



# Newsletter

3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER July/September 2014

## Makeni Ecumenical Centre

*Sharing experiences and information with our partners*

### **Inside this issue**

- Makeni School in need of two science laboratories
- Wenda Dil urges women to be self-reliant during 43<sup>rd</sup> Graduation Ceremony
- Irrigation Project: self-sustainability initiative through Agriculture Dept
- MEC conducts sensitizations on early marriages and teenage pregnancies
- Chisamba Ranch Primary School under pressure to include secondary section
- Barclays Bank continues help St. Nicholas Orphanage
- Deputy head-teacher attends peace training in South Africa
- MEC conducts bee-keeping course for settlers and staff

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## **Makeni School in need of two science laboratories**

**By Kandala Mwanangombe**

Makeni Ecumenical Centre School is in dire need of two laboratories. This is according to the newly imposed

requirements by the Ministry of Education for the School to be accredited to offer high school education from Grade 10 to Grade 12 as well as to be a Grade 12 Examinations Centre.

The estimated cost of building the two laboratories is K281, 000 (\$45,400). Fortunately we have room to build, so if all the funds are available the building could be completed before the end of 2015.

The subsequent phase of the laboratory project will be equipping the labs at a cost yet to be determined, but we hope for assistance from our friends in the Netherlands.

The construction of the second laboratory and the accreditation will help to avoid sending children of St Nicholas Orphanage and pupils of the school to other schools to write exams, which we currently are forced to do, incurring significant costs per pupil. In addition the centre would be

able to offer its facilities to pupils of neighbouring schools.



**Part of the new laboratory at the initial stages of construction**

The School currently has one laboratory, which is used for teaching Chemistry, Physics and Biology. However, new government regulations now require that a school has separate laboratories for each subject.

In the July meeting between the MEC Executive Committee and the Parents Teachers Association it was resolved that the project starts as soon as possible. It was agreed that resources will need to be raised through contributions from parents, and other fundraising activities such as walks, car washing, or even a golf tournament, as well as soliciting for assistance from the donor community and the corporate world.

Through internal resources MEC managed to raise K11, 070 to kick-start the initial stages of the project. The completion of the project will add a lot of value to the service delivery of the school and should be a morale

booster to both teachers and the pupils.

## **Mrs Wenda Dil urges women to be self-reliant during 43<sup>rd</sup> Graduation Ceremony**

**By Edward Phiri**

The co-founder of Makeni Ecumenical Centre, Mrs Wenda Dil, encouraged women to work towards self-reliance if they are to be respected and well considered in society. She was speaking during the 43<sup>rd</sup> Graduation Ceremony held on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014, where she was the Guest of Honour.



**Mrs Wenda Dil addressing graduates during the 43<sup>rd</sup> Graduation Ceremony**

She implored the graduates to remember where they come from and utilise their skills to develop themselves and the community in which they live. She encouraged

graduates to be good ambassadors of the Centre and encourage people they know to come and enrol at the Centre.

There was excitement as the events of the annual send-off ceremony unfolded, including speeches, songs, dances and drama. Some sponsors shed tears of joy as they looked back on how they struggled to raise fees for their relatives. The awarding of certificates to the graduates was enough to make them happy on this day.

39 students graduated in Agricultural Settlement, General Agriculture and Food Production, the majority of them women.



**Some of the graduating students pose for a photograph with the Guest of Honour**

During the same event it was announced that the Adult Training Programme will now be called the Skills Training Programme.

## **Irrigation Project: self-sustainability initiative through Agriculture Dept**

**By Fr Andrew Mukuyamba**

In its quest to enhance self-sustainability, MEC proposed to integrate irrigation under the crop production unit as outlined in the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan. The idea of introducing the irrigation project is to enable the Agriculture Department to produce crops throughout the year for sale so that the department can be self-sustaining.

We are glad to note that the project was started at the end of September to cover an area of 5600m<sup>2</sup>.

It was a difficult time to coordinate matters since this was a time when two new members of staff were being engaged to run the department and new students were being oriented for the 2014/2015 Academic year.



