

Newsletter Spring 2009

Be transformed by the renewing of your minds

One of the big areas in need of transformation is the attitude towards the causes and nature of disabilities. Most people in the community are unaware that therapy is available and are often ashamed and hide their children away.



The structure set up through the Local Transformation Units with Community Health Workers and the Bethesda Pool programme, coupled with welfare clinics at DMCC, enables a programme to raise awareness, teach recognition of disability and the milestones of a child's development.

The aim is the early detection of disabilities and the overcoming of prejudices and traditional beliefs towards disabled people so as to impart a spiritual approach.

Some of this awareness training has been started by Leonard Wanjala who, with Paul Stephens, runs the Bethesda Pool Programme. The training is now being expanded to cover an assessment of each Unit. Jane Dobbs is co-ordinating Community



each day, each child seen weekly or twice weekly for up to 8 visits, with follow up visits about a month later to decide the frequency and number of future visits. Parents and carers are taught how to continue with physio techniques.

The plan is to train 10 -20 Community Health Workers (CHWs) at Village level through each of the Local Units, each Worker having 2 or 3 children to look after. Training began with the workers from Kibingei and Kamukuywa, (units adjacent to HQ) in January this year with weekly seminars on a Tuesday all day for 6 weeks. The first 2 sessions are to be at HQ, where PowerPoint can be used; subsequent sessions will be held in the units, alternating between them, with the children already treated acting as living illustrations!

The transformation of the children's lives is dramatic and life changing for the whole family.

Further teaching programmes include a continuing series of lectures for the staff at DMCC which Sylvia and Alex will give. Parent Support Groups will bring together those who look after children with similar needs for mutual learning and support, and to encourage them to increase awareness among their neighbours about disability and available treatment. There will also be an equipment loan scheme, and local craftsmen will be encouraged to make toys, which can be very helpful in physiotherapy. There is a growing network with other local hospitals, physios and orthopaedic technologists and Occupational Therapists.



Based Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation services; Sylvia, (Mrs Sylvia Chemtai - a fully registered Kenyan physiotherapist who joined the team last June) and a team of trained Community Health Workers will provide physiotherapy techniques and design appropriate aids and appliances which Alex Juma, the orthopaedic technologist, will make in the DMCC workshop. Alex also customises the wheelchairs which have been provided by Wheels for the World. Standing frames or parallel bars to help children learn to walk can be made by parents or local carpenters.

The programme started at Kibingei Local Unit where the Community Health Worker had made appointments for visits to 29 children. Usually 6 children are seen



"God is our refuge and strength, an everpresent help in trouble"

Tatwa in Prison?

Well it was a prison before it became the office of the Mbakalo Local Transformation Unit.

Dominic Soita, the Local Co-ordinator describes how the transformation is developing.

“Mbakalo local transformation unit (LTU) was launched on 9th November 2007 with 1,680 registered members from 45 villages. Since that launch the LTU has developed as the leadership learn, people’s commitment to the process has become clearer and local goals have been set. Also in the community new members have been registered (membership now 2,200) and people are turning to God and away from traditional religion and culture.

Each of the line ministries is actively involved in delivering training to each of the LTU local co-ordinators to be rolled out into the villages via their co-ordinators. The local co-ordinators try to ensure that all the designated volunteers remain active and committed.

Farming: people have now realised that basing their farming on one crop is unwise, as one often cannot achieve the expected yields and this often leads to lack of food.

Relief & Welfare: a needy family has been provided with a two room house with the local people providing wood and the IcFEM Gap volunteer Programme providing expertise, manpower, co-ordination and some construction items.

Ministry to Senior Citizens: the elderly in the community are being supported directly by other members of the community and their own fellowship members.

Retirees: a special meeting has been held to encourage the retirees to become involved in the village fellowships with over 60 attending.



This has happened because people are being met regularly and encouraged. Communication is absolutely essential and this has been made possible because of the motorcycle (piki-piki) which was donated from supporters in the UK. The area is large but the motorcycle speeds travelling to allow more people to be helped and encouraged. The villages are usually about 8 kilometres apart along walking/bicycle tracks impassable to cars. To go round all the villages in the area means travelling some 360 km and despite the fact that the piki-piki does 100km/l (using 300Ksh of fuel as compared to 2000Ksh for a 4WD car) there is great difficulty in meeting fuel costs from the small community subscription.

After the first year the community has become focused and determined to see that the transformation is achieved. May God Bless His work”.

“As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God”

Did you see Matthew Parris’ article in The Times? He says how “secular NGOs, government projects, international aid, education and training alone will not do. In Africa Christianity changes people’s hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation.” He writes about the anxiety that arises from fear of evil spirits, of the unwillingness to take initiative and how “the Christians were always different. Far from having cowed or confined its converts, their faith appeared to have liberated and relaxed them”.

