



# Newsletter

2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER

April/June 2015

## Makeni Ecumenical Centre

*Sharing experiences and information with our partners*

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## School Laboratories construction on Course

**By Joe Silwenga**

In 2014 we reported that the MEC School was in need of two more laboratories to fulfil the Ministry of Education requirement. This project is estimated to cost K281, 000

(€32,000). Fortunately we had space to accommodate the lab construction.



*Roof construction being carried out on the Laboratory construction project*

It is gratifying to report that financial assistance was sought and Makeni Ecumenical Centre's all-weather Friend, the Friends of Makeni, Netherlands, has come on board to assist with half the amount required. The agreement was finally sealed during the visit of Mr Jan Kars, the Treasurer of Friends of Makeni, in March 2015.

"Makeni Ecumenical Centre is very grateful to the Friends of Makeni for this great assistance and support. We

hope that our friendship and partnership will continue to grow from strength to strength and that Makeni Ecumenical Centre will continue to be a channel through which people will be helped to live a decent life," said Fr. Mukuyamba, the Executive Chairman of the Centre.

So far €10,500 has been sent and is being used in the project. The building is at roofing level. The shortfall will need to be sourced elsewhere in order to finish the project.

After the building is completed, the laboratories will need equipment and other related items. We estimate these will cost K85, 000 (€9,680).

Makeni Ecumenical Centre injected K11, 070 (€1,261) in 2014 to start the project. Various stakeholders have been involved to aim for the laboratory to be completed by the end of October 2015. Pupils and parents are expected to raise a total of K15, 400 (€1,754) through contributions of K50 per pupil.

At the end of the project the Centre will have three separate laboratories to cater for Physics, Chemistry and Biology. MEC is still appealing to individuals, organisations and the corporate world to help financially or materially towards this noble project. The school has been operating for over 30 years and needs these facilities to keep up its standards.

## Bad roads a major obstacle to the development of the Settlement Villages

By Joe Silwenga



*A vehicle breaks down as it carries people and goods to Chisamba from Chisamba Settlement Village. There was no alternative transport for people so they had to wait until the vehicle was fixed.*

With the Agriculture Settlement Villages becoming full and the populations maturing and becoming stable, it has been noted that one of the biggest obstacles to their further development has been the bad state of the roads. Five years ago it was unthinkable to have private transporters service the Settlement Villages. However, with the increase in populations and expanding habitats, there has been increased interest by private transporters to transport goods and people. Unfortunately, the state of the roads is extremely bad.

The stretches from the main road measure 25km for Kalwelwe, 21km for Chisamba and 24km for Mwomboshi. The time spent to cover these

stretches of roads goes beyond one hour, due to the bad state of the roads.

Most vehicles used are open vans and they carry both passengers and goods. There is little space for comfort or sometimes safety. Most vehicles are not properly maintained. They constantly break down and drivers worry about the vehicle suspension system and the quick wear and tear of tyres.

Due to limited space for passengers and goods as well as restricted availability, farmers carry small amounts of their supplies and outputs between destinations and have to hire a transporter to carry more. The transporters charge exorbitant prices for the services they offer and only service these routes three days in a week, with only one round trip per day.

The prices from the road side to the Settlement Village range from K13 to K16 per person (about €1) for an average of 23Km. Although this may not sound much to European readers, one has to take into account the low incomes of settlers. In contrast the Lusaka-to-Chisamba route which is 62km fetches about K20 per person only.

Kalwelwe now has 47 families, Chisamba has 235 and Mwomboshi has 102, so this situation affects a great number of people.

## FOM's older children education support impacting one life at time

### Gift Shares his College Experience

#### By Gift Machaya

*The Friends of Makeni has been supporting the older children coming from St Nicholas Children's Home with educational sponsorship to attend college. This has seen some of the beneficiaries become teachers and social workers and many others are still studying in various fields. Gift Machaya is a 22 year old young man under the Older Children Education Support Programme. He here shares his college experiences and appreciation of this unique opportunity.*



*Gift Machaya during his stay at St Nicholas Children's Home*

I was born on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1992. I spent much of my early life at St

Nicholas Children's Home at Makeni Ecumenical Centre. I completed my secondary education right at the Centre in 2013. I enrolled for higher education at Lusaka Vocation Training Centre in May 2014 and I am doing auto mechanics.

Though I chose auto mechanics, I had no idea what it takes to be an auto mechanic. I am studying communication skills, mathematics, ICT, driving, entrepreneurship, engineering science and fundamentals of auto mechanics.

The subjects that I like most are communication skills, mathematics, ICT, driving and fundamentals of auto mechanics. I like these subjects because I perform well in them. The subjects I find challenging are engineering science and fundamentals of auto mechanics. I am working hard on these two to improve my results.

I am in my second year and at this level I am able to identify some faults in vehicles and I am able to fix them. The more I do the practicals on vehicle repairs and maintenance, the more I develop my interest in the trade. I will continue to work hard to have good results so that I can find a good job. I am grateful to Makeni Ecumenical Centre and the Friends of Makeni for the support. I am also grateful to my family which has been helping me with upkeep.

