



Mukuru Promotion Centre
Empowerment Step By Step
Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy
www.mercymukuru.co.ke

Newsletter

August 2021
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The new Vocational Training Therapy Unit

Dear Partners, Supporters and Friends,

I went to Ireland during August for four weeks leave. The last time was in December 2018. It was great to see family and friends again. I am very grateful to all those who hosted me especially Sisters of Mercy, Mater community. I had a number of appointments, documents to be renewed, business that had to be done and had to return for important meetings in early September, without seeing all those I would like to have seen. The restrictions and regulations about CoVid19, necessity to make appointments, and the need for tests, do take up a lot of time.

I was pleased to find programs going on well on my return. Dinah Maina, the Executive Development Officer, had looked after MPC well during my absence.



The Rehabilitation Centre, Vocational Training Centre and Songa Mbele were all running quite well, with various challenges. The local community continue to support Songa Mbele and the Rehabilitation Centre with food and hygiene items.

Teachers find the present term dates, with short holidays, very taxing. The timetable was changed in order to make up for school closures during 2020. We are all concerned about the students who did not return after the closures. A number relocated upcountry due to the parent's loss of jobs due to CoVid19. We hope they are in school upcountry. Country wide about 300,000 students have not returned to school. The CoVid19 pandemic has an impact on the number of students applying to do catering. So many hotels, restaurants and lodges have closed that there are many hotel workers still out of work. Students fear that those who have experience will be employed first so they may have to wait for employment.

It is very sad to see the Norfolk and Tree Tops closing as well as many other historic hotels who have been in business for more than 100 years. Hundreds of others are struggling to continue and employ skeleton staff and services. The hospitality business will only recover when tourism returns which it shows no sign of doing anytime soon.

Thank you, all of you, for supporting us year in year out. This is not easy, but as one generation of students leave us and many succeed, another group is taking their place. The work has to go on for their sake.

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

Sr Mary Killeen
Director

Education

In a normal academic calendar year, August is usually a resting month for pupils but this year it's the beginning. Teachers would normally use this time to upgrade themselves through in-servicing courses, planning for next term or to reflect on the past terms' achievements. This CoVid19 tainted year the Government had to condense the terms so that in 2023 Kenya will return to the traditional three term academic year starting in January and concluding in October.

Enrolments in MPC primary schools have continued to increase for the current term. Sadly, the teachers pupil ratio has not improved. The feeding program supported by Team Pankaj has played an influential role as it has created an incentive with enrolments. The other nearby schools are not offering meals and many parents do not have the means to provide meals for their children. Unfortunately, the lack of meals for children does impact on absenteeism. Some present the argument that parents are unsupportive and uncaring but the desperate situation is, parents do not have a steady income in the subsistence economy that has been ravaged by the impact of CoVid19. To have a feeding program at the MPC primary schools amounts to €6,000 per month and we are very grateful to Team Pankaj who provides the meals. The other financial strain for parents is the firewood fee which is US\$3 per term per child and over two-thirds of the pupil population's parents are unable to pay.



St Elizabeth and St Catherine's pupils enjoying their lunch

Regrettably, the CoVid19 virus is still with us and teachers are always reminding pupils to observe the protocols by regularly washing hands or using hand sanitizers, wearing face masks and observing social distancing. All these measures are being implemented with a lot of challenges as having to keep the face mask on all day for pupils is a monumental task. On the other hand, some are coming to school with no face masks at all because the parent cannot afford to buy them daily but they are given at the gate since the condition of entry to school is a mask. The Ministry of Health has also urged all civil servants (teachers included) to voluntarily get vaccinated in the nearby health facilities for free as they continue with their services.

We have a number of good experienced Early Childhood Education Teachers who are employed by MPC. There has been an ongoing situation where MPC is trying to have these teachers employed by the County Government. During the month MPC visited the offices of the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and the Director of Early Childhood Development

Education and submitted proposals for employment of ECDE teachers. One of the issues that has been mentioned is that the County will not absorb the ECDE teachers as they are over the age of 45. There are 3 teachers who will be considered for next year's recruitment.

ECDE Parents meeting at Sancta Maria Primary school



The primary schools are still waiting for the teachers who were transferred earlier to be replaced. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) promised to replace them once the on-going recruitment process is over. We will continue to follow up on the matter.

