

CHADIK newsletter number five September 2013

As I sit at the computer writing this update from Kenya, I am still reeling back from the news of the terrorist attack in Nairobi. It was sad enough to hear of the murder of David Parkinson, our security advisor, and the shooting of another man both in Nanyuki, but they pale in comparison with the terrorist attack. At the moment I am praying as you all must be for the safe release of the hostages.

Security in Nanyuki is very much on the mind of the local people so we hope that things will not deteriorate to the detriment of our projects. Whatever happens, we still have to support the children.

As usual I started by recent trip with a visit to Gertrude's Children's Hospital. I met with Carol Muriithi and as well as Gordon Odundo, the CEO, this time. In spite of a very worrying rise in the cost of living due to the new VAT, we are still running within budget. We also discussed our sending over volunteers who, with proper vetting, can be included in the existing programme. With sufficient notice accommodation can be found.

And so to **LISHACG**. We found that the **laboratory** technician had not been paid but luckily the municipal council had provided some of the major equipment we were expecting to pay for so the funds released have been used to pay the salary. The **dispensary** is now free to all patients, under the latest Government edicts, so the opportunity to get in money is reduced. It feels a bit swings and roundabouts at times!! The solar water heating is up and running, to the delight of the staff and new mothers, and I was invited to wash my hands to show how warm it was.

While the **library** is being well used, the librarian is studying for her certificate and only part time. To encourage her further, Chief Joseph is going to arrange for appropriate training in the Nanyuki library to increase efficiency of book handling and security.

The **IT centre** was the big disappointment. There is no publicity around the site to show the presence of the centre and access to the internet in spite of an agreement with the site committee in April that marketing would be done. Nancy is not up to the job and has problems dealing with the users. A radical change was needed so, on

consultation with the Chief and local business people, we decided to put out an advert for a fully experienced person to be employed on a six month contract to set up proper training programmes as well as an energetic marketing programme. CVs were coming in as I left and Chief Joseph will arrange interviews. We may have to pay up to Kes 20.000 per month but at the current 135 Kes/£ it is well within our resources. **NB** I heard today that interviews will be held shortly and the centre may be included in a local network to its benefit.

On the bright side, the solar supply is now sufficient to run the computers 8 hours per day, the room is well protected by the solar detector lights and the old benches have been replaced by chairs (this is Purity, the site Secretary, at work)..

We had a very interesting visit to Mr Wilson, the District Education Officer for the area. Following a long discussion about the **OMEJO nursery school** and the problematic registration, he said that they had not actually registered at all. It was all an attempt by the Chairman to keep control of the school unofficially. He was going to arrange for the Board to meet him at his office last Tuesday and take them through the registration process and, ever optimistically, get them registered as a public school. I hope to hear the outcome before long.

I did actually visit the school again as a “disinterested” visitor and although there 127 children there, there was no money for midmorning porridge and the teacher turnover excessively high. The happy note was the playground equipment in Pete’s corner was extremely popular.

I also visited a Children’s Home run by two delightful Italians from Sardinia on behalf of the Catholic Church. It was a joy to visit happy well fed children aged 4-16 all going to school every day. They love used tennis balls.

Finally an update on the Ag/tech programme. Having had the first proposal from the Mt Kenya Education College rejected by potential employers as being far too academic, I had a meeting with the Chairman and Duncan our project leader. The college appears to have everything we need, land, livestock and classrooms and very keen to cooperate. A new Draft curriculum will be drawn up allowing a type of block release i.e. four days hands on training and one day in the classroom. Potential teachers would be selected from Diploma holders rather than University level.

Once the new term registration is completed, the Chairman hopes to progress this quickly. We still have to check that the college is correctly registered nationally so that the children can get a Certificate of Education in their hands at the end of their training.

When David and Gilly Cowan, who are taking over the IT centre for CHADIK, come over to Nanyuki in November, I am hoping to hold a party for all the people who have helped us so much and give them a chance to meet the Cowans. I am sure one of the first invitations will be to Chief Joseph.

Cristabel. We will not have a real idea of how our joint venture is going until we get the first quarter's figures. However the staff feel encouraged by the interest. We badly need really good quality donations as items are flying off the shelves. **Please can you help!!!**

We hope to have over 50 people at our autumn dinner on October 4th. I cannot thank the owners and Georgie our caterer enough in their help to make a success of the evening.

Thank you to all our helpers

Gillian