*The Friends of Makeni are also sponsoring David Mtonga and Patrick Mwamba at the same institution.*

## **RDA women celebrate International Women's Day at St Nicholas**

**By Ireen Chinyama**

The women at Roads Development Agency (RDA) celebrated International Women's Day with the children at St Nicholas Children's Village at Makeni Ecumenical Centre on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015. Though the important day falls on 8<sup>th</sup> March of each year, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015 turned out to be suitable for these generous women.



*RDA women pose for a photograph with children from St Nicholas Home*

It was a wonderful day, which encouraged the children to learn from women in higher positions and diverse professions. They were also surprised. All they knew was men were always in higher positions. On that day children met engineers, directors, human resource personnel, office assistants, accountants, lawyers and road inspectors, to mention a few, who were all women.

The visitors gave motivational talks to the children and career guidance on the jobs they are doing, and this helped the children understand what it means to be in the stated positions. Children were further guided on which industry could be best for them. Emphasis was also laid on the need for girls to take up the opportunities available, to get a good education and follow a good career.

The women donated assorted items including 8 bags of mealie meal, 26 plates, 26 cups, 36 bathing soaps, 5 litres spirit of salt, 5 litres cooking oil, 3 mops, 4 big dishes, 24 Mac powder, 3 harpic and 5 medas kapenta.

We really appreciate the women for the heart and caring which they have shown. Makeni Ecumenical Centre appreciates the women for the commendable work they did, as well as the Roads Development Agency.

## **MEC's advocacy against early marriages changing rural people's mindset**

**By Joe Silwenga**

With the message against early marriages and teenage pregnancy gathering momentum in the rural outreach sites of Mwomboshi, Kalwelwe, Chisamba, Shikatende and Munyati, positive results have been

reported from various sections of the target groups.

Chief Chamuka of the Lenje-speaking people has been instrumental in ensuring that his subjects heed the call, and has since banned early marriages in his chiefdom. He has taken it upon himself to ensure that the message reaches all his subjects. In all the community meetings he calls, he always addresses the issues against early marriages and teen pregnancy.



*Chief Chamuka addressing a gathering in Mwomboshi. Mwomboshi Settlement Village is in his chiefdom.*

In Mwomboshi one child changed her mind. She was to be married away, but she decided to go back to school. The contact group also facilitated the dissolution of four early marriages in Mwomboshi. The case was also similar for Kalwelwe. There is a slogan

amongst men in these communities saying jokingly, "Makeni is ending people's marriages".

In Muniyati, reports to the police on cases of child marriage have increased and many such marriages are being ended. In Shikatende, school authorities and headmen assisted in ending two child marriages, with the help of the Shikatende Police.

School authorities in all the five schools where the campaigns against child marriages and teen pregnancies were done have reported positive changes in a number of pupils' mentality, especially girls. In some schools, teachers have taken the central role of being contact persons and change agents, not only in the schools, but also the communities around them.

The bicycles donated have eased travelling for the contact groups, who cover radiuses of between 7km and 15km. More still needs to be done to develop local leadership and support structure, as well as strengthening continuous sensitization.

## **MEC collaborates with ITWOBs to enhance ICT skills in teachers and lecturers**

**By Victor Kana**

With Information & Communication Technology taking centre stage in our

daily lives, MEC took a proactive step to ensure that teachers, lecturers and other relevant staff are trained in ICT, in collaboration with IT Without Borders.

ICT in schools across the country is now a compulsory subject and the centre is keen to continue giving its staff the skills needed to ensure that their support to students and pupils yields good results and transforms the ICT and e-learning culture of the centre as a whole.



*Chrys Thorsen of IT Without Borders conducting training in ICT at Makeni Ecumenical Centre*

IT Without Borders is an American Non-Governmental Organisation established in Zambia, founded by an ICT Microsoft certified expert, Chrys Thorsen, with a vision to help build an ICT literate society at all levels, from the village to the city. The mission is to capacity build ICT skills by training trainers. It is for that reason that it was possible for ITWOBs to partner with MEC to capacity build trainers.

16 teachers were trained as trainers at level 1 for 15 days from 1<sup>st</sup> June to

19<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The teaching method used was the Viral Method. According to Chrys Thorsen, this method reduces teacher's preparation time by 50%, increases comprehension by 65% and increases demonstrable skills by 100%. It further increases the teacher's confidence in the subject by 80% and lastly gives the students hands-on understanding.

Further training for level 2 is already under consideration. MEC is indebted to ITWOBS for partnering with her in this field of ICT.

## Double Blessings for St Nicholas Children

### Radio Phoenix and Barclays Bank share their kindness

By Ireen Chinyama

St Nicholas Children's Home had double blessings in the second quarter of 2015 when Radio Phoenix and Barclays Bank shared their kindness with the children at the children's home. On 23rd March, Radio Phoenix brought 12 boxes of assorted clothes, shoes, plates, cups, story books and toys. These donations helped supplement various materials we did not have. Due to wear and tear, clothes, shoes and some kitchenware need to be replaced every year. Since children are growing, clothes often need to be replaced.

Barclays Bank Zambia Ltd also came to the aid of St Nicholas in June. They donated assorted items and paints. The paints were targeted for painting inside of the children's hostels and the dining hall. This was the second visit we had from Barclays Bank this year, the last one being in March.

The two organisations indeed gave St Nicholas a double blessing. Their assistance is deeply appreciated by Makeni Ecumenical Centre board, management and staff, as well as the children.

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#### **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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