Goat Aid or Computer Aid? – you decide

These materials are supplied to you in addition to pages 168 and 169 of the textbook. They will enable you to develop your thinking further with regard to the two different aid projects.

Goat Aid

There are several excellent websites to see how Goat Aid aims to enhance the lives of people across Africa. Each website enables the readers to see how they might contribute and what difference the projects make to ordinary people’s lives. These three are particularly informative:

• Oxfam
• FARM-Africa
• Heifer International.

Goats can help to improve the life of people who live in harsh economic and environmental conditions.

The Galla and the East African Goat are remarkable creatures. They eat grass but can survive on weeds and thorny bushes. In times of drought they have a much higher survival rate than cows and sheep.

Figure 2: Improving quality of life through Goat Aid.

- The East African Goat is a highly productive animal that can produce three kids in each year for as long as 15 years.
- People can move away from a subsistence lifestyle if surpluses are produced. They can sell or barter surplus milk, meat, crops, clothes and tools. With money they can, for example, invest in education for their children and afford to dig wells with pumps.

• Meat that is high in protein and low in fat is available even in drought conditions.

Infant mortality is reduced and people can more easily resist disease and survive illness. They are more productive, increasing the chances of higher yields.

Milk is a source of protein, calcium and vitamin-rich food.

Figure 3: Improving quality of life through Goat Aid.

• Goat leather has many uses, from clothes and shoes to material for shelter and tools.

An essential output to help grow traditional subsistence crops such as maize and cassava.

• Goats are quick to mature and can produce three kids in each year for as long as 15 years.

• People can move away from a subsistence lifestyle if surpluses are produced. They can sell or barter surplus milk, meat, crops, clothes and tools. With money they can, for example, invest in education for their children and afford to dig wells with pumps.

Introducing the digital divide

Computers for Africa

Computer Aid is a relatively new venture that aims to enhance the lives of people in less developed countries. The textbook gives you information about the work of Computer Aid International. Another UK non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in this work is Computers 4 Africa.

In 2000, a group of American students decided to donate a goat to a family in Uganda. The goat, donated to Beatrice’s parents, soon produced twins. When the kid goats were weaned, the children drank the goat’s milk for a nutritional boost and sold the surplus milk for extra money. The cash from the milk accumulated, and Beatrice’s parents decided that they could now afford to send her to school.

The Tale begins

Beatrice was such an outstanding student that she won a scholarship, not only to Uganda’s best girls’ high school, but also to a prep school in Massachusetts and then to Connecticut College. A group of 20 donors to Heifer International financed the girl’s living expenses.

(Source: Nicholas Kristof, New York Times website, 3 July 2008)

Figure 4: Closing the digital divide.

The digital divide in 2005

• Europe has a population of 500 million (approx.) and 250 million internet users – 50 per cent.
• Africa has a population of 900 million (approx.), with around three million internet users – 0.33 per cent.
• Cameroon, in West Africa has a population of 16 million with just 15,000 internet users – 0.9 per cent.

Figure 4 shows students in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, Africa beginning to cross the ‘digital divide’ thanks to the British Council working with Computer Aid International. You can read more about this at The Post Online (Cameroon) website.