

July to December 2006 News

Makeni Ecumenical Centre
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<http://makeni.org.uk>



Dear Friends,

This is the second report for 2006. If you have any questions, please write to one of the addresses on the website for more information!

Biogas Project

Team leaders for the biogas project, Maarten van de Graaf and Peter van Hartingsveldt arrived in Zambia from Holland on the 4th July, 2006 to set up the project. With them came Saramaria van Zessen who is studying to be a midwife.

The young men were extremely enthusiastic and an hour after they had arrived at the centre wanted to be shown the spot set aside for the project, to judge its suitability. Fortunately, they were happy with the location and at 8 a.m. the following morning, dressed in their old clothes, they were hard at work with shovels and spades, digging the holes for the two domes that would accommodate the biogas tanks.

The Zambian students were most impressed at the physical strength of the two *mzungus* and were quick to join in and take turns in digging.

The concept that it is possible to generate gas from animal manure and at the end of the process have refined manure for the garden was very appealing to a community where one gets nothing for nothing. On the 1st August, Maarten and Peter were joined by another engineer, Michiel van Bokhorst, also from Holland and later by Elise Snyders, who is a teacher.

Although not technically part of the team, Elise, Saramaria and Sheena Manning (of whom more later) all took a keen interest in the progress of the tanks. At times when a small person was needed to smooth the cement inside the tank, they would get inside the small opening to do this important work, Everyone helped to keep the cement watered to prevent cracking.

One of the two unused chicken houses was upgraded to become a kitchen, where a gas cooker was connected to the outlet from the biogas tank. The idea is that the manure of our three dozen pigs will be sufficient to cook at least one meal a day for the orphanage and cut down dramatically on our electricity bills. There is still a technical problem that our agricultural staff are working on and we hope to give a positive update in our next report.

One of the most exciting aspects of this project was the interest that it generated from the general public and the media. Two television stations have made documentaries about the project and two newspapers have run articles. As a result, the centre has received many enquiries relating to the project and also in general about the centre and courses run here.

This has been a very positive experience and we are grateful to the biogas team and their helpers and the people and organisations that gave financial support to the project. (More technical details can be obtained from the [Dutch website](#).)

Community Mobilisation Project

A five-day workshop funded by ZWO Kloosterkerk, Holland and conducted by Emmanuel Mutamba of Green Living Movement was held from the 8th to 12th August at Kalwelwe Settlement Village. The participants were drawn from Mwomboshi, Chisamba and Kalwelwe settlement villages. Mr B. Zulu, an agricultural instructor at MEC, coordinated the workshop. The closing session was conducted by Fr Andrew Mukuyamba, MEC chairman.

Agricultural Settlement Project

In preparation for settling the 2006 intake, three members of staff from the agricultural department, Mr J. Silwenga, Mr B. Zulu and Mr V. Kapulu, attended a five day course in basic land surveying from July 31st to August 4th. With their newly acquired skill, the three demarcated 20 plots in Chisamba Settlement Village from 14th-18th August. The project was sponsored by ZWO.

New settlers were taken to the villages on the 20th and 21st September as follows: Mwomboshi (3), Chisamba (11) and Kalwelwe (2)

Graduation

The 35th graduation ceremony saw 57 students completing their studies: Agriculture General (14), Agricultural Settlement (16), Electronics (18), Home Economics, Tailoring and Design (9).

Officiating at the colourful ceremony was the permanent secretary for the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Mrs Barbara Chilangwa, who thanked Makeni Centre for offering courses assisting vulnerable groups in society, including school drop-outs, retirees, single parents and the aged. Mrs Chilangwa also commended MEC for the work of St Nicholas Village for Children and the Home-Based Care project, which cares for AIDS orphans who are living with relatives, providing school fees, food and other aid.

MEC Chairman, Fr Andrew Mukuyamba, thanked the Permanent Secretary for officiating and the government for their support over the years.

Addressing the students, Mrs Chilangwa reminded the graduates of the challenges awaiting them at work, home and in their community, stating that society was not tolerant of ineffective or inefficient people. She urged them to work hard as they go out of Makeni into their various fields.

In a vote of thanks, student representative Pitin Chulu, thanked the permanent secretary for accepting the invitation to officiate and expressed gratitude to MEC for the skills they have acquired during their training. He said the students would take up the challenge ahead and work hard to achieve their best.

Adult Training

On 26th September 2006, Fr Mukuyamba officially opened the new academic year. In the Home Economics department a new course in Food Production has been introduced. New intakes in Carpentry and Joinery and Radio and TV Maintenance commence in January 2007.

CCZ Conference

The three-yearly conference of the Christian Council of Zambia, an ecumenical umbrella body for Christian churches and organisations in the country, was held from the 26th to 31st August at the CCZ David Livingstone College of Education, in Livingstone. The theme was "God

in your grace transform Zambia". The conference was attended by two delegates from each of the church councils, 22 protestant and orthodox church members and also from the 19 affiliated organisations, of which MEC is one.