The Sisters of Mercy Education Office held 3 trainings sessions comprising Faith Formation and Spiritual Development, Catholic Ethos and Governance for the Head Teachers.



Teachers In-Service training at MPC Hall

St Michael's Secondary School

The MPC primary schools had 710 Class 8 candidates who completed their KCPE in March and at this stage only 44 of them have enrolled in St. Michael's Secondary School for Form One. MPC has been busy identifying the reasons for such a poor enrolment number. The Ministry of Education is also carrying out a survey on the pupils who have not yet joined any secondary school. A meeting with parents was held at St Elizabeth Primary School to ascertain the reasons.

The enrolments at St Michael's for the new academic year numbers 424 but there is a capacity for 650.



There is a significant difference in the girls' enrolment in Form One with 64% being boys and 36% for girls. The other year group with a disparity is Form 3 with 60% for boys and 40% for girls. Further investigation will need to be carried out to identify the reasons but we suspect that the girls are expected to do more labour-intensive jobs to support the families. Letters were sent to Churches and all Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs in the area to help identify more girls to attend school.

The other activities during the month involved the new admissions, Opening Term Mass, Form 1 parent meeting, staff meetings, mid-term examinations and sports day.



Admission team admitting Students



Waiting parents and students



One of the youth mentors addresses student group

One of the new initiatives for St Michael's this year will be the inhouse mentorship program. All the teachers are participating and meet their group every Monday during lunch. There are also peer mentors in the form of youth leaders who talk to the students.



Father Gabriel presiding over the mass.

At the beginning of each term St Michael's always commences with a Eucharistic celebration and the local parish priest from Our Lady Queen of Peace, South B leads us in prayer and thanksgiving to God.

The Form One Parents Induction Meeting was held and many new parents were received warmly and met with their child's classroom teacher. Parents were taken through a number of points such as the school routine, calendar, expectations, disciplines, academic targets and the child protection and safeguarding policy. The social worker also presented some of the services that are available to parents if and when required. Parents are not alone in their child's education journey.



The other side of this new partnership was the Orientation program with the new Form One students where the school Principal, Deputy Principal and class teachers introduced themselves and answered all the questions for the newcomers.

Form 1 Parents' Induction meeting



Form One Orientation

The Sports Day provided the opportunity for those students who love exercise to excel. It also provided the school with the chance to scout for the next Eliud Kipchoge and Faith Kipyegon, McDonald Mariga, Victor Wanyama or Kenya Sevens players and pick teams that can represent the school at the Sub-County and County level competitions.



Cross country athletics



Soccer



60m Dash

The effect of the pandemic is still causing a big impact on the families in Mukuru. During the month 48 food parcels were dispensed, 10 uniforms, many masks and sanitary towels. On top of everything else another fire outbreak occurred and more families were assisted through the social office.

As mentioned in a previous newsletter (2019), MPC is participating in the Tupumue (**Let us Breathe**) Project. This is a study (*non-communicable lung disease in Kenya: from burden and early life determinants to participatory inter-disciplinary solutions*). It is a 3-year study by the Kenyan National Research Fund and the UK Medical Research Council, led by researchers from the Centre for Respiratory Disease Research, KEMRI, and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and other UK Universities and is the first of its kind in Africa. Led by Dr Graham Deveraux

and Dr Helen Meme a team from the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) visited St Michael's and conducted a few tests on students' breathing. This is an exciting project as we are aware that over 70% of the patients who attend MIC Clinic have a respiratory ailment. The pandemic halted the project for awhile, however it is good to see the start of the project again.