**Paul Jongeling demonstrating how the booster pump should be used during the January visit**

The major boost to the Irrigation Project was enabled through the help of Paul Jongeling and Vera Ootes when they visited MEC in January 2014. They invested in the installation of a water supply tank, booster pump and its accessories and sprinklers.

Paul Jongeling and Vera Ootes as cooperating partners from the Netherlands have been helping Makeni Ecumenical Centre in a number of areas such as setting up a modern computer laboratory, upgrading the St Nicholas Children's Home, providing consultancy in strategy development and implementation and building capacity in line management staff.

Makeni Ecumenical centre spent K2, 183 to construct the booster pump house, using staff from the maintenance section.



**Part of the field designated for the Irrigation Project and now under cultivation**

For the initial part of the project, maize, cabbage, onion, Chinese cabbage, and local vegetables such as pumpkin leaves and sweet potatoes leaves have been planted. The crops will run in sequence and rotation

throughout the year with other crops to be introduced later.

## **MEC conducts sensitizations on early marriages and teenage pregnancies**

**By Catherine Oreta**

Makeni Ecumenical Centre's HIV/AIDS & Mobile Family Planning Project carried out massive sensitisation campaigns against early marriages and teenage pregnancies in its three settlement villages and surrounding areas in July and August.

Sensitisation campaigns were carried out as part of reproductive health education with financial support from the NGOCC who contributed K30, 000 for the campaign.



**Women preparing lunch for participants in Chisamba**

The campaign targeted teachers, pupils, local leaders and communities. Three days were set for each location from 0900hrs to 1600hrs. The first half of the day targeted teachers, the

second half of the first day and the second day targeted pupils. The third day targeted the local leaders and communities.

32 teachers, 1400 pupils, 29 community leaders (including Headmen), and 451 community members were empowered with information and knowledge during the sensitisation campaigns. The three communities were capacitated so as to respond to cases of early marriages and teenage pregnancies in their communities.

Apart from discussions and presentations on the dangers of early marriages and teenage pregnancies, more information was shared on HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, cervical cancer, gender based violence, sexual reproductive health rights and sexuality.

The campaigns were coordinated by Mrs Catherine Oreta and facilitated by Mrs Getrude Shinkanga, a very experienced youth and gender expert. The media played a critical role in publicising the events as they took place.

## **“Early marriage delayed my personal progress,” says Hakwaambwa**

A 31 year old young man, Friger Hakwaambwa, of Mwomboshi Settlement Village, recounts his ordeal

of having delayed his own progress due to early marriage. He recalled that he got married very early in life when he was still in junior secondary school in the Southern Province of Zambia.

He must have been around fifteen years old when he got his wife pregnant and they both could not continue with school. According to him, it must have been an issue of mere routine youthful play when later it reached him that the girl he loved so much was expecting his child.



**Friger Hakwaambwa, one of the young settlers in Mwomboshi Settlement Village**

“As per culture when a man makes a young woman pregnant, he has no choice but to marry”, revealed Hakwaambwa, while smiling.

After being married, the situation compelled Hakwaambwa to move to Mwomboshi to start a new life with his young and cheerful wife, as a worker on a farm. While working he noted that he was capable of working on his

own and for himself. That prompted him to apply for resettlement at Makeni Ecumenical Centre under the Agriculture Settlement Project nearly 13 years ago.

The panel of interviewers was dismayed when they saw a very young but determined man requesting for consideration under the Project. Though he did not meet the criteria of being above 30, under special consideration he was selected to undergo training in Settlement Agriculture for one year and later on to settle in Mwomboshi.

The young man has been very productive and full of hope for the future. He admits that he would have progressed more in his life if he had not married earlier. "Much of the money I get from farming is used to take care of my children's health, school and food, instead of furthering my education or buying more inputs in time", remarks the father of five children.

As a result of his experiences, Hakwaambwa has decided to help sensitise young people and teenagers on the dangers of early marriages and teenage pregnancies. He has also at times done voluntary teaching at the Mwomboshi Community School.

## **Chisamba Ranch Primary School under pressure to open secondary section**

**By Joe Silwenga**

Chisamba Ranch Primary School started as a community school with the majority being new settlement families that MEC started settling under the Agriculture Settlement Project in 1996. The structures at the school were former farm ranch buildings of the now defunct Zambia Agriculture Development Company Limited (ZADL).



