

# MPC



**Monthly Newsletter**

November 2019

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## *Mukuru Promotion Centre* **NEWSLETTER**

*Empowerment Step by Step*

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*From the Director*

Dear Friends

It was great to have Paula Cullen and Irene Plunkett back to continue with their work in the rehabilitation of street boys and through their own efforts and that of their friends and supporters, improve the infrastructure and resources of the Centre. Their friends Stephen and Adrienne Keely, visiting for the first time, helped them with some of their tasks. The Keelys, David Rice and group who support a project upcountry, also visited some of the MPC sites. Dr Wolfgang Boehm, who has had long experience in working in development, spent two weeks with us. His presence, discussions and reflections are very helpful. Daniel and Lucia of eRko visited Songa Mbele, which their organisation has supported for some time. John and Sinead Slattery managed to visit also and see some of the projects where they, through Africa Direct, assisted.

Representatives of parents from the four primary schools presented their concerns over the toilets in the schools, the water challenges, the cost of the new curriculum introduced by the Government which has now reached Standard Three pupils and will be introduced in Standard Four in 2020. Eleven pages of input on each child in Standard Three had to be sent by mail to the Ministry of Education. The schools found the cost of the paper, ink and materials needed, higher than what Mukuru parents can afford. They also presented the need for each school to have a computer lab so that the children can be introduced to computers, and teachers can use them for their lessons. In order to deal with these concerns, it is necessary to lobby the Government and private sector to enable the children of the slums, access primary education on a par with other Kenyan children.

We have worked very hard to improve the quality of the secondary education in St. Michael's through improvement in quality of staff and ensuring availability of textbooks and resources for teaching. Four of our staff went on a three week visit to Austria to assist in awareness raising and informing the youth and children of the work going on in MPC. Three of the travellers only got their visas a few days before travelling, so they were very anxious. We are most grateful to the Austrian Ambassador for his help in obtaining the visas.

I had a visit from a former parent of St Catherine's, who lived in absolute poverty in Mukuru slums around 2005. He, his wife and five children, struggled to get enough to eat, pay rent and send the children to school when he lost his job in a company that closed. He haunted me for help. Eventually I asked him for his qualifications and documents. I sent him to Strathmore College and asked them to tell me what he could do to be employable. They suggested that he do two computer packages. He already had accounting qualifications section two but had not completed CPA. After he completed the two computer packages, which were paid for by one of you, he got employed by the Government. Now some of these children are in university, the younger ones in good secondary schools, while he completed his CPA, did a finance degree and is working as an auditor with Kajiado County. A little help can go a very long way!

May you be blessed for the great difference you make in many lives!

*Sr Mary Killeen*

## Sponsorship

Being a holiday month for most students in secondary and primary schools, community service progressed on well. The majority of students got in early and completed their services in the first and second week upon closing school, as they anticipated to travel soon for December festivities to upcountry.

Both the KCPE (Kenya Certificate Primary Education) and KCSE (Kenya Certificate Secondary Education) examinations phases were marked with utmost calmness, no disruptions whatsoever were experienced as the students sat for their examinations. Under the 2019 sponsorship programme: 15 Form Four candidates sat for the KCSE exams while 22 Standard Eight candidates sat for KCPE; 1 from Bridge International School; 7 from Saints Peter and Paul School; 14 from St. Catherine Primary School and 1 from St. Bakhita Primary.

