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Hello supporters

This is the latest newsletter to the supporters of the Simbiri Trust - the operational name of the K and D 61:1 Trust. The Trust supports the work of the Simbiri Nan Bell Health Centre, in western Kenya (often shortened to Simbiri Health Centre).



The last year has had considerable challenges, but things are currently improving. Acquiring Gladys, our cow, was one of the highlights of the year! Gladys provides milk for our patients and the staff canteen, which is much more cost effective than buying milk. Another notable change in the last year is that we have three new Trustees - Paul and Gill Smith and Ann Egan who have replaced Keith and Dee Dick, the founders of the project, and Mark Egan (the previous chair) who have stepped down. Paul Smith is the new chair of the Trustees.

Medical work

Throughout the year we have continued to provide affordable primary health care, 24/7, to a very poor community in rural Kenya. In addition to the usual general primary health care, the health centre also provides mother and child preventative care (immunisations, ante-natal care, etc), deliveries of babies, and a dedicated clinic to monitor the ongoing treatment of people with HIV infection who are taking antiretroviral drugs to keep them well (there are over 100 regular attendees of this weekly clinic).

Clinical officers

Clinical officers provide the bulk of the health care at Simbiri Health Centre. Over the last year we said goodbye to Bon who had been our senior clinical officer for over a year. In his place we now have Vitalis, who is proving to be a most able senior clinical officer, but also a most able manager. His picture is opposite.



Visiting Doctors

We are very grateful to Hannah and Ben, two young UK doctors, who spent three months at Simbiri from January this year. They not only did a fair amount of 'hands on' clinical work, but spent time teaching and mentoring the clinical officers and nurses, implemented a new clinical notes system, spent time on outreach clinics in the nearby villages, and, by all accounts, were very popular with the local staff and patients.

Two trustees also spent time in Simbiri. Dr Tim Kenny was there for a couple of weeks in April and Dr Ann Egan was there for 10 days in September. Tim and Ann generally visit at least once a year each, but try to stagger their visits so as not to let too long pass between visits from UK trustees. Both spent time helping out, teaching, mentoring and generally encouraging a high standard of good medical practice at the health centre.

Note: all visiting doctors are self funded and are not paid or reimbursed from the Trust.

Management

The challenges in the last year have mainly revolved around the management at Simbiri. Our previous long term manager, David, retired at the end of 2014. Ruth Dick, daughter of Keith and Dee, the founders of the project, spent 8 months at Simbiri from January 2015. She was tasked by the UK Trust to take over the management and to steer a course towards a new management structure by the time she intended to leave (which was originally after 6 months, but she ended up staying 8 months).

What we had not anticipated was that a group of local people had seen what they thought to be an opening for them to 'take over' the management of the health centre and took a number of steps to undermine Ruth's work and administrative authority. This was a very trying time. However, I am pleased to say that the vast majority of the local community rejected the idea of this 'take over' and supported Ruth, the UK Trust and the health centre staff in our efforts to maintain a reliable management. This included the local chief - Chief Benson (like a local mayor) who has supported us throughout.

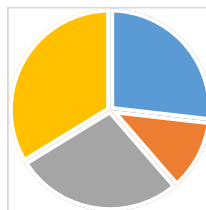
We are very grateful for Ruth for her work in Simbiri throughout 2015. Without her input we may well be in a very different place now. Indeed, we feared at one point that the health centre may have had to close.

Currently, the management is conducted by the heads of each department (nursing, medical, ground/farm, and catering) under the leadership of Vitalis, our chief clinical officer. We assumed that this would be temporary and that we would be in need of a dedicated manager, but have been pleasantly surprised as to how well the place is now working and managing with this 'broad based' co-operative style management structure. It certainly bodes well to the ultimate aim of getting Simbiri Health Centre self sufficient and self reliant. Dr Tim Kenny is planing to visit early in the new year to assess how things are going.

Finance - moving towards self reliance

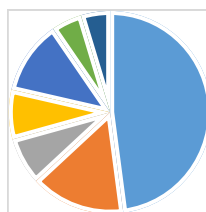
Clinic Income	£	
Funds from the UK Trust	26,300	
Clinic fees paid by patients	11,600	
Govt treatment fees (NHIF)	27,100	
Income generation projects	33,100	
TOTAL	98,100	
Income generation projects include: mortuary/funeral services, café, transport, misc small projects.		
Clinic Expenditure		
Salaries / Wages	46,100	
Clinic / Medical expenses	14,600	
Generator	7,300	
Mortuary	7,600	
Vehicles	11,400	
Clinic kitchen and Cafe	4,700	
Miscellaneous	4,500	
TOTAL	96,200	

Whilst our longer term plan remains to help make the health centre self-supporting, and although progress has been made towards this objective, we are not there yet.



The breakdown of the health centre's income and expenditure for the year ending 5th April 2015 is shown here. See our previous newsletters (on website) to explain about the income streams of the health centre.

Perhaps the most significant figure to note is that, compared with the previous year, the proportion of income needed from the UK Trust to run the health centre increased to 27% of the income required, which amounted to an increase from the previous year of about £3800.



Part of the reason why the proportion needed from the UK had to increase was because of the management problems as described earlier. This included fraudulent use of some funds (which resulted in the dismissal of a member of staff). Also, general costs have risen and, in addition, the cash flow to us from our claims to the Kenyan nation health insurance fund (NHIF), on which we rely for a large proportion of income, has been somewhat slow! Consequently, we were left with a difficult financial situation in April, but were extremely grateful to supporters who responded to Dee Dick's appeal at that time, without which we wonder if the health centre may have needed to close.

Since May the financial situation has been very difficult, but we have managed to continue and have never had to default on paying wages or make anyone redundant. We are optimistic that the financial situation and local income generation will improve but I trust that we can count on your continued support, as without Simbiri Health Centre I am sure that health care would be considerably worse off for the local people, and indeed, lives would be lost.

To all our supporters - Thank you very much for your support, and may I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas.

Dr Tim Kenny on behalf of the Trustees - December 2015