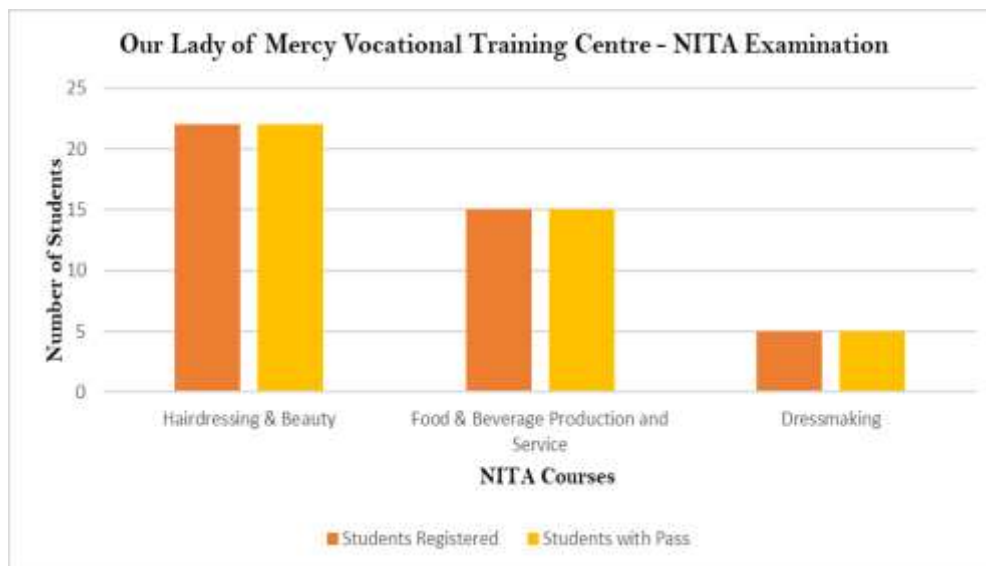


Doctors from KEMRI conducting the breathing tests

Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre

As Kenya stepped up its CoVid19 vaccination campaign by setting up inoculation centres the Delta variant continued to wreak havoc in the country particularly in educational institutions. Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre was forced to close the Centre for two weeks after one staff tested positive. Thankfully the staff member recovered and classes resumed.

The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) released the 2020 examination results just before students went for August holidays. Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre had a stellar performance with all students passing the exams. The outstanding performance was received with joy and jubilation by students and staff as it has been a difficult year for many students. The students attributed the good performance to hard work and discipline. The examinations which were rescheduled from last year were the first to be administered under the CoVid19 pandemic. Their battle was fought with resilience and won with grace. Many students fell away after staying for seven months out of school due to the pandemic. A number of the female students fell pregnant and others were married off.



We applaud the mighty efforts of these young women who were just so committed to achieve their personal goals. They certainly have inspired others as we noticed an overall improvement in student performances.



The Therapy Block for the Youth living with disabilities has much of the exterior work near completion. The external wall finishing, beams and column finishing, door fabrications, gypsum ceiling and some internal plastering were the main activities for the month.



External wall finished (Keying).



Columns and beams plastering



Fabricating and fixing the balustrades and handrails.



Fixing the gutters



Terrazzo flooring



walkway towards the ramp

Social Services

August was full of activities as it was the start of a new academic year for some. While the social workers were busy providing the services that are indicative for a new year there were the ordinary everyday tasks that needed to be completed and followed up.

Case Type (Activity)	No. of Clients	Case Type (Activity)	No. of Clients
Admissions to Schools	102	Mentorship Sessions	5
Abuse Cases	7	Masks and Sanitizers Distribution	25
Amaranth (Nutritional Supplements HIIV/AIDS)	96	Needy Family Assistance	91
Counselling and Guidance	34	Needy Students	29
Discipline Cases	21	Nutritional Support	208
Donations Issued	278	Pregnancies (Teenage) and Support Packages	11
Donations Received	127	Profiles	92
Fire Victims Assistance	16	Referrals	107
Follow Ups (Medical, Education)	7	Sanitary Towels	93
Home visits	48	School Absenteeism and Truancy	359
Hospital Visits	19	School Visits	1
Medical Cases and Referrals	1,890	Songa Mbele Therapy	53
Malnourished Babies	45	Sponsorship Follow-Ups	39
Meetings and Networking	44	Uniform Assistance	52
Total			3,899

There were interviews, assessments, profiles, home visits, referrals and nutritional support. The pandemic continues to impact on every aspect of peoples' lives in Mukuru slums – there is no respite for thousands.

One of the biggest logistical action plans in the month was the deworming program for primary pupils. The school population is over 6,000 pupils in the 4 primary schools. There are many positive benefits for the children and MPC has conducted this program for years.



Deworming at St. Bakhita Primary school



Teenage mothers receiving care package



Fire outbreak at Maasai village



Nutritional support for pupils and Community members





Needy St Catherine's pupils



St Bakhita Pre-Primary pupils



Life skills sessions



A number of home visits were carried out during the month to ensure that families were doing reasonably and had enough to eat.

A primary school pupil receives new shoes and uniform.



