

Living at Bukumbi begins to change

Living in a building which has a leaking roof and is rife with vermin isn't just uncomfortable – it's bad for your health.

And not only for the obvious reasons - if you suffer from leprosy like many of our friends at Bukumbi Care Centre, wounds caused by a lack of sensation in your extremities attract mice and rats at night which feed on them. Because of the lack of any feeling caused by the disease, you don't notice the damage being done as you sleep.

That's why the refurbishment of the living accommodation at Bukumbi Care Centre (BCC) – currently the focal point for our Community Development Programme – isn't just about cosmetic changes and making rooms look nice; it's about an essential change to the conditions people live in to protect their health.

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We started work in earnest in late January. The first block (of a total of 6 at Bukumbi) was selected by the community for renovation. Sijaona block is where the older single men live. Work was overseen by Charles our site manager and carried out by Fulgence, a local workman or fundi and his team, also made up of local people. Despite dramatic increases in the price of building materials, we had sufficient funds to press on thanks to the fundraising of the Easter Team volunteers, the profits from HDC and donations from individuals, businesses and churches in the UK. The roof and ceiling boards were replaced first and immediately changed the environment the men were living in. Window frames and mosquito mesh were next, creating a dry, bug free interior.

The beginning of April saw the arrival of our Easter Team. Sixteen volunteers from the UK were thrown together for two weeks of cleaning, painting, hanging doors and generally finishing off the work inside and outside of Sijaona. One of the volunteers takes up the story:

"On the first morning we split into our work teams and started what now seemed a slightly larger task of cleaning the walls and floors of the block. After 2 days of scrubbing and rinsing, the walls and floors began to look much cleaner. By day 3 we had some paint on the walls and it was amazing how it transformed the rooms, it was a great landmark in the progress. By day 4 we had managed to get a first coat on most of the rooms and the place was looking great.

"Alongside the renovation work we ran a playscheme for the kids, on each of the 6 days more than 100 kids came along for 2 hours of fun and games. The activities included arts and craft, sports, party games and the kids loved it. Many of them had never played these kinds of games before and for some of them it was the first time they had held a pencil or cut with a pair of scissors. This was a great experience for us and seeing the faces of the kids was so rewarding.

"Week two - this was it – the final week and only 3 days of work because on Thursday we were having an official opening so it all had to be done by Wednesday night. So the work teams set to it and did a great job. Monday & Tuesday were chaotic but great fun with fundis (local workmen) and volunteers in every room and every space possible. Whilst the rooms were having final coats of paint added to them, beds were being washed and scrubbed and new doors were being hung - it was crazy but lots of fun. The team were exhausted by the end of the day but so much had been achieved. So Wednesday was all

hands on deck and most of the work got finished by lunchtime, the afternoon was spent doing finishing touches. By the end of the day on Wednesday we had done it!

"Before we welcomed the VIPs into the building we wanted to give it back to the men who lived there, so we gathered them together and thanked them for allowing us to be there and for being so welcoming over the two weeks. As they came into the building it was just amazing to see their smiles and the thanks they gave us, each one sat on their beds and looked so proud to be living here. That was a really special moment for everyone."

The official opening was a great occasion as we handed the building back to the community and the government. As the

VIPS walked through the building there was a real sense of contentment and achievement - this work that had been relatively simple had made such a huge difference to the lives of these 17 men.

Eight weeks after the team arrived

the place is still looking good! The men have taken responsibility for cleaning and alongside the manager we are working with them to provide assistance from the staff at Bukumbi

to maintain the cleanliness. The men are so pleased to have cupboards and somewhere to store their belongings; no longer do they have piles of things next to and under their beds. Each bed has a proper mattress and mosquito nets that are not full of holes.

Bukumbi is most certainly a work in progress, and our role there will last many years. At this stage where there is so much to do and such a long way to go it is a great encouragement that such a big difference has been made for the men of Sijaona block already.

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Work to refurbish the women's block - Wafadhili - is now well underway. However with each block costing almost £8,000 to refurbish and re-equip, keeping the flow of funding into the project is key. The next two years of accommodation refurbishment at Bukumbi will be the most financially intense period of the programme, but absolutely key to the other aspects, and one which makes a huge impact on the quality of life for the community.

