



MPC

Monthly Newsletter

February 2020

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Mukuru Promotion Centre **NEWSLETTER**

Empowerment Step by Step

INSIDE:

Education	3
Sponsorship	5
St Michael's Secondary	7
Social and Health Services	8
MPC Clinic	12
Songa Mbele	14
MPC Rehabilitation Centre	16
Vocational Training	20
Happenings	23

From the Director

Dear Friends

I find the poverty in slums is growing steadily. Climate change is a factor due to the long heavy rains we had in November and December which caused a shortage of harvest due to lack of sunshine and rotting of produce in flooded fields. It is usually hot and dry during December and a time when most people go back to the rural area, help in the harvest and celebrate Christmas with grandparents. Many slum dwellers earn their living through hawking vegetables and fruit, but when the price is too high, buyers are few and profit is less. The rehabilitation of Likoni Road started about 8 years ago but was never really completed. An overhead bridge is under construction for the past few years and not yet complete. These road works cause very big jams. Industries cannot conduct their business well so relocate or close, leaving thousands without employment, which has huge impact on us and on our students.

We had a visit from Noreen Walsh and two friends, Mary and Kelly, who had collected funds to enable us settle some of the toilet problems in Bakhita and St Michael's and to join the Irish Guards (an Garda Siochana) in building and furnishing a playground for children living with disabilities. We expected that to be complete by now. Unexpected rain caused delays. We are grateful for the three US visitors and to their friends for supporting them.

I was in the dock in court and cross examined over the St Catherine's land case, which had been going on since 2007. Two more witnesses have to be heard before the completion of the case and the judgement. We pray the school retains the land which is badly needed for secondary school/technical and job training. BA crew, some supported by family and friends, continue to bring clothes and useful items for education and our skill training. It takes an effort for them to collect the items, store them, haul cases on the underground, or by trains or carry them in and out of cars and to check in. We appreciate very much all that they do. Without them we would not be able to give flood victims a change of clothes and household goods.

Our rehabilitation centre had a government inspection for renewal of registration. The new boys from the streets are slowly settling in and becoming less wild. The change from street life to begin education and training is very hard. Some give up after a few days and return to the streets. The boy needs to have a determination to change in order to succeed. They need a

lot of patience and encouragement and to have many activities they enjoy as well as the difficult task of learning to read and write.

We had the visit of John McCarrick and Group for the opening of tenders and choosing of contractor together with the Kenyan professionals involved in the proposed building in Songa Mbele. We need to strongly promote speaking of English and a reading culture in all centres and schools. All of the exams except Kiswahili are conducted in English. We continue to try to solve the issues regarding St Marian's Children Home, a local home whose services we need, in cooperation with the Childrens' Department.

Thank you, all of you, for your prayers, support and good wishes,

Sr Mary Killeen



Kelly, Sr Mary, Noreen and Mary in Mukuru helping to "Bridge the Gap with Hope"

Education

The school enrolment continued throughout the month of February. The pupil / teacher ratio unfortunately is still too high with an average of 1:68. With the high ratio it has been difficult to achieve some of the aims and objectives set in the new competency-based curriculum. MPC supports the schools with 22 extra teaching and non-teaching staff. The County provides for an extra teacher per school while the parents association supplements St Catherine's with 3 and St Bakhita with 1 teacher.

MPC Schools and TSC Teacher Ratio

School	No. of TSC Teachers	No. of Teachers out of school due to ill health	Total TSC Teachers Available in School	School Enrolment as at the end of February	Pupil /Teacher Ratio
St. Bakhita	16	1	15	972	1:65
St. Catherine	20	2	18	1,211	1:67
St. Elizabeth	27	0	27	1,885	1:70
Sancta Maria Mukuru Kayaba	24	0	24	1,733	1:72
Totals	87	3	84	5,801	

The over enrolments in the schools are putting the pupil at risk. During the month there was a terrible stampede case in Kakamega County where 14 pupils died and 39 were seriously injured as they rushed down the stairs. The numbers we have are beyond the capacity of the schools. Some of the children will need to be transferred to other schools for safety reasons. The increased enrolments have greatly stretched the space available. The ramp at Sancta Maria Mukuru has become weak and will need to be repaired. We have been reassured by KfW Development Corporation Bank (German) who provided the permanent school structure that the matter will be investigated. Maintenance will become a bigger issue.