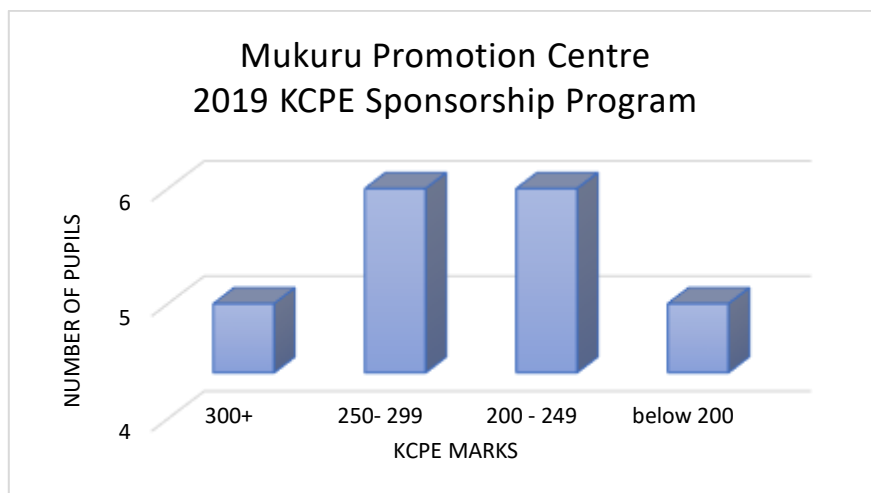
Saints Peter and Paul School Embu had 6 boys who completed their KCPE ranging from 259 to 374.

St Catherine's Primary School had 14 pupils completed their KCPE ranging from 151 to 335 and one pupil from St Bakhita who received 193 marks. We are very grateful for the sponsors from Australia and England who have provided an opportunity for the pupils to get an education and progress to secondary school or skills training.

The Standard Eight students who were earlier assessed for sponsorship, were invited to the Head Office to collect the Sponsorship Application Forms; this is a requirement as per the basic criteria for the sponsorship program. Each candidate will be required to fill in the form and return it by mid-December together with other documents such as birth certificates, KCPE result slip, recommendation letter as well as Primary School Leaving Certificate.

Reports will be sent out over the next 6 weeks to update the Sponsors on the progress of their respective beneficiaries in addition to appreciating the valuable support received from them. The processes have gone smoothly, and the students carried out the community service well, report forms were received on time, and their performance had slightly improved.

MPC had 258 pupils who achieved over 250 from the 4 schools. Of the 22 primary sponsored students who were sitting their KCPE, we had the following results:



## Education

The primary school pupils were on holidays for the month of November. The Standard 8 pupils who completed their KCPE are the ones waiting for the news on how they went and if they will be given a position in one of the National Government schools.

Others will try for sponsorships through banks and other corporations. Those who scored more than 350 marks will be well placed to secure a sponsorship. However, the bulk of students who scored below 300 will find it difficult.

The secondary Form 4 students sat their KCSE national examinations, started on the 4<sup>th</sup> November with English and finished on 22<sup>nd</sup> November with Physics Practicals. Some subjects had one paper, others had three papers to complete. Most of the examinations were 2 hours duration.

At St Michael's we had 108 candidates registered for KCSE exams:

Compulsory subjects:

	Papers				Candidates
English and Literature	PP1	and	PP2	PP3	108
Maths	PP1	and	PP2		108
Chemistry	PP1	and	PP2		108
<i>Chemistry Practical</i>					108
Kiswahili	PP1	and	PP2	PP3	108
Christian Religious Education	PP1	PP2			108

Options:

Biology	PP1		PP2		79
<i>Biology Practical</i>					79
Physics	PP1		PP2		29
Agriculture	PP1		PP2		23
Business Studies	PP1		PP2		86
History	PP1		PP2		69
Geography	PP1		PP2		39

November gave us the time to conduct teacher interviews as there is always movement at the end of an academic year. Teachers Service Commission has announced that they will commission "interns" to schools due to the inefficient numbers of qualified teaching staff across the country. This will cause further disruption to our teaching staff during the year. We hope to receive good quality candidates who are committed to helping our clientele at St Michael's.

## Environment

On the environmental front there has been numerous activities across the different sites. Thanks to the generous contribution from Kenya Revenue Authority, our Environmental Office embarked on a project to plant over 1,500 trees at the Head Office, St. Catherine and St. Elizabeth Schools. The donation is part of the Government directive to plant trees in Kenya and restore the tree cover to 10%. The varieties donated included Bamboo, Mango, Avocado, Orange, Loquat, Yellow Fever Acacia and Indian Ash.

We were privileged to have the guidance of a forester, Daniel Mwenda, who led the team to ensure that the trees were well planted. The tree planting activities included clearing of weeds, digging holes, mixing manure and red soil & the pouring the mixture to the holes, placing the tree into the hole and covering it.