Health Services

The zeal and diligence from the Clinic staff continued to be demonstrated towards the sick in August. Apart from attending to the patients there were other simultaneous programs happening such as supervision, capacity building, deworming program, immunization program (166), antenatal clinic (40), nutritional support, and tuberculosis screening.

The supervision involved the Ministry of Health guiding our clinicians on delivering the TB screening. The other aspect of increasing the knowledge for the clinicians focus on the diagnoses and management of childhood tuberculosis. The supervisor recommended community TB screening as an in-reach initiative to help reduce TB statistics among the slum dwellers. The Ministry of Health hopes that MIC TB program will develop to include the pediatric population.

Over 1,400 people were treated at the Clinic in August. The statistics for the month are listed below:

The Laboratory Tests For August

	Type	Cases		Type	Cases
1	Malaria	332	9	Salmonella Antigen	15
2	Stool Ova / Cyst	177	10	Pregnancy Tests	8
3	Urinalysis	162	11	Vdrl	4
4	Haemoglobin Levels	63	12	Blood Grouping	3
5	Helicobacter Pylori	42	13	Brucella Antigen Test	2
6	Random Blood Sugar	27	14	Urine Culture	2
7	Rheumatoid Factor	19	15	HighVaginal Swabs	1
8	Antenatal Profile Tests	16			
	Total				873

Average 42 tests per day

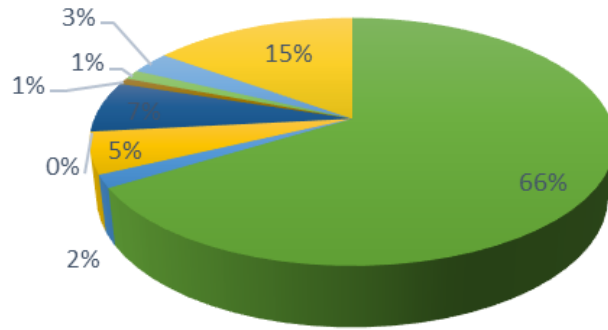
Patients Treated in August 2021

Category	Gender	0-5 Years	6 -12 Years	13-17 Years	18-35 Years	36-49 Years	50-64 Years	>65 Years	Total
New Cases	Male	160	73	57	15	44	26	7	382
	Female	177	88	47	260	90	20	6	688
		337	161	104	275	134	46	13	1,070
Revisits	Male	80	5	11	38	25	25	2	186
	Female	105	7	4	78	28	1	1	224
		185	12	15	116	53	26	3	410
Total		522	173	119	391	187	72	16	1,480
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>45.98</i>	<i>45.09</i>	<i>57.14</i>	<i>13.56</i>	<i>36.90</i>	<i>70.84</i>	<i>56.25</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>54.02</i>	<i>54.91</i>	<i>42.86</i>	<i>86.44</i>	<i>63.10</i>	<i>29.16</i>	<i>43.75</i>	

Most Common Treated Ailments in August by Age Group

Disease	0-5 Years	6 -12 Years	13-17 Years	18-35 Years	36-49 Years	50-64 Years	>65 Years	Total
Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	159	38	31	139	45	23	2	437
Urinary Tract Infection	4	3	0	46	10	3	1	67
Gastroenteritis	13	14	7	15	5	1	0	55
Gastritis	0	1	5	11	9	0	2	28
Helminthiasis	16	7	1	2	1	0	0	27
Sepsis	2	4	3	1	3	2	0	15
Tonsillitis	3	4	5	2	1	0	0	15
Febrile Illness	7	3	0	3	0	0	0	13
Other Diseases	36	35	52	69	40	20	4	256
Total	240	109	104	288	114	49	9	913

Percentage of Most Common Diseases in August



- Upper Respiratory TI
- Gastritis
- Tonsillitis
- Urinary TI
- Helminthiasis
- Febrile Illness
- Gastroenteritis
- Sepsis
- Other Diseases

