



Mukuru Promotion Centre

*Empowerment Step By Step*

*Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy*

[www.mercymukuru.co.ke](http://www.mercymukuru.co.ke)

# Newsletter

January 2021

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## Feature This Month:

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*Austrian Ambassador, Excellency, Christian Fellner talks to the children at Songa during his visit in January*

*Dear Partners, Supporters and Friends,*

We commenced the year with great joy to see all of the schools and centres open. Children are very safe in school, compared to what happened to many of them during the school closure period in 2020. It was sad to note those missing, the five who had died, those who had to move upcountry to grandparents due to loss of parents' jobs, those who had to be brought back from begging on the streets and from child labour and those who returned heavily pregnant. The students were thrilled with improved school meals thanks to Team Pankaj. Those in danger of starvation during school closure were assisted by the John and Moira Burns and Family, Sandro Paoletti and Friends, among others.

Our Vocational Training Centre welcomed Special Needs students and I am happy to see among the students, two teens of short stature, who are in danger of descending into alcoholism. Females of short stature seem to manage better emotionally than the males. I see a number of such mature women, but no mature men, as they seem to drink / or drugs as teens to cope with the challenge of being laughed at, taunted, accused of being cursed or bewitched. Let us hope these two students embrace their training and obtain employment that will fulfill them and enable them to live with dignity.

Our E-Waste project has taken time to get off the ground. Hopefully, now that the structures are in place it will now go ahead successfully, especially in this time of environmental awareness. Mr Patrick Nganga is very enthusiastic about the project and having a core person who is very keen, is a great help. Noreen Walsh, Sr Anne Doherty, Gerry Deeney, Parishioners of Ballymagroarty, and the Sisters of Mercy, Mater Misericordiae Hospital who supported the project, will be relieved to see the progression of the development.

We are grateful to British Airways Crew, especially Rose and her team of friends and KLM Dutch Airlines and their families and friends for providing help for students and fire victims and in particular for the teen mothers and babies.

Hand knitted baby hats by St Martin's Parish Church, England that managed to get on a flight from London to Nairobi. The hats will provide much warmth to 100 babies in the slums. Thank you to Hilary Stone for organizing the parish group.



We are greatly privileged to see the Gospel in action at Songa Mbele. The 'blind see' in that a number of visually impaired children are assisted in various ways to see or to learn skills that enable them to cope. In the same way the 'deaf hear'. What a delight for us to see big children walk for the first time and how they are absolutely thrilled with themselves. It brings home to us the wonder of our walking. Thanks to Sr Anne Doherty and Friends in Derry, Northern Ireland for recent help to Songa Mbele. We marvel at the new facility under construction, through the Kenyan Child Foundation, Ireland and look forward to enabling other children presently living with disabilities in the new facility.

Our friends in Ireland continue to support improvements in the lives of the Street Children undergoing rehabilitation. Thanks to the Church of Ireland, Calary Congregation and Cullen Communications for the new solar energy system. We need to improve our education of growing boys and girls so that we do not see again the numbers of teenage pregnancies that occurred around the Mukuru villages. It is true that those in school are less likely to be teen mothers, yet seeing teens barely out of childhood pregnant, brings home to us what more needs to be done by all of us, for the teens and their babies as well by educating present students on care of themselves and their friends.

I am truly proud and happy to be your partner in the various events in MPC.

May God bless and protect you and fill you with you.

Sr Mary Killeen  
*Director*

## Education

The Primary Schools reopened on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 with all pupils expected to resume studies. Grade 1-3 and Class 5-7 started their second term while the Grade 4 and Class 8 commenced their third term. The Class pupils will be expected to complete the National Examinations (Kenya Certificate Primary Education KCPE) in March 2021 due to the disruptions caused by CoVid19 pandemic in 2020.



### Enrolments

As the schools were interrupted with the pandemic there were very few new enrolments in January. However, the total number of enrolments at the MPC sponsored primary schools in January 2021 were 5,603 pupils as in the table below:

Mukuru Promotion Primary Sponsored School Enrolments 2021			
Primary School	Girls	Boys	Total
St Bakhita Primary	507	488	995
St Catherine Primary	644	563	1,207
St Elizabeth Primary	937	875	1,812
Sancta Maria Kayaaba Primary	828	761	1,589
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>2,687</b>	<b>5,603</b>

The Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) was introduced into Kenya in 2018. This curriculum is a learner centered approach and is now covering Grade 1 to Grade 4 in primary school. The Kenya National Examination Council is responsible for all examinations in learning institutions. The Assessment for Grades 1 to 3 and Class 5 to 7 were carried out between January 18-22. The Ministry of Education will continue to offer training sessions for the teachers on the new CBC.