Clement Buro is 69 years old and has lived at Bukumbi for the past 29 years:



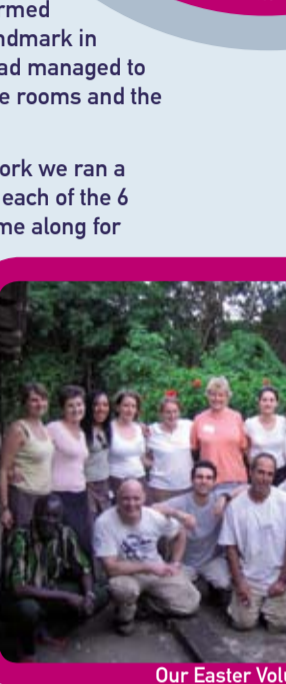
"All the men in Sijaona are sleeping peacefully now, we are happy to have a good house. It's great to have a cupboard with a lock to keep our things safe"

Paulo Kalumbeti is 56 years old and has lived in Sijaona block for 3 months:

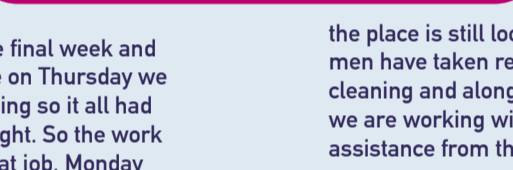


"After the renovation it is like living in heaven! Now I sleep well and have a good life. I have a new family, it is better than I thought I would ever have. It's like Cape Town, no, even London!"

The men of Sijaona Block prepare to enter their home



Our Easter Volunteers



DVP breaks quarter million mark

Over quarter of a million people in Mwanza Region now have access to safe emergency dentistry thanks to our DVP volunteers.

The June DVP team came to Mwanza just a few weeks ago and trained another 6 Rural Clinical Officers (RCO). This team took the total number of RCOs trained in Magu and Misungwi districts to 34, meaning that in the 2 years since it started, the RCO training has resulted in over 250,000 people gaining access to a trained person for emergency oral health care!

Each RCO is responsible for providing basic medical care to a population of at least 7,500 people. Their initial training in emergency oral health care is very limited, resulting in local residents either suffering in silence, travelling several kilometres for treatment or risking horrific injury through DIY or untrained tooth extractions.

The 2006 dental report from Magu district on the impact of the training there so far is very positive. There has been a three fold increase in the total number of patients treated overall, and more than 70% of people are now treated in Rural Health Facilities where the RCOs trained by B2A are based. Prior to the training, no patients at all are recorded as being treated in the rural health facilities. Furthermore, the training has resulted in a reduction of the number of patients being treated in the district hospital, which has eased the burden on this overstretched resource. There has also been a 100% increase in the number of more advanced

dental treatments that the hospital provided.

We hope to be able to increase the size of DVP and the RCO training during 2008. Subject to securing the necessary funding, we anticipate training 30 RCOs during the year, helping us to push on towards our goal of 500,000 people in Mwanza region gaining access to safe emergency oral health care by 2009.

If you would like to donate or volunteer to assist us with expanding RCO training, please either donate online or contact the office.

An easy difference to make

One year on after receiving just £10 from Bridge2Aid, Joseph Lubango tells us that his life has been transformed!

Disabled through Polio, Joseph used to beg on the streets of Mwanza, crawling around in other people's rubbish, his self esteem at its lowest. Through our work alongside Dr Kalluvya with the street community on Sunday evenings we got to know Joseph. We were first able to provide him with a trike to aid mobility, and we then helped him with £10 to buy a cupboard, bench and materials to start his shoe shine and repair business. He now has around 5 customers a day charging them between 2-8p to repair or shine their flip flops or shoes, giving him a steady income of around £2.40 a week which has recently enabled him to buy a bed for £12, and he is now saving up for a mattress.

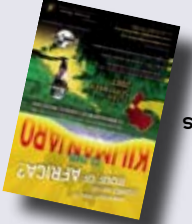
Helping Joseph to start his shoe shine business was about more than just money. Joseph proudly told us that he doesn't have



to beg anymore as he is a businessman. Now when he comes to Mwanza it is to greet his friends or stock up on materials. With enough money to buy food, clothes, soap and other everyday necessities, Joseph says that his family love and respect him as he is able to care for them. He says that he is now a big man in his village, respected by those around him and he tells others about the benefits of starting your own business.

From outcast beggar to business man in just twelve months, that really is a transformation!





Following the success in helping recruit fundraisers for Climb Kill 1 & 2, FMC, who publish Dentistry Magazine, have offered to promote future challenges for BZA. This is a huge support to our fundraising efforts, and we are extremely grateful to Ken Finlayson and the team for their corporate and personal support.

Thank you FMC!

On Friday night Martin and Annette Kelleher hosted a reception to profile our work, and we were delighted that so many people from the profession and trade were there to hear more about Bridge2Aid. The evening was closed by Karl O'Higgins from A-dec (who also hosted us on their stand at the show). We are hopeful that the contacts we made will lead to support that will affect the people we work with in Tanzania.

Ian and Mark were also guests of DVP volunteers Graham and Julie Stokes at the ball to celebrate 30 years of VT on the Thursday night of the conference.