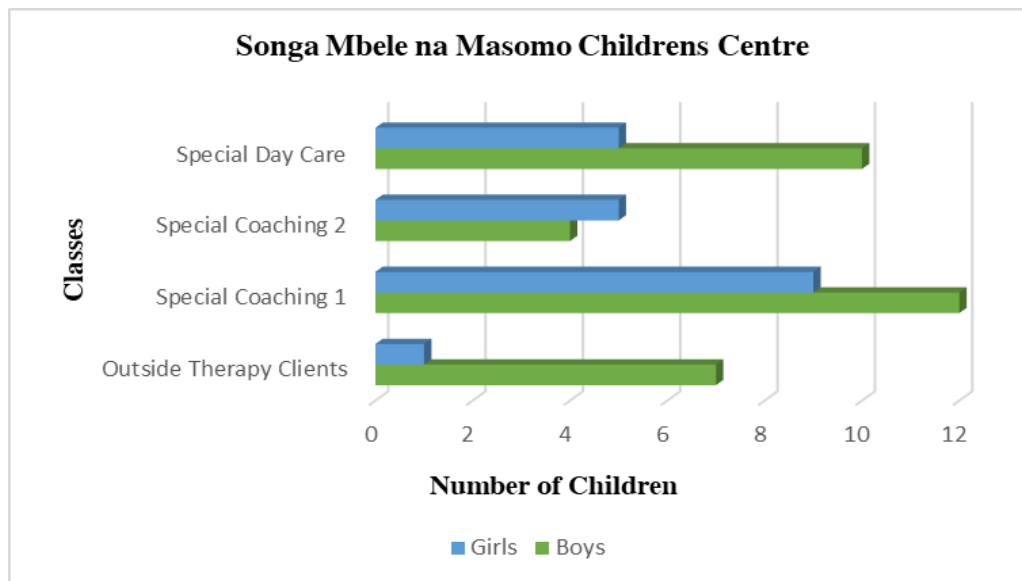
MPC is participating in the “Tupumue” (**Let us breathe**) Research Project and it is clear to see why when the large percentage of cases at the Clinic involves the lungs. We are excited to be part of this ground-breaking research for the people of Mukuru. Hopefully the research will provide many benefits to the community and assist MPC to serve the community better.

Welfare Services

Songa Mbele na Masomo

After many constraints over the last 12 months that impacted on the children's development the various classes at Songa are growing. The Association for the Physically Disabled Persons of Kenya (APDK) estimated in 2016 that there are over 1,600 families with children living with disabilities in Mukuru Kayaaba. With the new Kenyan Child Foundation sponsored facility we hope to further develop more appropriate services to the families.

The children in the various classes are participating and responding more and more according to their ability. The new admissions are also ongoing with a total of 76 for the month. The pandemic has caused all sorts of scenarios for the Centre and it is envisaged that by the end of January 2022 there will be a greater stability for the children and their parents. As we try to develop the best practices for the Centre a staff contingent went to Mama Lucy Hospital, St. Paul's School and the National Council for Persons with Disabilities to find out the latest policies and procedures for children's assessments.



Therapy sessions went on as usual in August and the therapists were able to attend to 53 children. Improvement has been noted in the children attending therapy sessions. Emmanuel can partially crawl, Nataly and Randie can concentrate more, Karen can creep partially and Israella can cross sit for a few seconds.





The Centre received 7 volunteers from the Sisters of Notre Dame, 6 caregivers from Rafa College and 1 intern from Riverbank Estate. The volunteers help to provide a stronger one-on-one learning.

Both Joseph and Melvin have been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Both are very happy with their progress.



Joseph - Special Coaching Class

Melvin Special Coaching Class

There are a few external jobs that need to be completed such as the sensory garden and pathways so that the children can really enjoy the learning environment.