One of the big unknowns about re-opening the schools was would the spread of the coronavirus increase. To reduce any spread the Ministry of Education mandated several safety measures for every school to adhere to. The Schools had to have a CoVid19 Committee who would coordinate the safety measures laid out by the Ministry of Education. Such measures included the wearing of face masks, water points for washing hands, hand sanitizers and social distancing. The pupils were taught how to wear the mask, how to use the hand sanitizer and the importance of keeping a safe distance. Pupils were also offered psychosocial support since most of them had not attended school since March 2020.



At the beginning of every year there are the customary meetings and many of them. All schools had their staff meetings, class meetings, parent meetings and Board of Management meetings. February will be a time for the Head Teachers to catch their breath. There were also other training sessions for new Board of Management members. There was also the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) Training for Grades 1 and 2 teachers sponsored by Teachers Service Commission (TSC) as well as the Visual Training by Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTE). We hope that there will be as little disruption as possible at Primary Schools for the 2021 academic year.

Now that all the pupils and students have returned we are grateful to Team Pankaj for their support to feed over 6,000 young people. The monthly cost to feed 6,000 people amounts to \$8,000US. It is an enormous expense for MPC to cover each month. We are incredibly grateful to our friends and supporters who provide the funds for the meals. This has been an issue since the World Food Program ceased supplying the meals for schools in 2017. We have continually lobbied the Ministry of Education on this issue.



We are thankful to John and Moira Burns and Friends who helped the very destitute children late last year with some meals.



A menu was introduced where the pupils will be enjoying a different meal every day rather than the usual Githeri (maize and beans) every day. Porridge has been added to the menu which is taken at 9:30am.

Monday – Githeri, Tuesday – Ugali and beans, Wednesday – Ugali and mixed vegetables, Thursday – Bread and missed vegetables and Friday – rice and beans.



United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) provided portable water washing tanks so that the children can wash their hands before going back into class.



The Telecommunications Company, Airtel, also provided 12 hand washing water points at St Bakhita Primary. One of the difficulties experienced at all the schools is to make sure that the pupils keep their masks on and not lose them after the breaks. We also need more thermo-guns so that temperatures can be checked.

We are still very mindful of the parents as they struggle to find casual work during the pandemic. Many parents of the school were laid off during the Covid19 pandemic which is still progressing.



*St Bakhita Primary receive donated masks.*

## St Michael's Secondary School

After a long stay at home for close to ten months, all learning institutions across the country were officially opened for all classes for the second term by the Ministry of Education. St Michael's was opened on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 with only 284 students reporting however, by the end of January the numbers had increased.

### Student Enrolments for 2021

Class	Stream	Girls	Boys	Total
FORM 1	North	18	16	34
	South	17	16	33
FORM 2	North	13	24	37
	South	17	27	44
FORM 3	North	20	21	42
	South	19	25	44
	East	20	25	45
FORM 4	North	16	34	50
	South	21	30	51
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>379</b>

Some students did not report back because of various reasons which included teenage pregnancy, parents relocating upcountry, other students transferring to other schools and others due to earning capacity for their families. St Michael's was at 63% capacity and hoped to increase this across all levels. The Government is trying to reduce the number of students attending boarding schools and have requested parents to send their children to schools in their area. We are fortunate to have the space to increase our numbers.

There were several school meetings in January as we tried to get students back into the discipline of learning. This term was extremely unusual as teaching involved both term 2 and term 3 curriculums. It was important to engage with the parents to ensure they were aware about what was to happen during the first 3 months of 2021. Parents were advised to start preparing for the KSCE which will commence on 26<sup>th</sup> March, and how they can support their son / daughter. The term will conclude on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The students have set good targets to achieve for the first 3 months.

## Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

The first day of the New Year is certainly one of the most anticipated days for many people. As people celebrated the New Year, many Kenyans were filled with hope about the possibilities of better days to come after a horrendous 2020. The Centre opened its doors to 2020 students on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Students who did not resume training in October 2020 reported back to school. Things are now running smoothly and preparation for NITA and KNEC exams is on top gear. There are a number of students who will be sitting for their NITA exams in August 2021 since they are not ready, especially those who did not resume learning in October.

The Computer course normally has high admissions but this year the numbers have gone down. The low numbers have been attributed to school closure in 2020 due to CoVid19 and lack of finances in many families. We hope to change the low applications in May when Form Four students from secondary schools complete their KCSE in April 2021.



*Martin (Special Need student) learns how to mix music and become a Disc Jockey.*

*Computer class for new students in progress*



The Centre takes pride in the quality of its teaching so that students who graduate can find employment. The tutors are committed and encourage students to work hard so that they can reach their own goals. We conducted an internal review and asked for the students' feedback on their tutors and courses.

The feedback received will help us improve in areas that will assist the students to gain greater confidence to achieve. The Catering class for example requested for more rigorous practicals. All students are progressing well and those who are not ready for April series exams will be offered a chance in August.



*Dressmaking student shows off her garment*



*Plumbing students fix the water tank.*



*Beauty Students conduct facial treatments items.*



*Art students make various Beadwork items.*



## E-waste Project

A new project this year is the E-waste project. We have seen around the world how much electronic waste is out there. The WEEE (Waste electronic and electrical equipment) project looks at the management of the waste. Aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the issue of e-waste management has become part of the broader quest for sustainable development. E-waste is the fastest growing waste stream. In 2016, Africa generated 5% of the global WEEE output hence the Centre intends to incorporate a training module on how to handle e-waste. This will offer students the chance to learn how to manage e-waste efficiently and safely. An environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted by the Centre last year allowed MPC to start the project because of the positive impacts. The 2 forty-foot containers set up by the Centre will be used as the storage and treatment facility. Waste electronic and Electrical Equipment has already been collected and it is being stored at the facility to be later dismantled and recycled.



*Some of the e-waste collected and stored in the container facility.*



*E-waste containers being off-loaded.*

## Social Services

The Social and Health Services Department were fully engaged as hundreds of activities were carried out across all departments at MPC especially the learning institutions. With thousands of children returning to school it was evident to see the interconnection.

Case Type (Activity)	No. of Clients	Case Type (Activity)	No. of Clients
Admissions to Schools	84	Nutritional Support	15
Abuse Cases	4	Masks and Sanitizers Distribution	41
Amaranth (Nutritional Supplements HIV/AIDS)	75	Needy Family Assistance	40
Counselling and Guidance	214	Pregnancies	8
Discipline Cases	5	Profiles	18
Fire Victims Assistance	105	Referrals	6
Follow Ups (Medical, Education)	9	Recruitment	10
Home visits	50	Sponsorship	35
Hospital Visits	6	School Absenteeism /Truancy	51
Medical Cases and Referrals	155	Therapy sessions at Songa	3
Malnourished Babies	12		
<b>Total</b>			<b>946</b>

On average the Mukuru slums experience 3 to 4 fires a month. In January we assisted 100 fire victims from Jamaica and Kisii villages in Mukuru. The families were supported with clothes, mattresses and shoes. Through the generosity of Team Pankaj, we distributed pens and biscuits to 2,125 children at St Elizabeth's Primary and St Michael's Secondary Schools.



*Sancta Maria Kayaaba pupils whose homes were burnt in the fires.*



### Two medical cases



*Mercy [L] St Catherine's student has been diagnosed with a kidney problem.*



*Lucky [R] had issues with his eye sight but now after receiving his new glasses school is more enjoyable.*

The Zero to Hero group held their meetings to plan regarding the bulk production for the mushroom project. The group meets every second week to share, address challenges and discuss on their progress. Currently, the process of mass production of mushrooms is underway.



## Donations During the Month

We are always grateful for the donations received as the needs are great in Mukuru. We would like to acknowledge the many people who helped out in January:

### Team Pankaj:

maize, maize meal, soya beans, rice, green grams, mixed vegetables, cooking oil, tomato paste, tomato soup, porridge, flour and buckets for each class. Mr Pankaj also provided the pupils and students with pens and biscuits.



