

OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH HARPENDEN

DEVELOPING WORLD GROUP UPDATE ON PROJECTS, JANUARY – MARCH 2018

1. DUNDEE DIOCESE, NORTHERN NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

In February we received a thank-you card from Father Gerald Gostling with pictures of the youth centre and people who are now benefiting from the stove, dining table and chairs we provided last December. This is now available for everyone to view in the March 2018 'Newsletters' section of our parish website.

2. THAR PARKAR DESERT, SOUTH EAST PAKISTAN

In March 2018 we donated £965 to the Columban Fathers to provide a large hand pump for the village of Rare in the parish of Khipro bordering the Thar Parkar Desert in South East Pakistan. Father Tomas King, who has organised a number of water pump projects in this region, was able to complete this particular project at lower cost than the £1,500 we had originally expected. This is because the village is in a place where the underground water is relatively easy to access. The community served by the new hand pump includes about 40 Christian families who work as bonded labourers for landlords, and they have a local parish priest, Father Parvez Daniel. The whole village contributed the labour required to sink the pump, which will be accessed by all families in the village. Father Tomas writes: *"Rare village is a deserving case. They do not have drinkable water in the village and the women have to walk every day to fetch water."* The photos below show local people collecting water from the stream and using mud to plaster the walls of their timber houses.



3. LUKOME PARISH CENTRE, GULU, NORTHERN UGANDA

In January-March 2018 we donated £5,768 to fund the construction of a large underground water tank to store rainwater collected during the rainy season, which begins in April. This will improve clean water supplies to the school and parish centre serving the community of Lukome, benefiting around 1,400 people a day. Father David Kolo Masaba, the local parish priest, writes: *"The tank could get full with a two weeks heavy rain if it is constant because we are harvesting the rain water from the Church roof which is big enough to give full supply of water... I want to say, the tank is really big and everybody around is praising the big work and its expensive nature. I have no doubt that once it's officially opened, it will be a big relief on water problems. Thank you so much for loving us and supporting us with such a life transforming project for the community."*

4. DROWNING PREVENTION AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAMME, THAILAND

In the most recent DWG meeting on 13 March, we agreed to donate £4000 to Safe Child



Thailand to help roll out its new Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Programme to an additional Thai province. Safe Child Thailand has worked for over thirty years to safeguard at-risk children in Thailand and through partnership with local organisations helps to empower them to reach their fullest potential. Drowning is a leading cause of child death in Asia, and the Thai Ministry of Health estimates that over one thousand, three

hundred children drown each year because they cannot swim. The programme aims to equip children with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent drowning through providing swimming lessons, water safety measures and basic first aid. The programme initially focused on a network of schools in Chiang Mai and Lampang provinces, providing a 15-hour course at a cost of £11 per child. In supporting the roll-out to further areas, our donation should provide the course for over three hundred and fifty children.

We made the full donation of £4000 for this project on 21 March using a £4123 refund from our project in Ethiopia. The situation there has made the planned furnishing of Sister Mary Joachim's newly built home for the sick and dying impossible for the time being, though (as reported in our annual project report for 2017) the oxygen concentrator we funded has already been bought and put into use in another building. We continue to hold Sister Mary Joachim and Father Sartorius in our prayers and hope very much to further assist their work in Gode once local conditions improve.

5. FUTURE PROJECT: SUPPORT FOR WOMEN LAUNCHING SMALL BUSINESSES IN KISUMU, KENYA

At the DWG March meeting we also agreed to support the work of Just Small Change which was established in 2011 to provide microfinance loans and training in small business development to underprivileged women, a number of whom are affected by HIV/Aids. As a result, these women are then able to provide basic needs, including food, medical and schooling for their families. The focus to date has been on a programme based in Kisumu, Kenya, where Just Small Change works with a local Catholic Non- Governmental Organisation, Our Lady of Perpetual Support (www.olpskenya.org). By March 2018, Just Small Change had one hundred and forty two clients running their own small businesses, many of whom are widowed ladies who are HIV+. Our target is to donate £5700, which will enable business start-up for fifty new clients (two groups of twenty-five in June and September 2018) through a five day training course, and the provision of a £75 loan.