The school walkway requires immediate attention.



Children cannot use the walkway for safety reasons.

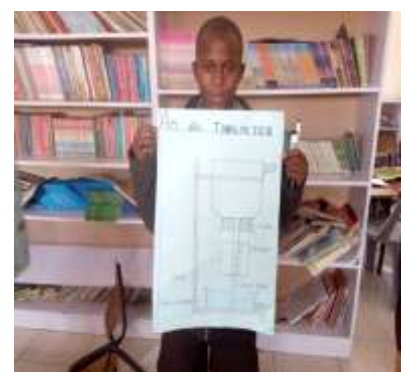
The heavy rains continued to cause us repairs and maintenance issues. Part of the wall at St Elizabeth fell into the river. Temporary measures were put in place with old iron sheets to shield the school from outside interference. We are waiting for the County authorities to resolve the problem as the road construction is creating backwash problems in the river.

The year 2020 started with a lot of difficulties in some schools regarding payment of water and electricity. St. Bakhita had their water disconnected during the month while Sancta Maria Mukuru owes Nairobi Water and Sewerage about Ksh. 200,000 (\$2,000). High bills on electricity are also a major problem which has led to disconnection of power from the schools. With co-sponsored schools, the responsibility of operational costs lies with Government. The budgeted figure for the primary schools is grossly underestimated. Many parents still struggle to pay ksh 500 (\$5) for firewood. Unfortunately, it causes a problem for the schools since part of this money is used to pay non-teaching staff salaries and even PTA teachers. We continued to lobby the Government.

We mentioned before about the importance of reading in English as the examination papers are all in English. To improve the academic results of the pupils we need to develop a good reading culture in the schools. The Head Teachers are implementing the read culture and have put in new measures to utilize the libraries better. New arrangements will provide a more conducive environment to achieve a love of reading as well as introducing language speaking in the schools.

The celebration of Masses in our schools has been well supported by Our Lady of Queen of Peace and St. Mary's parishes. All MPC schools have Mass schedules and the parishes are supporting the needs of the schools concerning Masses.

We are grateful to the Kenyan Child Foundation who provided funds to purchase supplementary textbooks on various subjects for the schools as well as learning materials with a focus on the new curriculum. Parents had been requested to buy some of the learning materials though this has been difficult with the current poverty situation in the families. The learning materials are already in the schools and are in good use.



Sponsorship

Sponsorship office is always following up on the pupils and students across the country. The most important activity was to ensure that all the students were in schools and settled.

Sponsorships for 2020

Education Level	Male	Female	Number
Primary Mainstream	51	32	83
Secondary Mainstream	77	36	113
Vocational Training Mainstream	2	2	4
Tertiary	2	8	10
Special Needs	35	27	62
Total	167	105	272

The numbers are subject to change with continued support. There are plenty of students who certainly would benefit with some support.



Milka, Kennedy, Sharon, Stellah, Shadrack, Joan and Robert.

MPC Alumni members, Robert and Milka take time to talk to their sponsored students from St Michael's. The group also offer mentorship sessions to the students with regular visits to the school.

Students (right) receive donations of revision books and uniforms from their sponsors.



Already to go now!

We conduct our follow ups on previous secondary and tertiary sponsored students. It is good to be able to give our sponsors ‘where are they now’ snippets. Some have graduated and attained jobs that are sustaining them. Others are still looking for jobs and are happy they managed to get a formal certificate. The Form Four students are still in the pursuit of transitioning to various tertiary levels. There were 13 of them who could progress to university.