Dr Monica, a volunteer, who assists at the MPC Clinic, helped outfit the Grade 4 and Grade 5 pupils at St. Catherine's Primary with games sports kits (shorts and t-shirts).





Kenya Airways donated clothing, sanitary towels, newborn items, toys and toiletries. Rose donated shoes, newborn items, clothing, toys, storybooks, and alarm clock. Cora Dessing and a friend donated baby diapers, ladies' tampons, clothing, pouches, toiletries, and toys.

For the Rehabilitation Centre Paula Cullen donated some clothes; Ken Mogane donated a toaster, blender, guitar, clothes and shoes; Magdalen donated clothes; Sonia Birdi donated coconut biscuits and Songa Mbele gave some paw paws. Mr. Mohamed Kana donated shirts and t-shirts and Amerie Foundation donated books and meat for the boys.

The Social Offices received masks to be issued to all the pre-school children as well as some pens and biscuits.

On top of the busy outreach, it is important to have some coordination with all the Social Offices and Schools. There were several meetings and trainings to help keep everyone up to date and on track to help the community. We are very keen to help parents develop in any areas that will assist in earning an income. Equity Bank provided some training for parents on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. They were trained on financial literacy, budgeting, loans, debt management, savings, entrepreneurship / skills and digital literacy.

The network meetings are very important to keep the social workers mindful of what is happening in our catchment area and how other agencies and Government bodies are resolving issues affecting the community.



*Needy clients receiving clothes and food*



*Lunga Lunga Home Visit*





*A home visit to a sick child*



*Follow up with the teenage girl who is expectant*

## Health Services

The MPC Clinic staff created more synergy and resilience when they came to work after the Christmas break. Our patients' statistics have continued to grow which is a result of hard work and commitment. Our numbers particularly the upward movement show that the people we serve have trust in our services. There are many patients who are presenting with more than 1 ailment. There were over 1,300 patients treated with over 700 laboratory tests conducted for January, yet there were over 2,500 illnesses presented. In addition to these figures there were 29 clients attending the Comprehensive Care Centre which included 3 new cases; 12 clients for tuberculosis which 3 were new cases and 59 mothers went to the antenatal clinic during the month. We are delighted that the number of immunizations has significantly increased over the last quarter.

We hosted the Ministry of Health during their supervision visit and they renewed their commitment to MPC and the clinic. We also received a volunteer nurse / administrator from Ireland who will be at the Clinic for 3 days a week. This will enable us to further develop the various procedures and protocols so that we can serve the poor better. We have recently purchased a biosafety cabinet to help with the right treatment of bacterial diseases for the laboratory.

We are thankful for the donations to the Clinic from Dr Jabbal. The medical equipment and medications will assist us greatly.

The only age bracket where the females were higher than the males was the 18-35 years range. All other groups have the males attending in greater numbers.

### Patients Treated in January 2021

Category	Gender	Under 5	6 -17 Years	18- 35 Years	Above 36 Years	Total
New Cases	Male	136	95	65	74	370
	Female	51	28	128	33	240
		187	123	193	107	610
Revisits	Male	189	51	115	100	455
	Female	124	37	76	87	324
		313	88	191	187	779
<b>Total</b>		<b>500</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>1,389</b>
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>59%</i>
	<i>Female</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>41%</i>

### Most Common Treated Ailments in January

Rank	Diseases	No. of Cases
1	Acute Upper Respiratory Tract Infections	312
2	Urinary Tract Infections	239
3	Immunization	228
4	Abdominal pregnancy	199
5	Parasitic Infections (Malaria and Intestinal)	196
6	Fevers (Unspecified)	171
7	Gastroenteritis	132
8	Diabetes and Hypertension	89
9	Headaches (unspecified)	84
10	Allergies	58
11	Other Diseases	832
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,540</b>

### The Laboratory Tests For January

	Type	Cases		Type	Cases
1	Urinalysis	156	10	Other Laboratory Test	17
2	Stool Ova / Cyst	120	11	Haemoglobin Levels	14
3	Malaria	99	12	Salmonella Antigen	9
4	Full Haemogram	74	13	Hepatitis B	9
5	Random Blood Sugar	58	14	Rheumatoid Factor	6
6	HighVaginal Swabs	55	15	Vdrl	6
7	Helicobacter Pylori	43	16	Blood Grouping	4
8	Antenatal Profile Tests	42	17	Liver Functions	3
9	Pregnancy Tests	18	18	DU Test	3
	<b>Total</b>				<b>736</b>

Average 37 tests per day

### Songa Mbele na Masomo

The Centre resumed after a two-week Christmas break on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2021. This was a great relief to all parents and guardians to have the activities return to normal for all children at the Centre after the pandemic. For them, it was a new beginning and an end to a confusing time caused by the pandemic.

