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Businesses get behind Ken

by Ailín Quinlan

CORK businesses have thrown their weight behind an innovative project to raise around €80,000 to ease the hardship suffered by the Maasai tribe in Kenya as a result of drought, AIDS and the lack of a basic health-care system.

The four Rotary Clubs of Cork recently launched a major fundraising drive in aid of Project Rombo, an innovative programme aimed at supporting the Maasai Tribe in Kenya.

Project Rombo is a long-term project to build strong, secure communities for the people living in the village of Rombo in southern Kenya. The aim is to ease the hardship they face due to drought, AIDS, the lack of basic education, the lack of clean water and the lack of a basic healthcare system.

quire urgent funding. The first project is aimed at fitting out schools in the Rombo area at a cost of about €20,000. The second project is to provide clean drinking water by bringing water from the spring at Munura to Rombo town area, at an estimated cost of €25,000. The third project will fit out the Rombo Health Centre and the Maili Tatu Health Centre with medical equipment, at an estimated cost of €35,000.

Cork Rotarians, representatives of the business community and Elaine Bannon, coordinator of the Rombo Project in Kenya, met in Cork recently to learn more about the plight of the Maasai Tribe and how the people of Cork can support this cause.

Rombo, a village at the foot of Kilimanjaro, on the Kenyan side of the Tanzanian border, near the Serengeti plains, is located in an area home to approximately 10,000 Maasai people. Rombo village itself, with a population of approximately 1,000 people, is a village of red dusty roads, timber shacks for shops and very poor people. The Maasai



Elaine Bannon with schoolchildren in Rombo and, below, with President of Bishopstown Rotar

are one of the few remaining tribes in Africa who continue to live by their culture and tradition. They continue to dress in their traditional clothes and live in the traditional mud and cow dung Manyatta.

Ms Bannon, coordinator of the project is also co-founder — with four Maasai people — of the indigenous development group, Light Of Maasi. The group addresses key issues in the areas of employment health and education, including tackling the practice of female genital mutilation.

Speaking at the fundraising programme launch, Ms Bannon highlighted the challenges the Maasai people are facing daily and made an

appeal to the Cork Rotary clubs for support.

Rombo was facing a number of



challenges and need for funding, she said.

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