Mr Joe Silwenga and Mrs Wenda Dil attended on behalf of MEC.

The vision of CCZ is to respond within a Christian context to the emerging social needs of the people in education, health (especially HIV and AIDS), gender and youth development, while also making useful interventions in emergency situations as they arise.

The five-day, tightly-packed programme included daily devotions, the chair's and general secretary's reports, audited reports, governance and voter education (just ahead of the general elections) and reports on HIV and AIDS and strategic direction.

It was very interesting meeting delegates from other groups and being able to compare notes, including that other organisations are going through the same problems as MEC, namely dwindling donor funding and a realization that self-reliance and sustainability is the only way forward.

One proof of the worth of the conference was that even those who had endured 14 hours of road travel to and from Livingstone never managed even one peek at the famous Victoria Falls over the course of five days!

PUM Link

MEC has made a connection with a help group in Holland known as PUM (Netherlands Senior Experts), which sends out experts in various fields at their cost. The receiving donor looks after the visitor's accommodation, local transport and meals, in this case managed by Mrs Wenda Dil. Our thanks are due to Truus Veldkamp for helping to set up this link.

The PUM local representative, Rudy van Gent, visited MEC on the 13th September, 2006 and PUM expert Mr Ton Linthorst arrived on 17th October for a three-week visit, to assist with our new pork processing venture, bringing with him gifts for the children at the orphanage as well as knives and other accessories for the project. "Linthorst" is a

famous brand name in the Netherlands meat processing world, so we felt especially honoured to have Ton with us.

After adjusting mentally, from "large Western commercial" to "small third-world development project", Mr Linthorst was able to pass on a great deal of important knowledge in the field of pork processing.

He assessed our needs and advised us to buy manually operated mincing and sausage machines, sharp knives and handsaws, instead of the expensive electric saw we were planning to buy.

The butchery has been made in a disused chicken house, renovated and converted especially for this purpose. Power points for a deep freezer and any other electrical equipment were installed.

Since this visit took place in October, the hottest month of the Zambian calendar, we were forced to think up ways that the carcass could be left hanging overnight, as required in correct slaughtering procedure, without it going bad. We were advised to slaughter in the late afternoons, to take advantage of the cooler temperatures. A further ingenious Zambian solution to the heat problem, was to buy a large tin bath at the local market and fill it with ice to place under the carcass. It worked beautifully, and in the morning, Mr Linthorst continued his lessons showing the students the correct way to butcher and package the meat.

There were two pig slaughtering sessions following this pattern. The second session was done by the teachers and students, under the watchful eye of Mr Linthorst. We were also taught how to make ham, bacon and other smoked cuts using a simple (clean) petrol drum smoker.

Canadian volunteer Ted Krickan took a very active part in all these activities and was a tremendous help to us during this time.

We are most grateful to the Rotary Club of Cape Town and George & Moonyeen Muller of Cape Town for donating mincing and sausage-machines.

We were helped with sausage making by another PUM representative, Mr Nol Nieuwenhuis, who took time out from his busy schedule to spend one and a half action-packed days with us. Many thanks are due

to Mr Nieuwenhuis for all his help, as well as to Buccaneer Meat Products (Lusaka) manager, Mr Corrie Krige, for allowing Nol to work with us. Cumberland sausages and boerwors were pronounced excellent by all who enjoyed the products. Many thanks also to Andrew Knowles in England for supplying us with recipes, as well as many useful informational leaflets on pork processing.

Students and staff were inspired by the teaching of the PUM representatives and we hope that in future we may take advantage of this excellent help once again.

We have the help of a local butcher for advice and factory visits, should we need further support in future, so we feel confident that we can sustain this venture, and become more self-sufficient in our production, as well as add value to basic pork products for a more commercial return on our livestock investments. We will also be able to take the manual processing equipment into rural areas to our settlement villages to share the knowledge we have gained.

Volunteers and other staff

The guest house for volunteers was stretched to its maximum capacity during the period of the biogas project, and the six young people had an added learning experience of working, playing and keeping house together. The girls did a great job at the clinic and we hope they will return to work here when they get their qualifications.

Elise Snyders

When not assisting the biogas team, Elise spent her time at the orphanage, having lots of fun with the children doing handcrafts such as beading, painting and design.

Together with Sheena and Saramaria she put on a fancy dress show and a parade. The children designed and made their own outfits, sometimes out of paper or bin bags and showed them off with much hilarity and applause from the audience.

All the inhabitants and staff within the centre grounds were invited to this fun-filled afternoon.