As the new multi-storey facility is entering its final stages a big challenge was where to put the existing classrooms as so many children reported. The new facility is scheduled to be completed at the end of March. After evaluating all sorts of possibilities, we are now operating the Day Care and Special Coaching Units in the existing permanent building and the Coaching class has occupied the library container temporarily. All the containers but one had to be removed to make way for the car park area.



*Containers are loaded on the transport for relocation to MPC Head Office Campus*



*Containers removed to make way for the Sentry and Car Parking Area*

The construction work is ongoing with the superstructure works completed. Many of the internal finishings and external earth works will now be the focus for the next two months.

As the enrolments increased during the month we had to improvise and erect a few tents on the playground area. The Coaching and Special Coaching Units are now operating from the tents.



*Two learning tents at the Centre*



Initially the 49 Day Care Unit pupils had a challenge adapting to the changes at the Centre but with time they settled well. The children who had regressed were helped to catch up with the rest of the children.



Children with autism really regressed and became more hyperactive as they missed the regular therapy sessions and had irregular diet since March last year. Teachers are working hard with them. The other children who attended regular therapy sessions are functioning well.

The 23 out of 28 Coaching Unit pupils resumed their learning at the Centre. The 5 pupils who did not report back were followed up by the social worker who discovered that the families returned upcountry due to the lack of earning opportunities in the Mukuru slums.

The physiotherapist had been kept busy with 50 children needing therapy. There were 24 Day Care Unit, 14 Special Coaching Unit, and 13 outside clients. The disabilities that are treated at the Centre are: Cerebral Palsy, Downs Syndrome, Autism, Hear Impairment, Visual Impairment and Physical Disabilities.

Now that we have more children and parents coming to the Centre daily we need to be more vigilant with safety CoVid19 measures. All surfaces were disinfected for safety and the entire Centre sprayed in the evening after all children have gone home. Security checks were carried out thoroughly to protect children and Centre property. We are grateful to Mr Meshack for the pawpaw donations each month. It is great that the children can receive fruits in their diets. Any surplus pawpaws go to the boys at Mary Immaculate Rehabilitation Centre.



*Day Care Unit Class*

## Success Stories

We would like to introduce two boys, Liam and Melvin, who have been attending Songa Mbele.

**Liam** was admitted at the Centre when he was 3years old with cerebral palsy and autism. Liam was on diapers, could not sit alone, his neck was weak and needed assistance for many daily activities. After a patchy start and inconsistent therapy attendance. Liam's mother started bringing Liam to the Centre on a regular basis and even started on the home program with the help of his siblings. Slowly the mother noticed the positive changes in the shape of Liam's limbs, from curved to straight spine.)

When CoVid19 pandemic struck the mother was the first to request for the therapy sessions to continue as she had seen Liam's capacity improve. She visited the Centre every day and assisted Liam with his exercises. Coordinating body function for him was a bit hard due to his autism.

He started standing with rails, chairs and eventually alone. This was a great achievement for him and his mother. As the year was coming to an end Liam started making a few steps and was very happy about it. He can now walk freely though only for a short distance and is also able to say "mama" and "daddy". Well done Liam!



**Melvin** was admitted to Songa Mbele when he was 5yrs old. He was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and started therapy immediately. He was able to partially grasp objects but for a short time. He was unable to crawl, sit for a long time, kneel, or support his head.

He was not able to express himself well, his speech was slurred. After much therapy at the Centre and at home Melvin has improved on grasping, can crawl alone, stand without support and take a few independent steps. His lower body has gained strength and stability. With continuous therapy Melvin will be able to achieve further milestones.

