589	0
Newsletter costs	1,976	1,524
Administrative and other costs	4,931	3,241
	<u>72,465</u>	<u>65,088</u>
<b>Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year</b>	<u>(3,321)</u>	<u>9,246</u>
Funds brought forward	96,361	87,115
<b>Funds carried forward</b>	<u>93,040</u>	<u>96,361</u>

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>	<b>31 March 2014</b>	<b>31 March 2013</b>
	£	£
<b>Net current assets:</b>		
Bank balances	76,111	100,051
Gift Aid recoverable	13,531	13,960
Amount due from/(to) COPA USA	3,398	(1,650)
Funding due to COPA in the Dominican Republic	0	(16,000)
	<u>93,040</u>	<u>96,361</u>
<b>Representing funds:</b>		
To support our work in the Dominican Republic	76,512	80,030
To react quickly to emergencies in the DR	9,348	8,749
For general purposes	7,180	7,582
	<u>93,040</u>	<u>96,361</u>

## The Knitting Project

Bob's wife, Alison, has also been working for COPA over the last few months, organising food, etc for the work groups and in the absence of a second Education Advisor has taken on some of the admin roles. One of her hobbies is knitting and Alison has written in her blog: 'One of the biggest challenges I had in packing, was what was worth dragging all the way out here. I am so pleased that my Cath Kidston knitting bag and needles found their way into a very heavy suit case, not only are they keeping me company during the long dark evenings, but they are rapidly becoming my tools for communication. A young mum had been particularly helpful in showing me where to buy food etc. She has



the most delightful little girl and as a "thank you", I made some little shoes. They have sparked the imagination of women of Bombita. I have made a few more pairs, but it seems to me that it would be much better if they could make their own.

As I sat with this little girl, teaching her to knit, she talked to me in Spanish. She knows I don't always understand her so she speaks slowly and deliberately, just as I guide her through each step of the stitch. There is something about both of us being in a learning situa-

tion. Neither of us has power over the other. I have found some knitting terms in Spanish to add to my vocabulary, but the conversation has really just been about life and the world.

In the 9 months that I have been living in Bombita, I have taught, with varying degrees of success, about 30 girls and women to knit. We started with a simple purse, and are gradually progressing to more challenging projects. The spirit of knitting is infectious, and not a day goes by without someone asking me for needles, yarn or to teach them to knit. The group I started in Bombita in January is currently on a break as it got too big for me to manage. We will reconvene in August, when the new school opens and I have a room to work in.

In addition to teaching, I have been busy knitting hats and baby shoes for the new babies of Bombita. I love visiting the new-borns to bring a gift, and of course, it is a good chance to practice some conversation.'



## The following article is taken from the blog of Fiona Hunt, one of the Project Trust volunteers for the coming year.

## Preparing for the DR

'At the end of July, I spent four days on the Isle of Coll for Training. It was very intense and our days were packed with talks about everything from security and safety to dealing with culture shock, insurance, health and of course, lessons on teaching. Having spent the last 13 years of my life being a member of the class, I was slightly worried about making the transition to being in front of one – will they listen to me, will it be difficult to keep them engaged? We had extensive talks from both primary and high school teachers filled with loads advice and also prepared and presented two lessons of our own which we received constructive feedback for. While still a bit nervous, I think it's only natural and I've left Training feeling much more prepared and with so many new ideas. I can't wait to meet my classes and start teaching!

On training I also got to meet the other volunteers I will be spending my year with. It was so exciting to finally meet them, especially my partner, Laura, who will be living and working in Bombita with me as the Art Teacher. There are six of us in total – Laura and I in Bombita, Sophie and Lucy who will be working in a project identical to ours in the village of La Hoya,



Felicity, Steven, Laura, Lucy, Sophie, Fiona and Joe

about 30 minutes away, and Joe and Steven who will be in Santiago de Los Caballeros, in the north of country, also teaching but at a different project. We all got on so well together and I can't wait to see them again in a few days time.