Belinda at her graduation ceremony

One of our success stories is Belinda. A MPC beneficiary who graduated in 2018 with a Diploma in Accounting. She is very happy and appreciative of the support she received. The smile tells the story, a dream come true. We wish her well in the job market.

The end of February marks the half-way mark for term one. The students are more aware of the school's expectations and life is a little more familiar and regular. So far this term there has been the Opening and Mid-term exams. The results will help our students to appreciate where they are positioned on the academic scale and to see how effective their efforts are. With our parent meetings and support from the social workers and other MPC staff we hope that the students can appreciate how many people want them to succeed.

St Michael's Enrolment For 2020

Class	Faction / House	Girls	Boys	Total
Form 1	North	18	16	34
	South	14	16	30
				64
Form 2	North	13	25	38
	South	16	26	42
				80
Form 3	North	18	24	42
	South	19	26	45
	East	21	25	46
				133
Form 4	North	15	36	51
	South	21	30	51
				102
Total		160	219	379

With the enrolment numbers not at full capacity we hope that this will result in higher marks and learnings for the students.

One big disadvantage for our students is that many of them come to school hungry. It is difficult for them to wait until 1pm to receive a plate of Githeri. We are trying to find ways to help those who only receive one meal a day such as a porridge supplement.

The newly recruited Macheo Students in Form 2 were placed into study groups. This program is sponsored by Strathmore University in Nairobi. The first group completed Form 4 in 2019 and performed really well. The new group met for the first time in February. Each Macheo student will lead a study group at St Michael's and will share their learnings with others from the Macheo sessions they attend.

*Form Two St Michael's student start the Macheo Program
Sponsored by Strathmore University.*



Social and Health Services

The buzz in the Social and Health Services department is always lively. The month was characterized with lots of meetings and undertakings. The network meetings included the Mater Hospital Comprehensive Care Unit, the Childrens' Office Starehe Sub-County, Director of Criminal Investigation Child Protection Unit, Songa Mbele na Masomo as well as the Alfajiri Centre who assisted in the recruitment of the Street Boys for the Rehab Centre. We had over 2,400 contacts during the month and this does not count the other daily enquiries, emails or telephone calls made. Further medical activities are reported under the Clinic. Our social workers are kept busy during the week. It would be ideal if we could employ more staff to assist with the demands. Like all situations, we need to prioritize.

February Activities

Case Type (Activity)	Number of Clients
Home Visits	96
Abuse Cases	11
Amaranth Client (Nutritional Supplements HIV/AIDS)	79
Nutritional Support	119
Malnourished Babies	17
Transition	563
Disaster Victims	8
Absenteeism	226
Moral Formation Talks	226
Counselling	51
Recruitment	56
Child Data for cases	3
Mobilization for Equity Bank Loans	305
Class 8 Assessments	275
Medical Cases	76
Needy Family Assistance	295
Total Clients Served	2,406

After the first month of schooling it was important to remind the pupils and students that we have a Child Protection and Safeguarding Office. Sr Lilian coordinates the office and is assisted by the 12 MPC social workers. The office ensured that the parents and staff were made aware of its presence and informed them on the trainings available and measures to take if they become aware of any cases. The primary pupils were presented talks on Human Trafficking to sensitize them and what measures should be taken to safeguard themselves and others in their communities.

In collaboration with Hope Worldwide, our pupils in Classes 6, 7 and 8 at St Bakhita attended sessions on Child Sexual Abuse, Benefits of healthy life choices, Self-Awareness, HIV AIDS and STIs. It seems confronting for children to learn about such topics, but it is so necessary given the nature of life in the slums. Unfortunately, the reported cases are increasing.



Lorraine and Std 7 Class session

The statistics of teenage pregnancies and motherhood rates in Kenya stand at 18%. The causes identified vary from poverty, peer pressure, rape, broken families, to social practices that encourage teens to be on their own, and a lack of education from parents and teachers. The World Youth Alliance has created the new Human Dignity Curriculum which will help the office on how to deliver the program to students at MPC schools.