The Kenyan Child Foundation from Ireland is making the expansion of Songa Mbele na Masomo Childrens' Centre possible. The Centre has been at maximum capacity of 80 children for the last few years with dozens of families on the waiting list. The new multi-storey facility will help the Centre enroll more than 200 children. We hope that by May the hand-over will have been completed. This will be an extremely exciting chapter in Songa's history and for the only facility of its kind in the Mukuru slums.



*The New multi-storey Facility*

## MPC Rehabilitation Centre

Typically, January finds us ready for recruitment however, this year it has not been the case due to the CoVid19 pandemic we retained the 2020 boys since we were not able to do the normal home visits. There are 51 boys registered at the Centre at different academic levels.

Class	Academic Level	No.
Year 1	PP1(1), Class 2 (2) and Class 3 (7)	10
Year 2	Std 5 (5), Std 6 (7), Std 7 (4) and Class 8 (1)	17
Carpentry	Grade III (11) and Grade II (1)	12
St Catherine Primary	Class 3 (1) Class 4 (1) Std 6 (2), Class 8 (5)	9
St Peter & Paul School, Embu	Class 8 (2)	2
Mangu Boys High School	Form 3 (1)	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>51</b>

The boys were well energized after the long holiday break and eager for the new year. The timetable has provided enough room for library lessons where books are borrowed, read and kept in good condition.





The carpentry students prepared themselves for the forthcoming Government exams which will be conducted in April 2021. There are 4 students who will do the Grade III test while 1 student is doing the Grade II. The other 7 who joined this year are also showing great interest in learning the skill.

*Carpentry class prepare materials for the Grade Exams.*



Being a new year, we are expecting more new boys to be introduced to the ProFuturo tablets and trained on how to use them. So far, all the boys are doing well managing the tablets to study. The teachers continue with their own training on Tuesdays to find new and engaging ways to help the boys embrace learning.

At the beginning of each year, it is important to establish the boys' stories and update their profiles. In this process, we re-intake information once more but this time, our emphasis is adding more information on their backgrounds. This exercise is important in order to get a clear picture of the boys' histories and it helps with re-integration with their families, if possible.



*Counseling session with the boys*



During the month we received donations-in-kind such as food, clothes blankets and other items. We are very grateful to our donors and visitors who support the work of the rehabilitation centre.

Among the donations that we have received were baby clothes that we forwarded to St Catherine Social Office. The other items were:

- Paula Cullen and Friends sent some clothes.
- Mr. Ken Mogane donated a toaster, blender, guitar, clothes and shoes.
- Madam Magdaline donated clothes.
- Madam Sonia donated coconut biscuits.
- Songa Mbele donated paw paws.
- Mr. Mohamed Kana donated shirts, trousers and t-shirts.
- Team Pankaj brought cookies and veggies.
- Amerie Foundation donated books and meat.



*Books from Amerie Foundation*



In January we had a volunteer environmental student who worked with the boys in keeping the compound tidy as well as assisting teachers in the classrooms.

The weekends at the Centre seem to be busier than the week. There are lots of activities to keep the boys engaged in other areas. The Art and Beadwork class is held on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Acrobatics and Dancing on Mondays and Fridays while Yoga is done on Sundays. We hope to get the Scouts program operational by the end of March.



*Art and beadwork*



*Acrobatics and dance class*

Gardening continues even though it's the dry season. The boys attend to the garden with watering and weeding and harvesting the produce each week. The boys weeded and cleaned the drainage tunnel which leads to the river from the kitchen. They slashed the grass and litter collection. The compost manure pit was also done by sorting the food remains from paper waste.

The chicken and rabbit projects are progressing well and looking loved as the boys have taken care of them with a lot of enthusiasm. We are trying to promote new experiences for the boys such as seeing how their hens can produce eggs for eating.

## Solar Energy Hot Water System

One of the most significant developments during the month was the completion of the newly installed solar energy hot water system. While the installations began just before Christmas it was completed in the first week of January. This was such a timely contribution to the Centre with the coronavirus pandemic. The boys can now enjoy lovely **‘hot showers’** in the early mornings. Also, the solar panels will help reduce the major costs of electricity throughout the year. We are very thankful to Claire Chambers who raised the funds by promising to jump out of a plane to celebrate one of her BIG birthdays; Cullen Communications Ireland for their generous donation to the project as well and Paula Cullen and Friends who also helped raise the funds.



