



PRESS RELEASE
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Travel Counsellors works to improve the education of children across the globe

Travel Counsellors has been working alongside one of the largest child-centred community development organisations in the world, PLAN UK, in order to improve the standard of education for children in poverty stricken countries, helping them to realise their full potential and building a safe, healthy environment from them and their families.

The independent travel company has been working with PLAN for 16 months and in that time has funded a project to repair and extend a primary school in the Ndere Village, Kenya and donated £200,000 to an educational project that aims to link thousands of school children around the world.

Travel Counsellors founder and chairman David Speakman has just returned from a visit to Kenya with representatives from PLAN UK. He visited Barkogonga Primary School which, in October 2005, had its roof destroyed by a cyclone. The Queen's Award winning company paid for the repairs and improvements to the school by constructing new classrooms with safer structures and ventilation and the project was completed in April this year. This has created a more spacious and sustainable learning environment for the pupils.

"Seeing the difference we have made first hand was an amazing experience," say David. "These children deserve a better standard of education and this project has improved the lives of the 307 children and their parents living in the village, and will benefit future generations living there too."

David also visited a number of schools taking part in the educational linking project developed by Plan UK, which has been awarded £200,000 of funds from Travel Counsellors PLC. The scheme, commencing this year, aims to link 2000 schools in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the UK over the next five years.

Pupils from 65 schools in Kenya, Malawi, Sierra Leone and the UK will be the first to take part in the project. It encourages children in the UK to examine their roles as global citizens, international issues such as education and poverty and how these subjects relate to their lives and the lives of children in developing nations. The project also supports the school curricula in all countries by increasing children's knowledge of their linked country and its development issues.

Following David's visit, the company is now also donating a further £20,000 to the project to enable five schools to develop resource centres with computer equipment and digital cameras so that schools can link electronically. These schools can also teach their pupils computer skills and raise money to run the resource centres through selling the facilities to the local community members.



David adds: "The school linking project is such a worthwhile cause and allows children from different backgrounds and cultures across the globe to communicate and learn from one another. The extra funds we have donated will enhance this level of communication and give children in countries such as Kenya, Malawi and Sierra Leone the chance to use the technology that so many of us take for granted. I encourage anyone in the UK who has a relationship with their local school to get involved and support this project."

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About Travel Counsellors: Travel Counsellors PLC is one of the UK's largest independent travel companies with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2007) of £210 million, a 17% increase year on year. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 850 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 170 staff at the company's head office in Bolton. In the UK Travel Counsellors places all customer money in a Trust account which guarantees a 100% refund in the event that a supplier collapses. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, South Africa, Australia the US. Travel Counsellors was the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2003-2008, the technology category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards and are the 2006 & 2007 winners of Travel Agent of the Year voted by readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited. In 2007 the company won the Accenture Innovation Award and the Outstanding Achievement Award at the Travel Weekly Globe Awards. The company also received a record breaking 94% in a recent customer satisfaction survey.

About Plan UK

- 1) Plan UK celebrates its 70th anniversary this year and was founded by British journalist John Langdon-Davies in 1937 to rescue children orphaned by the Spanish Civil War.
- 2) Today we work in 48 of the world's poorest countries across Africa, Asia and South America.
- 3) We have 120,000 sponsors in the UK and one million sponsored children worldwide.
- 4) Our projects including schools and health-centres are geared towards working with children and their communities to help them fulfill their potential
- 5) Sponsorship starts at £12-a-month and, rather than going to individual children and their families, funds projects to improve schooling, health, nutrition and livelihoods across communities.

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