Participants at Human Dignity Curriculum training workshop at St Catherine's

Some of the training sessions involved the basic laws in relation to safeguarding and rights of children, as well as the case management principles and steps of case management. MPC's undertaking on safeguarding and protection is considerable given the thousands of children we have in our care each day and in slums, children have a lesser voice, due to the poverty and corruption. The best way to empower them is through constant awareness raising and to provide a safe place to go. One initiative is to create Safeguarding clubs. In February alone, there were 6 reported cases of abuse, one case of early marriage and one case of negligence.

We are grateful to the Conrad Hilton Foundation for providing the funds to create the Safeguarding Office at MPC. The CitiesRise group provided funding to create extra the counselling rooms at the school. The Masters level university counsellors on placement are a great help to MPC.



A motivational talk in St. Bakhita



Class 8 Home visit



During a home visit assessment. Mother receives food parcel and clothes support.



Students from St Catherine and Sancta Maria Kayaba uniforms and writing materials.



A mother receives nutritional support



The new counselling offices



The art work was completed by the art students under Andrew's guidance.

MPC Clinic

The month has been busy with quite a number of things taking place in the Clinic. There has been a smooth running of the facility and a good flow of patients. Service delivery has been commendable as a result of good teamwork and the assistance from Dr Monica from Slovakia and Dr Nina from East Timor.

The Ministry of Health officials conducted their quarterly monitoring and evaluation visit, happy to report that the Clinic received a satisfactory and positive score including the Mother Child Wellness and TB programs at the Clinic. Our nurses attended the scheduled meetings that looked at the effective vaccine management (EVM). We were given set targets to achieve by the end of the year. The annual supervision by WHO will be conducted in April.



The Clinic had a 'vision' camp sponsored by 'Dot Glasses' for a few days which meant that we could test pupils' eyes and determine who needed glasses. We were fortunate to have 3 American visitors, Noreen, Mary and Kelly who helped out with the coordination. Over 100 clients were tested with 60 of them requiring glasses. This will make a big impact in their learning at school. Our visitors also helped with donations of supplies for the

Clinic.

As the recruitment program continues at the Rehabilitation Centre the Clinic continues to offer them full medical check-up and giving treatment where needed. There are no alarming diseases only the usual conditions associated with living in dens and on the streets.

The equipment that we have has a finite life. Chemoquip Ltd, where we get our laboratory equipment serviced, provided us with a new haemoglobin machine without charge. We are very grateful as the laboratory work at the Clinic is increasing.

The Mother Child Health statistics for the month were antenatal mothers 65 and immunized children 45. This is a good result for the vaccinations. We are returning to satisfactory levels. The number of laboratory tests continues to increase. There were 636 tests completed and the top numbered ones are listed below.



Mary takes a closer look

	Highest Laboratory Tests for February	No. of Tests
1	Stool for ova and cyst	151
2	Full Haemogram	122
3	Urinalysis	116
4	Malaria test	108
5	H. Pylori	33

Patients Treated in February

Category	Gender	Under 5	6-13yrs	Above 13	Total
New Cases	Male	88	42	140	270
	Female	120	48	234	402
		208	90	374	672
Revisits	Male	131	43	128	302
	Female	120	36	234	390
		251	79	362	692
Total February		459	169	738	1,364

Most Common Treated Diseases in February

Disease	No. of Cases
Acute Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	433
Respiratory Tract Infection	87
Urinary Tract Infection	176
Gastroenteritis	248
Abdominal pregnancy	41
Hypertension / Diabetes	27
Fever	75
Gastritis / PUD	55
Neuralgia and Neuritis unspecified	45
Allergies Unspecified	34
Other Diseases	429
Total	1,650



My vision? Great!



Songa Mbele na Masomo

The Centre returned to normal during February as the many children who were caught up the 'Up-country' phase, when families retreat to their ancestral lands for a period of time to be with the extended family, returned. It usually takes a few weeks for the schools and Centres like ours to settle down and start normal operations. Our planned activities for the month went on well.

