

Care for the Elderly Stories

BW's Story

BW is 82 and has a very painful knee which severely restricts her movements. When Patrick, the staff member in charge of Mercy Ministries, visited her he was utterly appalled when he saw the conditions in which BW was living. Her sons were all dead and her only source of help was a small grandson. Her traditional thatched home was on the point of collapse, and when it rained the roof offered no protection to BW and her few possessions - a simple bed and a soiled blanket. IcfEM has



B's new house

been able to help her by building a new mud-walled house with a proper roof.

Many old people live like BW; they have to get their water from the river, they have to collect firewood so that they can cook, and if they are in pain they have to endure it, because a visit to the doctor is far too expensive even to consider. When they are too old to work there are no pensions, home helps or meals-on-wheels to help make their lives more comfortable. AIDS is destroying the old social order that would have provided for them. Now the young are dying and the old are left alone to fend for themselves.

Some elderly people, however, are simply ignored by their family.

JM's Story

When IcfEM first met JM she was seriously neglected, living in a filthy mud-walled house, and covered with Jiggers (Sandfleas), parasites that burrow into the skin and lay their eggs so that the body starts itching. She was in a pathetic state, but loving Christian care changed her last days. She was visited by a Mission nurse and the Head of Mercy Ministries. They bathed her, cleaned her, got rid of the jiggers and made her comfortable. Others came to clean her house. Frequent visits by IcfEM staff made her family sit up and ask what was going on. Eventually her family were reconciled, realised their responsibility to their old mother, and she died in peace.

SN's Story, 96 years.

Her house was falling down and she was built a good house. She was a strong traditionalist who did not believe in God but now she is saved and happy. She didn't have a son and so people from her late husband's family chased away and took all her land. She took in her married needy daughter to stay with her and she was with her when we came across her.

RK's Story, 80 years.

She stays alone. She has two poor sons who have no concern for her. For sleeping, she lies on a mattress with blankets which the Relief and Welfare Department staff have given her.

SO' Story, 87 years.

He had a cataract but IcfEM helped him to have an operation and now he can see. He has severe hearing loss. His house is old and in a state of disrepair and neglect. His children are willing to help him but they are very poor.

SM's Story, 76 years.

He is a widower who is neglected by his poor sons. He had poor vision due to cataract for which he was helped by IcFEM to have an operation. His legs are swollen and he has a septic wound from which he has suffered for very many years.

MN's Story, 93 years.

She was helped to put up a new grass thatched hut which was better than her previous one. All her children are very poor and others are mentally handicapped with one being totally deranged.