**Chisamba Ranch Primary School**

ZADL was a parastatal company under the Zambian government whose mandate was to develop agriculture through running state owned farms.

From about 1996 the population has been steadily growing, and there are now over 250 families settled (approximately 1500 people) in Chisamba Settlement Village alone.

Chisamba Primary school has more than 600 pupils, but only 8 classrooms, meaning there is an average of 75 pupils per class. In January over 45 children from Chisamba Settlement Village could not be enrolled in primary school because of lack of space. This prompted the Village Management Committee to introduce a Grade 1 class in addition to the pre-school class that has been running for some years in the village.

There has been an increasing demand for senior secondary school due to population growth and parents have been concerned since school places in boarding schools around the area are often difficult to find and expensive.

The school administration has therefore embarked on resource mobilisation efforts with various stakeholders for building materials needed.

The have discussed with parents and initially have asked each pupil to contribute K500. Parents, meanwhile, were asked to make bricks within the school grounds and by the end of September bricks had been made out of anthill soil and baked in kilns. They also contacted the office of the District Commissioner for funding and support towards this mammoth task. Indeed help towards the construction of the school will go a long way in alleviating the difficulties pupils and parents are facing in Chisamba Settlement Village and surrounding areas.

## **Barclays Bank continues to help St Nicholas Orphanage**

**By Ireen Simwale Chinyama**

It was a beautiful Saturday morning on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2014 when Barclays Bank visited Makeni Ecumenical Centre St Nicholas Children's Home for what they called a social visit and interaction with the children. The visit was segmented into three parts: work, interact and lunch with the children. The team of more than 10 Barclays Bank employees quickly set out to work – painting the dining hall.



**Some of the foodstuffs Barclays Bank employees had with the children at St. Nicholas**

The second programme was interacting with children, in which they did homework, reading, presentations on financial literacy, budgeting, entrepreneurship skills and a motivational talk. They went on to donate 240 litres of cream PVA paint, 10 litres each of green and black paint, 3 roller brushes and 3 paint brushes. The paints will cater for the entire orphanage.

After the interaction and donations, it was time to have a meal comprising various foodstuffs and drinks, which the children enjoyed with gratitude.

As a gesture of appreciation the children sang songs. The Matron, Mrs Ireen Chinyama, thanked Barclays Bank for giving the children their time and helping hands. "It is our prayer that God will continue to richly bless you, your work and families for all this great work you are doing for us", she said.



Mr Banda, the team leader from Barclays, explaining the purpose of their visit

## **MEC Conducts bee-keeping course for students and staff**

**By Victor Kana**

Several MEC employees and Agriculture department students recently had an exciting time learning about bee-keeping at no cost at all. The main objective was to empower the participants with skills and knowledge in bee-keeping to enable them to integrate bee-keeping in their

farming systems and earn an extra income.

The course duration was three weeks and the resource person was Mr Goodfellow Mugala, a student in Agricultural Settlement. He volunteered to offer the training knowing the potential that bee-keeping can offer farmers in the Settlement Villages. He has massive experience in hands-on bee-keeping and is a member of the Bee-keepers Association of Zambia.

Amongst the topics learnt were: the bee, covering what the insect is all about; making bee-hives, transfer of bees from hive to hive, processing and harvesting honey, and making wax.

The participants learned that there are more than 200 products from the bee-keeping industry that can be realised, including honey, wax and candles. We heard how honey can help in curing illnesses such as common colds, heart diseases, weak immune systems, diabetes and some body weakness.

A bee-keeping project has been restarted within the Centre to help create a hands-on facility for students in agriculture and at the same time take care of the bees that stray into buildings and houses around the Centre.





A hanging bee-hive within the centre

Settlement students are being encouraged to introduce bee-keeping projects once they settle on their 10 acre farms.

### **School Update!**

Drama has been becoming popular among pupils at the school. Below we see the school drama club performing in front of the pupils.



School Drama Club in action

### **VISION**

***Prosperity for All Zambians, God Being Our Help***

### **MISSION**

***"To provide skills training, education, settlement, health and community services with the sole aim of empowering people to live a decent life"***

### **Editorial Team**

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