Of uttermost importance at the Head Office was to plant Bamboo trees along the river boundary and on the slope to mitigate against any further erosion. Fruit trees in the three centres are to provide food security to the children. Once the schools resume, each tree will be adopted by a student to ensure they are cared for.



*Daniel Mwenda, Project Leader*



*Preparing the holes*



*Fruits trees for St. Elizabeth*



*Planting Bamboo on the slope outside St. Michael's*



*Seed balls that will also be used as an experiment with the Environmental Club activities*

After the planting, we experienced very heavy rains which makes life easier for the watering. We look forward to seeing the growth along the river and at the different schools.

## Social and Health Services

The month has been successful with various activities going on. The main activity being attending to clients in the office, supervision of community service for the sponsored students and conducting home visits in the community. Interventions were made and other cases were referred where the service was not available. Life skills and motivational talks were also conducted at the Skills Centre, Songa Mbele and Rehabilitation Centre. We also managed the distribution of donations from well-wishers and referrals to other health facilities. Two of our social workers were also interviewed by the journalists from Austria.

### November Activities

Case Type (Activity)	Number of Clients
Home Visits	63
Amaranth Client (Nutritional Supplements HIV/AIDS)	87
Nutritional Support	93
Malnourished Babies	28
Moral Formation Talks	87
Sponsorship Profiling	87
Sponsorship Community Service	41
Counselling	77
Standard 8 Sponsorship Applications	303
Medical Cases	35
Needy Family Assistance	11
Teenage Pregnancy	3
Admissions	8
<b>Total Clients Served</b>	<b>923</b>

With the Home visits conducted in November we identified 31, nearly half, who were living in abject poverty. We provided some necessary and emergency supplies for them. The nutritional program distributed over 300 food parcels to other needy families who are known to us. The 28 malnourished babies received weekly porridge supplements and their parents received food parcels. We are alarmed at the level of poverty in the informal settlements. Even though Kenya's economy is apparently improving, the "informal economy" which has over 3 million citizens living there, has a youth unemployment rate of 70% even though they only represent 40% of the population (*Kenya Bureau Statistics 2015*). At Mukuru Promotion Centre, we don't need to wait for the statistics to come out, we see the reality everyday of the families, children and youth struggling. With the generosity of some locals we can provide some meals for hundreds of people.



We had a visit from KEMRI (Kenya Medical Research Institute) Dr Helen Meme and medical scientists from England (National Health Research Institute) Dr Graham Deveraux and Dr Angela Obasi, who are conducting research into lung diseases in the informal settlements. Over 30 students, both primary and secondary, and the Community Health Volunteers were invited to a session to hear their views on the impacts. This will be an on-going program that will span three years. We hope that this will provide some useful interventions and strategies for the people.

The three pregnant Standard 8 girls successfully sat their KCPE exams. The girls didn't do as well as they had hoped but it is understandable as they had missed several weeks preparation. We will keep an eye on the girls and see how we can assist them further.

The medical cases for the month were 35 and 70% of them were treated at the MPC Clinic. The others were referred to other health facilities due to special nature. We have one child who has throat cancer and has undergone 26 radiotherapy session at the Texas Cancer Centre. The child is also HIV/AIDS and is currently very weak with swollen legs. Through the generosity of a donor we have managed to assist the family with the medical expenses.



*Lorna can walk by herself now.*



*Pauline's immune system is stable*



## MPC Clinic

The number of patients who visited the Clinic this month went up from 1,386 patients to 1,454 which average to 70 patients per day.



We received some medical supplies and baby clothes donations from Paula Cullen and Irene Plunkett.

As part of the research program, KEMRI assisted the Clinic by training our nurses and clinicians with 8 days training on 'Spirometry'. Our staff are well equipped on how to measure the lung volume and the air quality of the children and adults who are part of the research. Five of our Community Health Volunteers also received training.

The Sub-county Health Team visited the Clinic and were very pleased with our records, documentation and patients' files. Our Infectious Disease Policy was developed in detail last month thanks to our volunteer, Maria OhAodha. The Ministry were very pleased with the updated documentation. Our approaches on the prevention of waterborne diseases and cholera was applauded.