*Arrival of the panel materials*



*One side of the solar panels fixed.*





*Installing Inverter box*



*Tank*



*Expansion Tank*



*Connection*



*Power*



*Temperature*



*Equals Big Smiles!*

## Sponsorship

January was a month of hope that things would work for the better after the uncertainty of 2020. Schools across Kenya reopened officially on 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 for all classes after a 9-month break imposed by the Government. Hand washing, the wearing of masks and temperature checks were mandatory for all returning to school. The various activities took place as scheduled without any interruptions.

The sponsored students returned safely to their respective schools for term 2 while the Form 4s, Grade 4 and Grade 8 will complete term 3. The 2020 academic year is scheduled to end in May 2021 with the KCPE and KCSE examinations.



*Some St. Michael's Students  
excited to receive a cheque from their donors.*

Equity Bank facilitators together with MPC Sponsorship Office held training sessions in MPC multipurpose hall targeting the Mukuru slum community engaging in Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The training attracted 247 participants with the aim of supporting and empowering them through financing and capacity building. The training came at a good time to help people as they had suffered huge losses due to the corona pandemic. The mentorship and training conducted touched on Entrepreneurship, Finances and Digital Literacy Education. The workshop was also attended by our very own students from the vocational training centre. That would prepare them for future endeavours especially those planning to be self-employed.



*Equity Bank Training Workshop*



Every third term of the academic year we give a presentation to all the Class 8 primary students to raise the awareness about possible sponsorship to secondary school. It also provides MPC to encourages the students to work extra hard for the remaining time. The sponsorship enables average, poor students to excel in high school without having to worry about paying school fees. There are other commercial entities who provide sponsorship, but this is normally for the academically gifted student with a mark over 350/500. Within the four primary schools there are over 700 pupils who complete their primary education. Out of the 700 around 300 will be successful in obtaining a place at a National school where the government caters for the tuition fees of \$600US per year but the extra fees become a real challenge for the parents. The next category would try and obtain some form of scholarship and that leaves around 250 pupils without an option as most of the families would not be in a position to pay for tuition fees and the extra non-tuition fees. There are 150 places available at St Michael's for Form Ones and we hope that the current Class 8 pupils do well in their examinations.