The whole article is well worth reading. It is a great encouragement to have a testimony such as this from a self-declared atheist. If you have access to a computer then log on to:

www.timesonline_co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/matt_hew_parris/article5400568.ece

New building at HQ



A toilet block and a kitchen and dining room which will give the opportunity for people who are working in the various regions to meet together.

Blessings at DEC

Sunday morning worship, prepared and conducted entirely by children between 6 and 14 years – what a joy to witness such a genuine expression of love and worship by the DEC boarders! David & Riitta Goodman are just back from Kimilili, where they spent some time at DEC. The children are just like all children, energetic, mischievous and often messy; but the Sunday service under the caring eye of Pamela, the school chaplain, was unique.

Thanks to the support of Children Alone Trust, as well as our own supporters, DEC has a scholarship fund for very needy but promising children from the local communities. We met most of the children on the scholarship programme and one, Brenda, stands out in particular. Brenda is 12. Both her parents are dead, and she has to live with an aunt who has five children of her own, all under 7. We were taken to the home which is about 2 miles from DEC. Seldom have we seen such abject poverty. They live in a single room mud house, which is falling down – see photo – which has nothing in it except a few cooking pots in one corner, and an old metal bunk bed against one wall. No mattresses, and only a pile of rags on it. Brenda is doing well at DEC, and has now been taken on as a boarder. Pamela told us that Brenda has been pleading to stay in her house during school holidays rather than go to her 'home'.

DEC (Dreamland Education Centre) is IcFEM's primary school. Presently, with the funds available, DEC is able to provide scholarships for about 27 children, depending on how many need to board. The target is to provide for 40, i.e. 5 in each of the 8 classes.



Some of the DEC Scholarship students



Built to last!



For primary schools in Kenya, the government provides the teachers but the community must provide the buildings. These are usually built in the same way as houses, with wooden frame and mud walls. The trade of building is not highly regarded in Kenya. For ten years, IcFEM, in partnership with the Harambee Foundation Holland and the Kimilili Trust in the UK, has been building brick and stone school buildings. This picture shows the lasting quality of their work. You can find a full description of this partnership in the Summer 2006 newsletter.

IcFEM DVD

The new DVD of IcFEM, with an overview of the whole work and a detailed look at five aspects of the Mission's work, is now available from the office.

It is a most useful way of advertising the work of the Mission to a group or to individuals - very informative and full of interest.



Special thanks...

We hope you have enjoyed the new appearance of the newsletter. We are indebted to the generosity of Withington Girls School who are covering the cost of design and printing, and to Elliott Peterken at Charterhouse Advertising for the design. Our grateful thanks to them.

Maize & Beans

No meal is complete in Kenya without ugali which is made from maize – so everyone grows maize, but at present consumption exceeds production by 40%. There are many reasons for this – inaccessibility of quality seeds and fertilizers, poorly timed land preparation and planting, uneconomical use of available land. Small farmers have also been unable to benefit from any surplus to their own requirements because the outside traders have been taking a large proportion of the possible earnings.

To address the anticipated national shortage of the staple foods, the Kenyan Government had to find a way of engaging with small farmers. IcfEM through its Local Transformation Units (LTU's) offered unique access to thousands of such farmers, so on behalf of them it has entered a Memorandum of Understanding with Equity Bank, who make low interest loans in the form of seed and fertilizer to the farmers.

IcfEM's Maize & Beans Project, which is managed by Patrick Biboko, involves signing-up farmers, from all of its 10 LTU's, who will plant one acre or more with beans planted between rows of maize – an efficient use of land as the beans mature first and are harvested, leaving the maize to mature. The seed and fertilizer are bought in bulk from the manufacturers and distributed to the farmers. A facilitator is trained to teach and supervise the preparation of the land, the correct planting, the weeding and the top dressing with fertilizer. The harvested crops are transported to store and Equity Bank undertakes the marketing, obtaining the correct price. When sold, the money is put into each farmer's bank account, less the amount of the loan. IcfEM receives a commission to cover the costs of delivering the project, including the provision of local storage capacity and possible future developments.

Equity Bank is the highest capitalized bank in Kenya. Its loan schemes are tailored to many groups with rates from 8% to the normal 17% (inflation in Kenya is running at 28%). The loan to the farmers in the IcfEM project will be at 10%. The bank does not require a security to be put at risk, but only that the farmers are customers of the bank, and members of an IcfEM Fellowship group.

All the IcfEM staff have been working flat-out since early January, presenting and explaining the project across the present 10 LTU's, and signing-up farmers. David & Riitta Goodman witnessed second or third signing-up sessions in two LTU's, Naitiri and Mautuma. Over 200 were signed-up in each session. The pictures show the queues at Mautuma, and three farmers who had just signed-up. Altogether around 6,000 farmers have already been signed-up, and IcfEM is hoping this may reach 10,000. The timetable is tight as planting must be started by mid-March.



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