Landscaping around the pathway



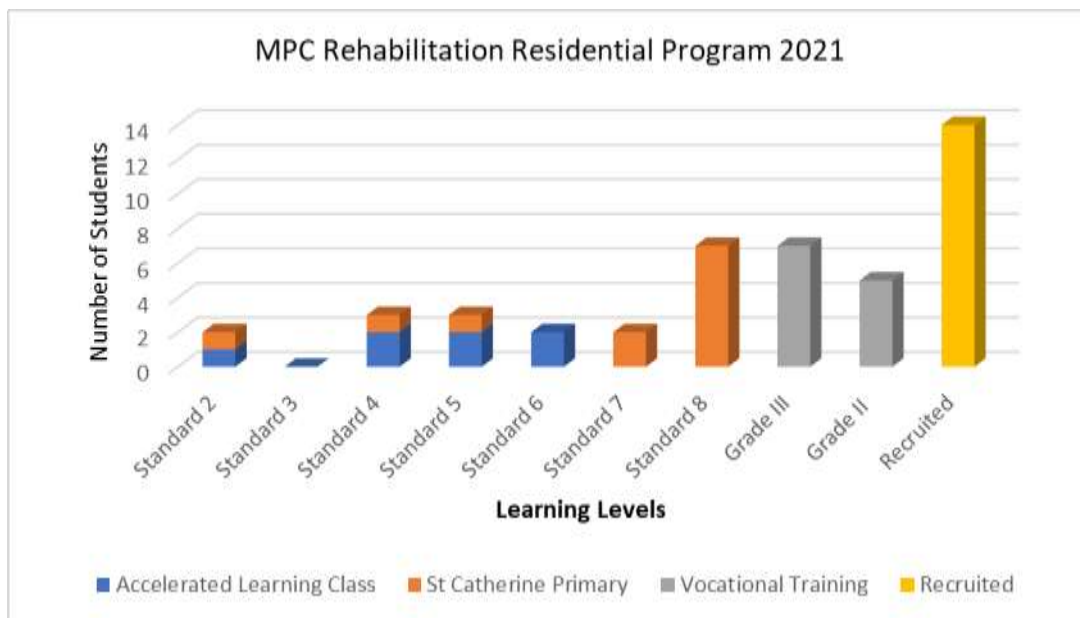
Aerial view of the pathways



Renovation of the existing building

MPC Rehabilitation Centre

The planned and unplanned activities continued in August. Seeing the boys take greater responsibility for their actions is reassuring that the rehabilitation program is working well. The major activity carried out for the month was the recruitment drive where staff go around the dump sites and streets to engage with some of the boys. The process recruited 36 boys however 22 of them relapsed and went back onto the streets. The other 14 boys have settled down well. It is always so difficult for someone who has been living on the streets to conform to a timetable, rules and regulations. The apparent freedom to do whatever I want at whatever time is too great for some. The newly recruited have all received medical check-ups but most of them had some sort of malnourishment which is not surprising given the CoVid19 pandemic. The next stage was to assess them academically so that they can be placed in the most appropriate class for remedial learning as quite a few have not been to school for a while.



The aftercare program assists the boys who have completed the 12-month residential program and have been reintegrated and require some follow-up with the social worker and counsellor so that they don't relapse. Their needs vary from counselling, guidance and moral support. Currently, there is one in tertiary education, 14 in secondary school and 3 in primary schools.



Volunteer helping with coaching

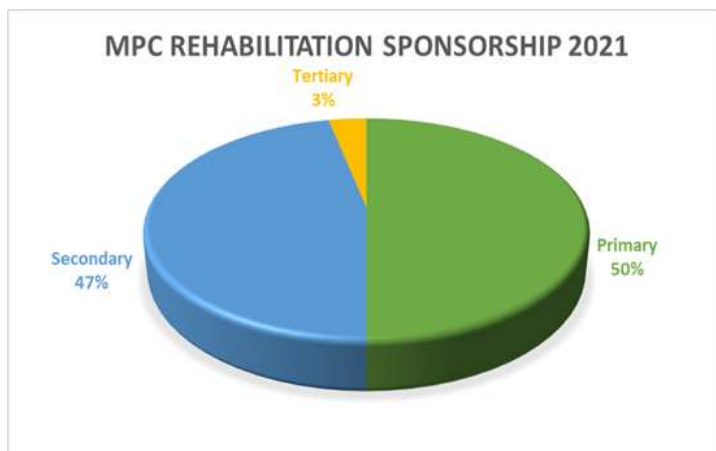


Library session

There are 13 boys who have registered to complete one of the two carpentry courses on offer at MPC. There are two levels for the boys being Grade III, the entry level and it involves basic measurements and corners, Grade II is the intermediate level with more complicated structures. The Grade I can be achieved after 2 years of practice and can sit for their license with NITA so that they can start their own business as a carpenter.



Carpentry student practicing on the sander



We are grateful to individuals who are sponsoring the students' education. Currently there are 30 students who are learning at primary, secondary and tertiary level institutions.



To give the boys the best chance of success all of them receive regular one-on-one counselling and group counselling.

We have several occupational therapy initiatives ranging from gardening, art, music, acrobatics, rugby playing, basketball playing and cooking. All these activities are therapeutic to the boys in very many ways. They can bond during games, develop unknown talents through the arts grow in appreciation of the environment.