On Training we also met Felicity, our Desk Officer, who will be one of our main points of contact if we have any problems or need any advice throughout the year. She is absolutely lovely and gave us loads of information about our project and tips on living in the Dominican Republic. Next time we see her will be when she comes to visit us at our project in November, a quarter of the way through our year(!). On Saturday, before our end of Training ceilidh, we had a chance to speak to Amelia, our country representative who lives in the capital, Santo Domingo. It was really nice to speak to her and hear about the Dominican Republic from a native Dominican and she assured us that she would teach us some Merengue and Salsa steps when we arrive. I think it might be time to hang up my Highland Dancing pumps in favour of something a bit more exotic.....

The business of packing has also started and while I knew it would never be easy to fit a year's worth of belongings into a rucksack, it's proving to be more difficult than I thought. When presented with a checklist that includes everything from a warm sleeping bag to a year's supply of Tiger Balm (apparently works wonders on mosquito bites) the rucksack that seemed "huge" when I first got it certainly isn't seeming so huge after all.

I'm now trying to ration it down to the *absolute essentials*..... \*begrudgingly removes hair dryer\*.....

## Volunteering with COPA

Pictured below on the Isle of Coll, off the Scottish coast, where they spent several days training for the year ahead, are the four Project Trust volunteers who will be working at the COPA schools in Bombita and La Hoya. Prior to their training they had attended a selection course with the Project Trust organisation, also on the Isle of Coll. Laura, Sophie and Lucy were recently able to meet with some of the COPA UK committee at Cricklade and hear more about life in the DR, the COPA project and the work they will be doing. Fiona had a university entrance test on that day so was unable to be there.

They are now in the DR and settling into life in La Hoya and Bombita. Currently they are preparing the art rooms and participating with the other school activities and will soon be leading lessons in either Art or English. We wish them well for the year ahead and look forward to hearing about their experiences in the DR. From Left to Right: Laura Toffolo from Glasgow, Lucy Baker from Darlington, Sophie Cashell from Conwy and Fiona Hunt from Inverness.



## The Original COPA built classrooms in Bombita

Bob, our Project Director, writes: 'The builders of the new school buildings have been sweeping through the old school. The exterior walls of all the buildings have been



Painted, the window shutters have been repaired and renovated, the student toilets have been refurbished, turf has been laid and flowers and shrubs have been planted. It all looks very smart.'

Teressa, Education Advisor, tells us: 'I have to say I'm really looking forward to the new school year and to this brand new challenge of single tanda. We are working hard to

make it as a successful as we can from the outset, although no doubt there will be hiccups. I am particularly excited about the playground because it means that the teachers will be able to use 'outside' as a classroom. I have tried to focus a lot of the work near the classrooms in the old school on literacy and numeracy and plan to give some training on how they can be used to teach. We've also painted some very physical activities on the old playground that can be used as a kind of 'trim trail' by the PE teacher and we have asked a local man Prudy to build us some swing sets.'



## 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 :**

Mrs Sandra Samways  
57 Pauls Croft  
CRICKLADE  
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SN6 6AJ

### **COPA Guernsey Treasurer:**

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

### **Guernsey Sponsorship Secretary:**

Mrs Margaret Keeling  
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ST SAVIOURS  
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By shopping via easyfundraising you will be raising free donations for COPA. Just go to <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/COPA> register, and then search for your desired vendors. You'll then use their websites as usual, but be raising money for COPA. It costs you only a few moments more, nothing else. Hundreds of retailers like Argos and Amazon donate money to supporters of good causes who shop on line through this site and we could be one of them! As well as the donation itself you can Gift Aid it and donate even more money to COPA.

The new sign at the entrance to the school in Bombita



## Sponsorship Letters and Cards



The address for your letters and cards is:

**Child's name and sponsorship number  
Escuela de COPA (Bombita or La Hoya)  
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.

Registered Charity No. 1027117

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