Saramaria van Zessen and Peter van Hartingsveldt

Saramaria and Peter are part of the Dutch Church link to Makeni. The church in the town of Barendrecht has supported MEC for many years. Saramaria's father Huib is a long standing supporter and fundraiser for MEC, making Saramaria a second generation friend of MEC.

Sheena Manning

Sheena is from Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, where MEC also has another strong link and many friends due to the presence of Dr Pierre Dil and Lee Ann Dil. Sheena arrived in Lusaka on 18th July 2006. She hopes to start medical school in the the new year and came to help the family planning project that is linked to the AIDS and HIV prevention clinic.

Sheena and Saramaria visited rural clinics with the mobile AIDS and HIV prevention unit and participated in workshops for AIDS and HIV teaching. They also visited urban townships delivering maize meal to our home based AIDS orphans.

Sheena also took an interest in the orphanage, especially in the evening walks with the children around the Makeni area.

Claire Steen

Claire came to work at the centre for two days a week in the middle of 2006 after Anglican bishop David Njovu introduced her to Makeni Ecumenical Centre.

Claire worked at the orphanage, helping children with their reading and doing craft work including colouring, painting, collages, bracelet making and play dough.

You can read Claire's full report on the website.

Ted Krickan

Ted joined us from Vancouver Island, Canada, for three months ending in December. Ted spent a great deal of time with the children at the orphanage, tutoring maths and English, going for walks, giving the children their very first computer lessons, and getting to know everyone well. Ted also played the role of St Nicholas (in a nice warm suit) in our annual celebration, accompanied by singing of songs and presents, cake, dancing and even a few fireworks in the evening!

You can read Ted's full report on the website.

Caroline Cope

At the end of July we had a flying visit from an old friend, ex Lusaka resident Caroline Cope, who was in Zambia doing some research for an article that she was writing.

She and her husband David are connected to the Friends of Makeni through Little St Mary's Church in Cambridge, who are long time supporters of our work.

Due to the shortness of her visit and pressure of work, she was unable to visit MEC this time, but we met at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, and went for coffee at the new Arcades shopping centre.

Mrs Dil gave her an update on our work and present needs, which resulted in her and David sponsoring the high school education of one of our deserving orphans.

We thank Caroline and David most sincerely. Their financial and moral support is much appreciated.

Maarten van de Graaf, Peter van Hartingsveldt and Michiel van Bokhorst

The biogas team! See earlier in this report for details.

Donations

We would like to thank the Zambia Tamil Cultural Association for their kind donation of library books for the Adult Education courses. Mr A Nithyanathan made the donation on the 14th of July, greatly improving the supply of these much needed books. A cash donation was also given for books that were not obtainable at the time.

A donation of a large deep freezer was received from George and Moonyeen Muller and the Rotary Club of Cape Town. This will be used in the biogas kitchen for our meat processing project. Our sincere thanks for your support!

Debbie and Bruce Milano are continuing to support and replenish the First Aid kits in Mwomboshi, Kalwelwe and Chisamba Settlement villages.

The donations so far received from St. John the Baptist church in Piddington, Northants, UK, (also the church of former volunteer Andrew Knowles) amount to £650. Thank you for your continuing support!

Overseas Visitors

In addition to volunteers, it is always good to have visitors – thank you to all of the following who spent some time with us or assisted us in other ways:

- Jelske and Drikus Kleefoman, Netherlands – thank you for the lovely photo!
- Nol Nieuwenhuis, Netherlands - PUM Sector coordinator (meat industry); more about this in the next newsletter.
- Michael and Jane Steen, UK
- Catherine, Mathew and Eleanor Hughes, UK.
- Harry Kraft and Anke Kuiper, Netherlands.
- Ton Linthorst, Netherlands, PUM representative.
- Rod and Sue Calder – who help to bring parcels from Canada via Namianja Mission, Kalomo.

Web News

A film clip of the biogas project has been added to the website, along with clips of the children at St Nicholas Village that were recorded in November 2006, and a clip of the church choir. There are also new photo galleries, including some photos from the 2006 St Nicholas celebrations. A “Google Earth” satellite view of the centre has also been added.

A speech given by President Kenneth Kaunda on the occasion of the 10th anniversary (1981) is available on our music page and remains relevant listening 25 years on. (Broadband or patience is required to download!)

Very nice reports from Claire Steen (England) and Ted Krickan (Canada), both volunteers in 2006, have been added to the website.

Dutch readers may like to visit a new companion website at <http://www.vriendenvanmakeni.org>.

From time to time we unfortunately have to change our online web addresses due to spam. If using an address ending @makeni.org.uk to contact us, please check that it is still valid at the main website contacts page.

Please let the webmaster (makeni.org.uk) have your latest email addresses, so that we can continue to reach you via our online mailing list.

Warm Regards,

Mrs C.M. Allen, Fr Andrew Mukuyamba, Mrs W. E. Dil, and the staff of Makeni Centre.