*St. Elizabeth Primary*



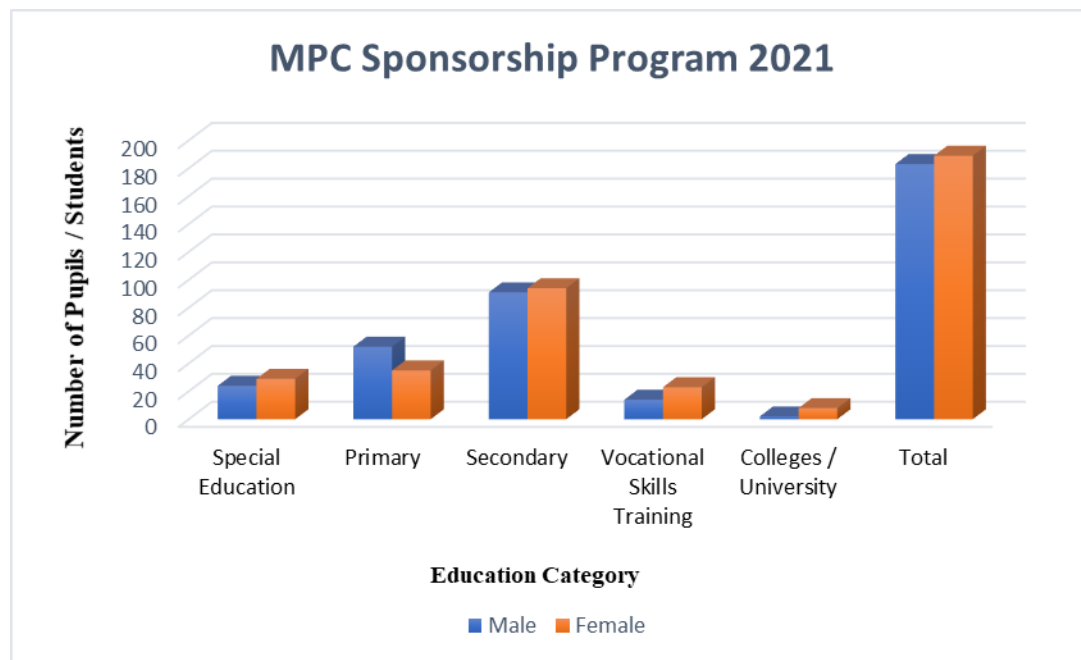
*Mukuru Primary*



*St. Catherine's Primary*



*St. Bakhita Primary*



We discovered reasons why a few students did not return to school during the month. Some students found casual jobs for upkeep due to the hard times caused by the pandemic. There were a number of girls who became pregnant and thankfully Manos Unidas has provided 'care packages' for them. Others had moved upcountry after parents lost jobs during the lockdown and could not survive in the slums with no food or income.



Raphael, a needy boy and a former St. Michael's student was provided with a place to stay having suffered homelessness for a period of time. He is currently enrolled in computer classes at Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre.

*Raphael receives some household goods to start a new life.*

We are concluding our work on the on-line sponsorship database where donors will be able to access the latest updates on the sponsorship program. More details will be provided in February newsletter.

## Child Protection and Safeguarding (CPS)

The CPS Office was kept busy during January with many activities that included:

- Career guidance and safeguarding talks
- Abuse Cases
- Counseling
- Meetings
- Macheo Program (Strathmore University)

The moral formation talks for the vocational students were conducted by Irene Njeri and Jyoti Sharma. The 39 students were taught self-awareness in the perspective of Johari's window as they could be more knowledgeable of themselves; identify their strengths, weaknesses, hobbies, and what they do not like about themselves. After the sessions, a number of students requested help with some counselling.

Over the last 6 years MPC has been committed to raising awareness at the schools and community about child protection and safeguarding. The more sessions are conducted, and the outreach of community health volunteers and social workers take place, sadly the more cases are identified. During January 17 cases were reported. The cases will be followed up with the various stakeholders and when necessary to the Directorate of Criminal Investigation's Children Unit in South C. Some of the cases involve rape, defilement, pregnancy, emotional abuse, neglect, family feud, missing child, counselling and social aid.

CPS was privileged to receive 8 volunteer counselors from different institutions such as Tangaza University, Amani University, and Technical University Kenya. The counselors have been allocated in the different MPC schools to assist in counseling services to the children and staff and offer psychoeducation to the students. We have managed to counsel 35 clients, 14 vocational students and 21 from the community.

*Irene, volunteer counselor, presenting her session to the hairdressing and art/craft students.*



A consultation was carried out with Victoria Mwema, who is the Macheo Program Coordinator from Strathmore University about the 2021 program. MPC has been involved in this program since 2016 and our students at St Michael's Secondary have greatly benefited. All 12 students from the program managed to gain admission to university. She explained that Saturday's remedial classes will not resume due to the Ministry of Education's ban of extra curriculum activities in schools. However, they are planning something for the Form 4s to be doing while Form 2 and Form 3 continue to learn via WhatsApp on Saturdays.



*Two of our teenage pregnant girls who were rescued to Nest Children's Home.*



*During a meeting with the guardian of the teenage mother, whose request is to support for the girl to go back to school.*



## Announcements

The Vocational Skills Education and Therapy Centre for Youths Living with Disabilities building, or the shorter version is the 'Therapy block' has completed some of the foundation work. We are a third of the way through the project, however due to the area being a dumpsite many years ago the foundations had to be reassessed and redesigned. Now that all that has been sorted out its all systems go. The month mainly involved formwork completion for the funnel foundation.



*Front View*



*Rear View*

*Concrete spacers are placed between the reinforcements and the blinding course.*



*Covers are placed on the marine board formwork onto the metal work to give a funnel shaped column base.*

To achieve a funnel shaped column bases, steel formworks were welded in a funnel shape to cover the marine board formwork.



*Concrete casting and vibrating*



*Concrete work completed. Formwork Dismantled. Time for the curing.*



In 2018 and again in 2020 MPC had conducted mid-term reviews on the strategic plan. In the last quarter we commenced preparation for the new plan and during that time there have been a number of meetings with staff, parents, community and other stakeholders to develop the new strategic plan for 2021 – 2026. We hope to have this completed before March 2021. We will post the strategic plan on the website for your reference.



After a year like no other we are extremely grateful for your generosity.

Thank you for making activities possible!

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