The event was a huge success from a Bridge2Aid point of view. We were grateful for generous donations of new equipment and resources from Velopex, A-dec, Dental Directory, Optident, Minerva, Coltene Whaledent, Ringley Park Dental Practice, FMC & Septodont, to name but a few. Ian and Mark returned to Tanzania recently from the BDA Conference in Harrogate.

BDA Conference Diary

We fully expected the van to be released from customs in early January and so confidently that it did eventually arrive in Mwanza – in early May! To cut a very long story short there were some customs issues which took a while to resolve. Unfortunately, these resulted in unexpected charges which will now delay the start of the schools service as we recover the funds over the next three months. However – the autumn will see the van on the road 2-3 days a week in schools, orphanages and AIDS outreach projects. The

Reports of the arrival of the dental transit van in the winter newsletter turned out to be somewhat premature!



community work has continued on a smaller scale in the meantime with regular visits to various children's facilities in the area. More news on this in the autumn.

Schools Dental service a step closer

"I visited Bridge2Aid's base in Mwanza in October 2006 to work in their dental clinic – Hope Dental Centre – and having seen their work first hand, returned to the UK determined to help out in whatever way I could. There was a need to provide some new equipment in Hope Dental Centre that could be used for more complex treatments which generate good income for BZA and are a great boost to what they are able to achieve through those funds. I approached Minerva and Coltene with my shopping list and they were only too pleased to sell me the equipment at

Pictured with Mark & Ian are Dr Jill Nightingale with Cliff Franks, Sales and Marketing Director for Minerva, and Steve Mallinson and Germa Thompson from Coltene Whaledent.



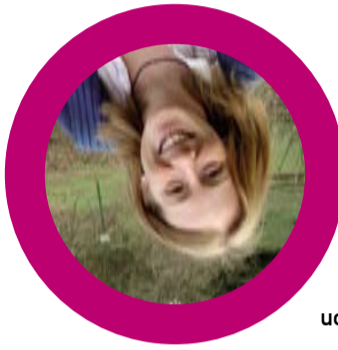
The new equipment has now arrived in Mwanza and will be put to good use by Ian and the other visiting locum dentists. Pictured with Mark & Ian are Dr Jill Nightingale with Cliff Franks, Sales and Marketing Director for Minerva, and Steve Mallinson and Germa Thompson from Coltene Whaledent.

We were delighted that Ringley Park Dental Practice in Reigate combined forces with two dental supply companies to support us with a donation of equipment at the BDA Conference. The donation was made possible by one of the Ringley Park partners, Dr Jill Nightingale:

Companies Combine to help BZA



We have received permission from the District Education Officer to operate an education programme for the Bukumbi children. We've recruited a co-ordinator to oversee the first



two years of the programme, which will initially consist of a research project before an intervention strategy is planned during 2008. Fay McNamara will co-ordinate the new project. Fay is a teacher currently working in Mwanza and has previous development experience in South Africa.

New programme for the autumn

September will see the start of another exciting programme at Bukumbi!

More information on this to follow in the autumn newsletter.

Team Profile

Charles Lugwisha: General Assistant

Born into a family whose service in the church went back many years, it was no surprise that Charles Lugwisha became a central figure in the music department of Kirumba Valley Christian Centre. His gift of singing and playing keyboards is appreciated in this prolific church of which his late father and now his elder brother, Pastor Geoffrey Lugwisha, serve in the role of pastor. He has assisted

Bridge2Aid with all sorts of work ranging from mechanics and negotiations with Government offices to supervising the recent building renovations at

Bukumbi Care Centre. He played a key role recently by driving the mobile dental van from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza, a distance of 800km over pot-holed Tanzanian roads without a single puncture!

He says of the role of Bridge2Aid at Bukumbi Care Centre: "Comparing the community when I first visited in 2004 to now, it is as if their minds are changing, they are starting to believe in themselves again."



Charles Lugwisha

Who are we?

Bridge2Aid is a UK registered charity operating dental and community development programmes in North West Tanzania. Our community development programme works with the disabled, People Affected by Leprosy (PAL) and the elderly street people of the region – both in Mwanza city and at a disability care centre, Bukumbi.

Our dental work helps build the capacity of the Tanzanian health care services through dental training. We operate a dental centre in Mwanza which donates its profits to our work and provides free and subsidised treatment to those in need. If you would like to receive the free newsletter regularly, either:

- Contact the office - 0114 232 6030
- Visit the website - bridge2aid.org
- Email - rob@bridge2aid.org



Bridge2Aid • PO Box 4173 • Sheffield • S6 9BW • Tel: +44 (0) 114 232 6030
www.bridge2aid.org • enquiries@bridge2aid.org
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Bridge2Aid News



Inside this issue:

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www.bridge2aid.org