The other major happening at Songa Mbele is the development of the new facility. The new multi-storey construction will have classrooms, dining room, specialised therapy rooms as well as a sensory room. The new building is sponsored by The Kenyan Child Foundation, a group from Ireland. The project will take around 40 weeks to complete and we hope to commence in March this year.



John and Ciara McCarrick and Helen and Gerard Kelly



Given the new construction we needed to look at how we could maximise the playground space for the children in wheelchairs. The Garda Third World Fund provided the funds for leveling the other end of the property. The first part of this project is to remove the rubble that was left previously when we had sea containers as offices. Once anyone starts digging anywhere they end finding things that they weren't banking on. This part of the exercise took a little longer than expected. Eventually the ground was then cleared of all undesirables to make way for a new level. This was a big job as the area was quite uneven with a lot of debris around. Once this is level, then we can start on the wheelchair friendly circuit to provide some outdoor activities for the children, culminating with a new playground, equipped with swings, slides and climbing frames.





We had our visitors, Noreen, Mary and Kelly, help out with the feeding and learning programs for during the month.



At Songa Mbele we don't have any wheelchair friendly toilets so Cheshire Disability Society of Kenya and Liliane Fonds will be providing the necessary funds for this project. It will make a huge difference for staff and children.

Preparing the foundations for the disabled toilet

As usual supporters resumed their activities during the month. Star Kids Initiative continued with their mentorship sessions and fund activities. Other local groups visited the centre as part of their community service.



The most challenging month of the year for us is February as we have to juggle a number of activities at the same time and give equal attention to each of them.

We have boys trying to secure apprenticeships after their program; recruitment of the 2020 group, medical, sponsorship and school follow-ups. There is the constant issue of birth certificates and registration at the different government agencies. All of these exercises take time and human effort.

Mary Immaculate Rehabilitation Centre Enrolments

Institution	Education Level	Number
MIRC – Year 1	PP1(1); Std 1 (4); Std 2 (4); Std 3 (3); and Std 4 (4).	16
MIRC – Year 2	Std 5 (5); Std 6 (3); Std 7 (7).	15
MIRC - Carpentry	Grade III (7) and Grade II (2)	9
St Catherine's Primary	Std 3(1); Std 4 (1); Std 6(2); Std 8 (5).	9
St Peter's Embu	Std 8 (2)	2
St Michael's Secondary	Form 3 (1)	1
Mangu Boys High	Form 3 (1)	1
Mbaikino Highschool	Form 1 (1)	1
Mururia Highschool	Form 1 (1)	1
Total		55

The recruitment process started in early February with the social services staff taking to the streets (bases) to follow up on those who were identified during the street visits in January.

Transition is difficult at the best of times, but for some of the boys the initial period is tough for them as they are used to making their own decisions when they want, how they want it. The structured routine is okay for a couple of days then it becomes too hard for them. For the majority it is no more than confining for a while when they realise the potential for them. Apart from a few challenges the 2020 recruitment has been successful. The process is still on-going as we have a set target of 70 boys including the ones who are in school.



On the streets during recruitment

The MIRC Centre's registration renewal was finally given a green light after two years of being on hold. The big hold up was due to the staff changes after the 2017 National Elections when some government departments needed presidential approval. The required documents for this process were given out to the Sub County Children Officer. Nine government officers from Child Protection, Health sector, Administrative Police, Chief's office, 2 Sub-County Children's officers came and inspected the Centre. The Sub-County Children's officer will review the documents and forward them to the National Council for Childrens' Services.