### Patients Treated in November

Category	Gender	Under 5	6-13yrs	Above 13	Total
New Cases	Male	89	31	167	287
	Female	88	31	283	402
Revisits	Male	132	19	203	354
	Female	126	18	267	411
<b>Total September</b>		<b>435</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>1,454</b>

### Most Common Treated Diseases in November

Disease	No. of Patients
Acute Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	299
Respiratory Tract Infection	123
Urinary Tract Infection	215
Gastroenteritis	275
Skin Infection	115
Peptic Ulcers /Gastritis	54
Abdominal pregnancy	22
Hypertension / Diabetes	46
Fever	68
Arthritis / Neuritis	45
Tuberculosis	7

**Songa  
Mbele Na  
Masomo**

The month of November was busy with activities planned and unplanned.

We welcomed a number of visitors for short periods of time. Some of them new and some of them old friends of Songa. John and Sinead Slattery from Africa Direct spent some time looking around the facilities and could see the various developments.



*Wolfgang, Sinead, John, Sr Mary with Luciah.*

The 29 pupils from the Coaching Unit commenced their exams during the month. We hope that they have done well so that they can be integrated into mainstream schools and not lose their way due to fees. The Star Kids Initiative group took Coaching Unit pupils to the National Museum as an end of year excursion trip. The children had a great time.



*Coaching Unit Pupils Excursion at the National Museum*

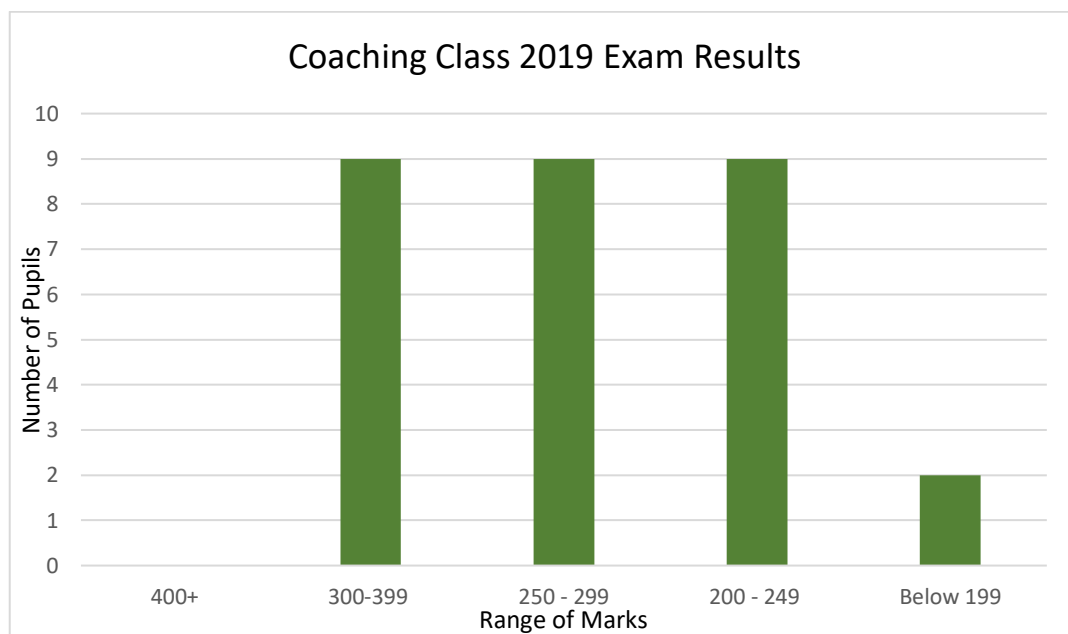
The therapy sessions were very successful. We had 42 usual clients who have been attending the sessions and there was 1 person who was referred from a nearby clinic. The client was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. Another client was admitted at KNH due to a fracture. All our clients have greatly improved due to regular attendance. Well performed home programs also contributed to the improvement functions of the clients. Fine motor materials that have been long awaited have been ordered. These materials will help clients in strengthening their finger muscles so that they can hold objects with their hands.

