Emmanuel Home Newsletter
June 2021

*(formerly **Kanyawegi Children's Home**)*

We have a God who answers prayer…

On the back of each newsletter we include some '**Prayer Pointers'** for those who want to know what best to pray for regarding our work. This month we'll begin by using the Prayer Pointers from January's newsletter as a structure for providing feedback and updates. The bullet points below are the topics for which we asked '***Please pray...'***

- **For the children and young people as they start back at school/college after many months in lockdown.**

We can thank God that children settled well in their schools for 'Term 2' of their 2020 academic year in January this year. Most of them go to boarding schools and we were able to ensure they had all they needed. It must have been quite hard for them to get back into the routines of learning, and as reported before, some of the secondary school children are in classes of 50 or more pupils – so don't perhaps get the individual support and attention children of the same age receive in the UK. At the end of Term 2 (in March) most of the children had progress tests and the results were mixed. A few of them showed improvement from the previous year but overall there was a decline – some of which must be due to the impact lockdown had on learning.



The children wrote letters to the Chairman (Peter Skinner) apologising for their performance and promising to do better. One was particularly honest in saying that he hadn't done well because he was focusing on playing football rather than his studies! Peter wrote individual letters back to each child encouraging them to do their best and to take advantage of all the help and support their teachers are able to give. These letters were greatly appreciated by all the children and the photo on the left shows Catherine with hers. We don't expect the children to be 'top of the class', but we do want them to make the most of their education. We also want them to know that God's view of and love for them is not dependent on their academic excellence!

- **For the Kenyan authorities as they tackle the pandemic. Give thanks that the AstraZeneca vaccine is to be distributed to many developing countries at cost price.**

This is still a matter for prayer, particularly as the latest pandemic news from the Kisumu area of Kenya isn't encouraging. After months of very low numbers of cases (compared with the UK) the 'Delta' variant is now spreading rapidly and the communities and health services etc. are really struggling. New restrictions are being put in place – many relating to the process of dealing with dead bodies. However, the fact that there is now a restriction of 100 attendees at funerals shows how different the situation is in Kenya and how there is still considerable scope for transmission of the virus. We are thankful for the commitment of the G7 nations to donating vaccines and equipment to needy nations, but recognise that such nations are a long way from having the virus under control.

Our own Manager, Linda, had covid a few weeks ago and was quite sick. We thank God that she was able to isolate at home and overcome the infection without the need for admission to hospital.

- **Give thanks for the faithful work for the charity of our Manager, Linda. Please pray she will be able to balance the demands of this work and those of her family and her own new business enterprise.**

Indeed, we do thank God for Linda's faithful work. She has had several significant challenges to deal with relating to our work (particularly with Mercy and Beryl – more on this later), and lockdown has also impacted upon her chicken business. When she set it up last year she was anticipating good demand, especially as each local funeral would require about 40 chickens! However, food can no longer be served at funerals, so Linda has seen a huge drop in demand. Please pray that in time she'll be able to build up her business again, as it will be an important source of income for her.

Linda has responded well to requests from the UK for update information and financial records. Currently she produces a monthly report based on a set of standard headings about the children etc. and she completes a spreadsheet that tracks all expenditure – sending over copies of receipts and bank statements. The Chairman checks all this through and responds with any queries, and this is then followed by a Zoom meeting where matters can be discussed further if necessary. We praise God that communication channels have been so much better in the last 2 years, and the financial records are the best they've ever been.

- **Giving thanks for how God has provided us with the funds from individuals and churches to sustain this work.**

We are so grateful for the ongoing support of individual donors and churches. As most of you know we are not taking on any new orphans so naturally there will be a decline in the number we support over the next few years. Despite the fact that some donors have ceased regular giving we thank God that enough funds are coming in to cover current

needs. We have committed ourselves to 'finishing strong', and so will do all we can to ensure the remaining children and young people are supported well through to the end of their education.

- **That despite the current difficulties our children, young people and adults will still have a real experience of God's love for them.**

Our newsletters often focus on the educational and welfare aspects of our work – primarily because these are matters we are most easily able to gather information about. However, we have always also been concerned with the spiritual health and development of each individual. When all the children were together in the children's home it was more straightforward for the staff to have an idea of the 'faith journey' of each child, but now that the children are in boarding schools and staying with relatives during holidays it's not so easy.



Thankfully, most of the schools we use have a strong Christian ethos, and some encourage church attendance (when that hasn't been restricted by the pandemic). In the Spring our educational expert Lydia purchased on our behalf a range of age-specific devotional materials so that each child and young person could have something to read that was Bible-based and could be applied to their own lives. We pray that these materials will help them understand and experience more of God's love for them.

"Thank You" to all those who have been praying for our work and particularly about the matters listed above. Thank you again to all the individuals and churches who have continued to support our work financially over the last year so that we can make a difference to lives in Kenya!

Other Matters to Report:



Teenage Single Mums:

In January we spoke of one of the girls who sadly had become pregnant during lockdown last year. Subsequently we were informed of another. Mercy had her baby in mid-May (see photo) and both are doing well. However, it is unlikely that Mercy will return to secondary schooling, so in due course we will consider supporting her in some job-based practical training locally to her home in order that she might be able to learn

new skills from which she can earn an income. Beryl was the other girl and she gave birth in June – both she and the baby being quite unwell after the birth. We as a charity will not be taking on additional responsibility for the baby but will want to continue to help Beryl in appropriate ways. In fact, we supplied funds (not available from relatives) to ensure that Beryl could be taken to hospital for a check-up and this led to her having the baby in the hospital environment rather than at home. It's likely that this was a life-saving action. It is anticipated that Beryl will be able to return to secondary school at the end of July and that the baby will be cared for by relatives whilst she is at school.
Please pray for Mercy and Beryl and their babies… they face so many challenges in the coming months and years, particularly as the biological fathers of each baby are unlikely to be involved.

Currency Exchange Rates:
One unanticipated outcome of the covid pandemic is that the British £ to Kenyan Shilling exchange rate moved in a positive direction – so each £ donated in the UK is able to do about 15% more than this time last year!

New Prayer Pointers

Please pray...

- For the children to be able to overcome barriers to learning and absorb what they need to know – particularly as they prepare for their 2020 end-of-year tests in the next few weeks. Please pray that their transition to new classes will go well at the start their 2021 academic year in late July. *(Note: Academic years have been rescheduled because of the covid pandemic.)*
- For the communities in the Kisumu area – that they will implement appropriate strategies and restrictions to gain greater control over the covid 19 virus.
- For Mercy and Beryl and their babies – that they will get the care they need and that the right decisions will be made about future plans for these two mums and their education or training.
- For the 3 older young people in higher education who are due to finish their courses in the next few months.
- That each individual we care for may know the reality and joy of a daily walk of faith with Jesus.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the work of the Charity: Please contact Pete or Gill Skinner, Carino, Old Gore Lane, Emborough, Radstock, Somerset. BA3 4SJ. Telephone: 01761 232337.
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As a result of many of you getting in contact with us about electronic distribution, we are now distributing these newsletters to many supporters by email. *Thank you.*

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