Basketball



Potential Rugby Sevens Players



Constructing the dog kennel

Mosaic on Rehab wall



For many years there has always been a security risk for everyone on the St Catherine's site. This site hosts: St Catherine's Primary School (1,300) pupils, MPC Clinic (100 patients per day) and the Rehabilitation Centre (50). The fence had deteriorated and very little was left standing. There is a slum behind the compound and many hardcore street men live there, would use the compound as a thoroughfare. After much red tape with the authorities, we finally erected a "live fence". Sections of the riparian land had much soil erosion and lots of rubbish. Part of the fence foundation had to be reconstructed. We are very grateful to Sandra Young and her family, Adelaide Australia, who provided the bulk of funding.



Riparian land 'Live Fence'



The cost of food is ever increasing. We are very thankful to the local donors who provide good quality vegetables and fruit to the Centre. Good nutrition plays an important part in a successful program. The average food provision per month is approximately \$400US per resident. Donations certainly make a difference to our budget.



Boys receiving food donations



Shoes donation from KLM Crew

There are many parts to the MPC Rehabilitation Centre and without our generous donors the smooth operations would not be possible. We have individual, church and corporate donors who provide one off donation and we have a small group of donors who consistently assist in the day-to-day activities of the Centre such as Brothers and Sisters in Need, Family and Friends of Fr. Helmut, Paula Cullen and Friends, Claire Chambers and Calary Church, Iris Lange, Milimani Rotary Club and Team Pankaj.

Sponsorship

August marked the beginning of a new academic year 2021, whereby students commenced first term. This unusual occurrence happened as a result of the prolonged closure of schools in 2020 due to CoVid19 pandemic in the country. The Ministry of Education has managed to ‘squeeze’ the lost time to cover as much within a short period of time for the students.

The National examination results were out and students in Class Eight and Form Four were transitioned to different institutions depending on their calling letters from the Ministry.

Former Class Eight boys from the MPC Rehabilitation Centre were placed in Form One, 8 of them were admitted to different secondary schools. We are happy for the support they received from the donors as it provides a stronger focus for them with most of them performing well in the examinations.



Form One admissions were carried out successfully at St. Michael’s Secondary where the majority of students from the MPC – primary schools were admitted. The Sponsorship Office admitted 34 students in Form One being 19 boys and 11 girls placed on the program. There has been a huge challenge admitting girls but the social workers have been walking around the community to identify more girls.

Emmanuel Mutua & Moses Maina admitted to Ruthimitu Secondary School.

Opportunities were offered to students attending the vocational training centre at Our Lady of Mercy (MPC). These students are currently enrolled in catering, plumbing, dress making, hair dressing, art and craft as well as computer classes. Our goal is to have students pass with good quality education that would enable them to find immediate employment as this is the key to lifting them out of the vicious cycle of poverty.



Sponsors meet with their students

Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre were overjoyed to have 79 new students to begin their 2021 courses. Former St Michael's students (49) were enrolled in the Computer Packages class. Having the right skills for employment goes a long way and computer literacy will provide them a chance to compete with others in the job market. Another group of 28 students were sponsored to enroll in other courses such as hair dressing, catering, plumbing, dress making. At the conclusion of their course, they will be employable and earn a living to sustain themselves.



Computer Packages Class



MPC Alumni sponsors present fees cheque.

Announcements



MPC welcomes Karin Radauscher, a volunteer from Austria. An accountant by profession Karin will be assisting at Songa Mbele na Masomo for the next 6 months.

After 18 months of struggling with CoVid19, two MPC staff were diagnosed with the virus. Both staff experienced different severity but thankfully have made a full recovery. Nationally, there have been 235,863 confirmed cases since March 2020 with 223,637 recoveries and 4,757 deaths. Only 42,399 or 19% of the confirmed cases were treated in a health facility with the majority of recovered cases staying at home due to the prohibitive costs.

The population of Kenya is around 48 million and by the end of August 1,968,656 people had received the first dose (4.1%) and only 804,583 (1.68%) had received both doses. While many countries around the world are trying to achieve 80% double vaccinations this will be a mighty long way off for Kenya especially people who live in the informal settlement.



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Email: info@mercymukuru.co.ke

[Director: maryk@mercymukuru.co.ke](mailto:maryk@mercymukuru.co.ke)

Website: www.mercymukuru.co.ke

Tel: +254 (0) 722 505 904

Tel: +254 (0) 733 588 068