Peris, facilitates the government officials



Government officials inspect the centre

Two years ago a sponsor, while waiting to catch a plane, was reading an article about the advantages of 'tablet kits' and thought this would be good for the boys at MIRC. It has been an extraordinary journey with all sorts of issues crossing three countries. Sadly, a local company couldn't deliver the goods but luckily for us, a Spanish company, was producing similar kits. Since 2019 we have been negotiating their arrival. Happily to report that the long awaited Pro Futuro tablets arrived at the Centre. We are grateful to Pro Futuro Spain for their generous donation of the equipment (40 tablets, server, laptop, data projector) and Clare Chambers and the parishioners of Calary Parish, Co. Wicklow for making it possible by

contributing to all the customs duties and excises. The boys are eagerly waiting to use the tablets as soon as the staff members have been trained. Michael and Tobias from Don Bosco Centre will provide staff training on Tuesdays. The tablets will certainly make the boys learning more interesting and be tailored for each boy to progress at their own levels of ability. This will be a game changer for the boys. The best thing about the Pro Futuro kit is that its self-contained. It won't work on any other network. Curricula can be loaded at anytime and the teacher can see what each boy is doing from the laptop! Great! Teachers don't have to have eyes in the back of their heads!



Tobias introducing Pro Futuro to staff members

The social workers from MPC came and talked to the boys about sexual abuse and what actions to take in cases of such incidences.



Our American visitors were busy in February as they also spent time with the boys at the Rehab Centre. The boys taught them how to make chapatis (pancakes). Later, Mary, Kelly and Noreen provided a feast for them: fried chicken, chips and a soda.



It's all in the kneading!



Boys thoroughly enjoyed the feast!

Our numbers at the Centre continue to increase and have had to stop enrolments in the Computer Studies, Catering and Hairdressing courses.

The other courses are progressing well though numbers are a little lower. However, we are hopeful that the new month will bring changes.

Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre 2020 Enrolments

Course Title	Course Duration	Enrolments	Examining Body
Computer Studies	3 months	43	Internal
Catering	1 Year	33	NITA
Garment Making	1 Year	14	NITA
Hairdressing & Beauty	1 Year	37	NITA
Plumbing & Masonry	1 Year	14	NITA
Art & Craft	1 Year	7	NITA
Dee-jaying	5 Months	12	Internal
Front Office Housekeeping/Laundry	1 Year	8	KNEC
Total		168	

For youth with disabilities access to good quality education with the necessary support helps ensure that they are prepared well for life. Justin Nyachiro, a Special Needs student took a course in dressmaking at our Centre in 2018 and graduated in March 2019. It has not been easy for him after his graduation. Unfortunately, he was knocked down by a car and left with further injuries. MPC gave him the hand sewing machine he was using when he was a student in order to start making garments again for sale. He also received some material (fabric) for his use. We are happy that he will be able to support himself.



Justin wastes no time in making some garments

Kenya Wine Agency has continued to uplift the lives of our 2019 Catering students. They have partnered with several hotels within Nairobi where three students have benefited. They have also picked up a discussion on attachment for the remaining students and possible retention with PERAK (Pubs Entertainment and Restaurant Association of Kenya). Perak has also requested for a list of best performing students for consideration in the event of any openings. We thank KWAL especially Sharon Okoth for working hard to change the lives of our students.

The Catering practicals are on top-notch. The catering course is the most expensive to run but practicals are critical for the students. The students spend hours preparing menus and to see what they look like in reality is good for motivation. The students have also experienced preparing outside events.



Preparing the meals



Catering Instructor, Evelyn



Settling the Tables for the patrons

Dee-Jay Class

The Dee-Jay instructor took to the field to advertise the course. The places the students visited include Kayaba, Kisii Village and Fuata Nyayo. As a result, three students have enrolled. Going out for field work provided a good exposure for our current students thus boosting their self-esteem and confidence. The class has been taking part in corporate shows organized by Big Ted (ACAIC) and Kenya Wine Agency Limited (KWAL) sponsorship last year. The shows have made a great impact to the students. They have given them a greater picture on how the world of professional Deejays looks like. The students have learnt how to organize events and most of them have been able to earn money through taking part in events organized by various groups.



Dee-jay students preparing for an event



Dee-jay students on an advertising mission

Happenings

...



Chicken Coup



Glasses are cool!



Counselling rooms

Mukuru Promotion Centre

Empowerment Step by Step

Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy

www.mercymukuru.co.ke

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Thank you for your support to improve the quality of life for thousands of children, youth and seniors each day.