## SPECIAL COACHING UNIT

The pupils are doing great and learning took place as required. Rosca the girl who was admitted to hospital had the plaster removed and she is doing fine. The attendance this month was affected due to the closure of all primary schools around. This did not hinder planned activities to take place during the month. Children have been assessed accordingly and reports concerning their progress prepared. David Mbutia, a boy in this class will be promoted to Coaching class next year so that he is trained in settling down in preparation for exit. All children are now able to use potty and feed themselves in this unit. This is a great achievement. Randy, an autistic boy, has gained speech and can now express himself. As a Centre we feel happy and hope that next year we will continue to be successful.

## COACHING CLASS

The USIU volunteer students have greatly helped with improving the performance of learners in the Centre. The exam results were as follows:



## DAY CARE UNIT

Pupils have shown great progress and three of them will be promoted to the Coaching Unit next year. Different activities took place this month which facilitated development of fine motor and gross motor skills. More progress will be recorded as learners continue with learning and we wish them well.



*Faith and friends donating food provisions*



We have a constant battle with trying to protect the property. Our mabati (iron sheet) fence was attacked by young people. They tried to get the metals which could be sold. The staff chased them from the compound across the river. We managed to recover most of the materials. Our maintenance staff have welding them back together. This will make it even more difficult to take. In the right photograph you can see how sandbags are being used to push the river over onto our fence undermining the foundations.

## MPC Rehabilitation Centre

The long holiday of the year was here with us. Like other children, our boys' minds were set for play and relaxation which means that here at MIRC, our team was ready for this holiday. We sat to plan the timetable that would keep our 51 boys engaged throughout the holiday time. Different activities such as gardening, liturgical preparation for the graduation, motivational talks, cleaning up and talent show were slotted in.

We finally managed to find the two homes of the boys who have stayed longest at the Centre. Their family whereabouts were unknown to us for a long time, but because it has now become mandatory that anyone registering for KCPE examination must produce his/her birth certificate, luck was on our side.

Below, is another success story of one of our boys. In this case, the boy's relatives traced him up to our Centre. These relatives from the mother's side last saw him when he was a small child. Earlier during the year, we had gone tracing his father but in vain. He had shifted to unknown place. His parents separated when he was a small child and remarried. As is customary in the boy's community, the boy was left with the father but he could not get along with the step mother, hence ended up on the streets.



*A happy reunion*

Paula and Irene's visits always bring blessing to us as they consistently try to improve the care and standards at the Centre. They are outstanding! They brought donations to the boys and also involved them in several activities. They had organized a trip for the boys and staff. We left the Centre bright and early passing through Nairobi city centre as we headed to Kiambu. Our tour started by visiting the Mau Mau caves and it was interesting to learn that the caves are estimated to be 2.5 million years old. They run nearly 300 kilometres inside and must have been an ideal hideout for the Mau Mau freedom fighters before independence.



*In the dark MAU MAU caves*



*Boys picking fruits*



*Waterfalls*

Our next activity was boat riding. The boys were quick to grasp the idea of directing the boat using the oars as guided.



*Boat riding*



*Later, a mouth-watering lunch was served in a serene garden setting.*



*Play time*

Afterwards, the boys played on the swings and slides and relaxed before heading back to the Centre. They were served with juice and biscuits before leaving. We arrived back at the centre exhausted but also greatly enriched, and safe. It was a fantastic trip! The boys were talking about it for some time.

The carpentry boys, under the guidance of their instructor, Charles, assisted in putting up a new ceiling and boards that had earlier been painted by Paula's group assisted by some staff. They also helped in re-painting the hall and even fixing the lighting.



*Paint*



*Position*



*Panels*

Before Paula and Irene left Nairobi, they orchestrated the laying of the basketball court foundation. Due to the very heavy rains this is still on-going, but the weather bureau tells us that the rains will be around until Christmas, so we hope it will be completed before the end of December.

*Paula and Irene pacing out the basketball court*





*Ongoing construction of basketball court*

There was a scheduled friendly football tournament where four teams from among the boys, competed. Our staff were the coaches and we can report that George's team emerged the winner and was gifted with hats.



