

Update on the Diocese of London Lent Appeal 2005 for Health Projects in Southern Africa

The wanton loss of life that accompanies extreme poverty impinges on all of us. Our desire, as Christians, to be present to the suffering body of Christ is real, but finding mechanisms to alleviate this suffering and tackling its root causes can be daunting. In Lent 2005 the Diocese of London worked alongside 5 mission and development agencies who are part of our Diocesan Global Development Group and who have partners in Southern Africa. £75,000 was raised (in a Lent that came soon after the generous response to the tsunami) for the five health related projects that report below. These demonstrate that it is possible for us, as individuals and congregations, to collectively make a difference. In addition the Global Development Group continues to engage in advocacy for structural change such as debt remission, trade justice and corporate social responsibility. In London we have a diocesan Lent Appeal in alternate years: in 2007, led by the Bishop of Willesden, this will focus on the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery and the ongoing issue of human trafficking.

Please accept the thanks of the Diocesan Global Development Group and the Bishop of Stepney, who chaired the 2005 Lent Appeal Working Party, for making such a significant contribution to the health projects featured below. (These pages form a leaflet if printed double-sided on one sheet of A3 - with pages 4 and 1 on one side and pages 2 and 3 on the other, and then folded).

Malawi: £14,000

(USPG)

A big thank you to the Diocese of London

Last year a grant from **the Diocese of London Lent Appeal** helped to make a real difference to the staff and patients at **St Luke's and St Martin's Hospitals in Southern Malawi** by providing funding for vital healthcare programmes.

Every day, despite shortages of staff and resources, this network provides healthcare for the local rural communities. The majority of people it serves are subsistence farmers living in extreme poverty. HIV/AIDS is making matters worse. More than 15% of the population are living with HIV — it is one of the worst affected countries in Southern Africa.

One of the nursing staff at St Luke's Hospital, Mathilda Chiutula, has lost three brothers and a sister to AIDS in the last four years. This tragedy led her to specialise in HIV/AIDS care



and she is now also the co-ordinator for the Anglican Church's HIV/AIDS work in Malawi.

Thanks to donations the hospital has been able to train volunteers from the villages both in counselling and the home care of the sick. This is a truly remarkable and very successful development. Over 100 volunteers have been trained in basic skills to help them visit terminally ill patients in their own homes. The initiative comes from the community and St Luke's Primary Health Care Unit is giving advice, support and training in necessary skills. Each volunteer has responsibility for two or three patients who live not far from them. The aim is to visit once a week to offer encouragement and basic assistance with home care and domestic needs. The hospital is most encouraged to find such enthusiasm and dedication amongst the villagers to address the needs around them.

Mathilda is just one of the dedicated staff at St Luke's that make it such a special place. 'The Christian faith is important to me' she said. 'If you are a Christian, your aim is to help others. At St Luke's we have the spirit of Christianity, which is very important.'

Your donations have helped USPG to provide funding for drugs, equipment and personnel training and has helped to ensure that this crucial health network continues to save the lives of so many people in Southern Malawi.

Thank you for your generous support in 2005.

Zambia: £14,000

(CMS)

A Church plan to combat Zambia's AIDS crisis has snowballed with help from CMS and the London Diocese Lent Appeal. After financial backing from the CMS, an HIV/AIDS desk in the Anglican Church of Zambia has turned into an integrated health programme leading the way for Zambia to control both its AIDS and Malaria problems.

After nine of her well-educated relatives were killed by AIDS, Grace Mazala Phiri dedicated her life to communicating the truth about HIV/AIDS. In 2004 she was appointed National HIV/AIDS Co-ordinator by the Zambia Anglican Council and CMS, after working in community health for most of her nursing career. Under Grace, the Church's HIV/AIDS programme expanded rapidly, with emphasis on what she calls the "real life facts". Clergy and key church leaders have had training on the basic facts of HIV/AIDS and effective methods of raising awareness and caring for people.

A year into the programme, all five dioceses in Zambia have their own health co-ordinator. There are 110 trained home-based carers, and support for over 1,500 vulnerable children as well as a voluntary testing and counseling programme. More and more HIV-positive people are being put on retroviral drugs and with church congregations being openly informed and church members volunteering to educate others, stigma and discrimination is being reduced. Grace is also making sure that the dying and bereaved get appropriate pastoral care.

But the courage of Grace makes the difference for assistant. "This lady used especially about retroviral for the sake of learning, wrote about my brothers suddenly opened up. She access treatment before it telling my story, which had on retroviral drugs and with a assistant has joined a support She has also become a Health Education project.



and others who speak up is what individuals – like Grace's typing to ask me a lot about HIV/AIDS, drugs. I thought she was just asking but after reading an article that I and sister dying of AIDS, she was HIV-positive and wanted help to was too late. She thanked me for prompted and encouraged her." Now much-improved prognosis, Grace's group for people living with HIV/AIDS. voluntary field officer for an HIV/AIDS

Grace is thankful for her training the AIDS co-ordinators, she has been able to access other funds, and the Zambian HIV/AIDS programme has expanded to cover other killer diseases like Malaria and TB. "So many wonderful things have happened that have touched, changed, improved and saved people's lives through the HIV/AIDS programme in the Anglican Church in Zambia." Our Lent Appeal has raised money for CMS seed grants in several countries; Zambia is one example of that.

Malawi: £14,000

(Mothers Union)

Literacy and Development Project in Malawi

The Mothers' Union started this training in three African countries, Malawi, The Sudan and Burundi in 2000. First the countries concerned selected 18 women to train as Literacy Trainers. The training was provided by LABE [Literacy and Adult Basic Education] based in Kampala. The method used is PLA - Participatory Learning and Action - which uses time lines, seasonal calendars, diagrams, drama and games to develop literacy, numeracy and analytical skills using the resources already in the community rather than formal reading matter. The M.U. raised one million pounds in its 125th anniversary year, which paid for the first three years of the project. It was so successful that more money was needed to

continue the programme. The £14,000 raised by the Lent Appeal will help this work to continue in Malawi.

Women who have taken part are so delighted that now they are not cheated in the market place, they can take jobs to help sustain their family and most important of all they can now read the instructions on the medicine prescribed for their children. It must be remembered that "teach a Mother to read, and you educate the whole family" The project is open to all women in the villages. The money raised will go towards paying the Trainers, who are paid as M.U. Workers and share M.U. vehicles.

A big thank you to all those parishes who contributed to the Lent Appeal

Angola: £19,000

(Christian Aid)

The Lent 2005 appeal made a grant of £19,000 to Christian Aid's programme in Angola. This update tells you what is happening at ACJ –it is also a way of saying thank you to the many generous congregations in the diocese, which contributed to this and other programmes last Lent.

ACJ: The partner

The Association of Christian Youth is an Angolan NGO founded in 1990 by ex-members of ACM (the Angolan YMCA). It has been a Christian Aid partner since 1995. ACJ runs health, water, sanitation, education and vocational training projects.

The project

Luanda's slum areas don't have basic sanitation and drainage systems. When it rains, the roads in these areas turn into rivers, and the water just stays there until it dries. There is nowhere for it to run off to. These huge pools of water are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and in the rainy season, malaria is rife. Pregnant women and young children are especially vulnerable.

Angola has one of the highest child mortality rates in the world – more than one in four children die before they reach their fifth birthday. Half of these children die from malaria, making it the main childhood killer.

CA has been funding ACJ's malaria programme since 1995, and their HIV programme since 2002. The malaria programme, having been running for longer, is more developed, but both work along similar lines. Specific activities include:

- 1 Training and supporting volunteers from schools and local communities in malaria and HIV awareness.
- 2 Raising awareness of malaria and HIV among local government representatives.
- 2 Treating and then selling mosquito nets, at heavily discounted prices, from five mobile stalls. The usual price, from a pharmacy, would be \$10. If people buy from ACJ's stalls they only pay 200K for a double bed net or 160K for a single one.

ACJ often set up their stall outside the main maternity hospital, and distribute mosquito nets, free of charge, to pregnant women and to orphans. Other adults have to pay the discounted rate. Awareness is very low and it's important to explain very clearly how to use the nets.

- 3 A theatre group Nzakimuena (meaning 'come and see with your own eyes') that performs in schools, churches, market places, hospitals, bus stops and just in the street, raising awareness of malaria and HIV. Just one performance can get an audience of up to 1,500 people.

Providing five mosquito nets each week to Radio Ecclesia, who do a weekly programme about malaria. Contestants call up and are asked a malaria-related question. If they answer correctly, they win a mosquito net.

Things ACJ would like to do in the future, but doesn't currently have the funds for:

There's a tree called Nem that repels mosquitoes, it's very effective. ACJ would like to start a project of planting one of these trees outside every house. They also want to train teachers and liaise with schools to get malaria and HIV awareness to be a permanent part of the usual curriculum.

Tanzania: £14,000

(Crosslinks)

Berega Hospital, Morogoro, Tanzania

Imagine a 5 hour walk along a dry and dusty path. The sun is beating down. A 3 year old walks alongside his pregnant mother and a 10 month old is strapped to her back. They have a long and arduous walk to Berega hospital for routine vaccinations and for monthly weighing. When they arrive they wait for several hours for their turn. The vaccinations done, and weights plotted on the growth charts, they start the 5 hour walk home again to their village.

This story is now a thing of the past! A few years ago Berega hospital started a community outreach programme. Each of 5 villages is visited every month by a team travelling in a 4-wheel drive vehicle. In each village approximately 200 children are weighed and given routine vaccinations, pregnant mothers examined, a health topic taught, and an evangelist preaches. The team have seen a huge increase in vaccination uptake and better antenatal care now that mothers no longer have to face such long walks to get to the hospital.



The villages are remote and the mud roads bumpy. Sometimes rivers have to be crossed. And in the rainy season the roads become a bath of mud. A 4-wheel drive vehicle is a necessity for this work. The hospital also uses a vehicle for trips to town to purchase building materials, drugs, and other equipment.

The money donated by the London Diocese Lent Appeal is being used towards the purchase of a new 4-wheel drive vehicle for the hospital – a Toyota Prado. This is on order and expected to arrive in Berega by April this year!

Thank you so much for making this possible!

Drs Noj and Mary Northway.

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Development Group & the 2005 Lent Appeal Working Party. February 2006