*Boys having fun during football tournament*

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November our boys were invited to this year's World Aids Day commemoration by Kenya Literature Bureau. These celebrations came on the eve of the actual date. The guests and KLB staff appreciated the boys' energy as they entertained them.

We were given a carton full of library books, 4 cartons of clothes and a cheque for Ksh.20,000 to purchase food for the boys. Our boys responded to this kind gesture by KLB by dancing several thanksgiving songs and were joined by the invited guests.



*Presentation of the cheque*



One of the most significant events during the month was the Baptism ceremony. The boys had been attending baptism classes twice a week for the whole year. The baptism ceremony was held at Our Lady Queen of Peace. Paula and Irene had t-shirts and gifts for all those who were baptized. It was such a colourful event followed by celebrations back at the Centre.



*Fr Bing anoints the boys*



*At the church*

The carpentry boys had been wrapping up their studies and were waiting their NITA examinations which will start on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2019.

Preparations for the graduation ceremony which will go hand in hand with prize giving day were underway. We hope the day will be a success as we reintegrate the boys back to their families to join formal schools.

The centre was privileged to have two candidates, one in class eight, who scored 334 marks, while the other in Form 4 is awaiting his results. The other 5 who sat class eight exams and are sponsored by MPC did well too. The highest had 374 and the lowest 259 marks. We are grateful to Iris Lange for sponsoring 7 of the boys.

The boys and staff have also been working hard in the farm and we are very happy to enjoy the fruits of their labour. We still continue to maximize the available space by planting more vegetables and hopefully in the very near future, we will be rearing chicken.



*Harvesting vegetables for supper*

Amy, our counselor, has taken advantage of the long holiday to give motivational talks to the boys. Resocialization and good behavior have been the focus topics during this time as we prepare the boys for their exit. This helps to awaken the boys' desire to go back home to their families as productive and reliable individuals, ready to be helped and to give back positive energy to the society.



*Amy presenting topics to the boys*

This month 16 boys went through the rite of passage/circumcision at Loco Clinic which is usually free. Before the operation the male teachers give several talks to boys preparing them for this process. There were no complications.

Feeding 50 plus boys every day takes a lot of our resources. We are very fortunate at times that local people provide us with meat, vegetables and flour. These basic ingredients go a long way with the boys' nutrition. We are grateful to Stephen Ng'ang'a, Action Focus, Strathmore group and Raja Trust for their donations.



*A new addition, table tennis in the second games room. Irene and Paula provided the coaching classes.*

## Skills Vocational Training

November was the month for our Skills students to ensure that everything had been completed for the KNEC and NITA exams.

Over 280 students have come through the Centre in 2019 to improve their chances of gaining employment. Some of the courses on offer are short term for the very reason to help them secure a job as soon as possible so that they can become self-sustaining. The unemployment rate in the informal settlements is considerably high and they need every advantage to compete with others in the job market.

During the month there had been a few welcome distractions as they prepared for the final examinations. The environmental program has been greatly assisted by the students as they helped with the planting and watering of trees.

## Happenings

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Like September, November was the month for visitors. John and Sinead Slattery came for a few days to catch up on the Africa Direct sponsored projects at MPC and other places in Kenya. Clare Chambers from Calary Church, Wicklow, Ireland also came to see how the tablets projects at the Rehabilitation Centre was progressing. Irene and Paula, also from Ireland came and blazed trails down at the Rehab Centre.

Our long time friend, Wolfgang was of great assistance with the group going to Austria. We mentioned last month about four journalists from Austria who interviewed some of the beneficiaries in preparation for their articles and radio talks for the DKA fundraising campaign at Christmas. A successful campaign will assist with funding of some of our projects. Four of our own staff, Mary, Risper, Perpetua and Mathew left to help out with the campaign by raising awareness of where some of the funds go to and how they are utilised. We look forward to the reports from Austria.



*Mary, Risper, Perpetua and Mathew ready for take-off to Austria at the airport.*

Mukuru Promotion Centre

**Empowerment Step by Step**

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