



What a team!



Rose (ECD) Kennedy Mr Dedans Vincent Mildred
Millicent (ECD), Rose (Y1) Millie Millicent Josephine Vivian

Eight years on from our first year in Kosele we returned for our most action packed summer so far.... During the five weeks we (Terry and Judi) were out there we received a total of 30 UK visitors. At one point we had an extra 24 people in the home needing to sleep, eat and 'wash.' People who have visited Hope and Kindness prior to the successful drilling of the 'bore hole' will appreciate what a huge 'difference' this particular gift has clearly made.

This years visitors included: Ian and Hilda Mcmillan (who have committed to return for 6 months in 2011), a team of 18 from Chipping Campden Baptist Church who led a Children's Holiday Club, built two new homes and facilitated a 'film night' for over 200 of our neighbours and three teachers Caroline, Gwen and Laura who came and shared their creative talents in the school with lots of art and drama and ... pancakes with chocolate sauce! We also enjoyed a surprise visit from Jim Hilderly, an 'old' friend (and our very first visitor to Hope and Kindness back in Oct' 2002) who blessed us with timely 'encouragement' and tins of paint that were needed for a very overdue job on the external paintwork of

all the original buildings.

Apart from enjoying the visitors we also did some very important jobs like interviewing teachers. After two days of interviews with thirteen candidates we appointed five new teachers (four of whom had just finished their final exams five days earlier) They may have been looking forward to a break and a rest before the beginning of term but immediately found themselves committed to two weeks of Teacher Training and team building. However, their response was very enthusiastic and the reports we have since received from the Head Teacher, Mr Dedans, and the children themselves has been very positive.



“We’re on a mission from God”

In December 2009 our Minister Edward Ibberson came to us to discuss the possibility of taking a Youth Group on mission to Kenya. After much prayer, God spoke very clearly to all of us and then the planning, and many more discussions, for this ambitious (some might call foolhardy) trip to Kenya, to visit Hope and Kindness, began.

The first of many challenges facing each of the 13 teenagers who wanted to go, was to each raise £1,400 for the trip. After 5 months of feverish fundraising, including anything from sledging down a steep Cotswold hill on an exceedingly icy snowy day (in just your swimming trunks) to a rather refined ‘English Tea party,’ every single person achieved that goal and more!

Those months of preparation also included writing countless checklists and many training and equipping sessions. We tried to cover everything, from the challenge of teaching songs and games to children whose English was very limited (bearing in mind our Swahili and Luo were limited to no more than half a dozen words) understanding what servant hearted leadership looks like, resolving conflicts and simply staying friends! It was important to prepare the young people for the reality of living 24/7 in a hot, dusty, confined space with ‘basic’ facilities and a limited menu! It was a lot of hard work but the benefits were two fold. The young people went out feeling confident and as leaders we felt prepared and organised!

At 10:00 am on Friday 29th July 2010 we flew the 8 ½ hours from Heathrow Airport to Nairobi. For some it was their first time away from parents, for some it was the first time they had ever flown! A mixture of apprehension and excitement were thrown into the pot of emotions ...consequently it was not until 2:00 am the next morning that we all finally fell asleep in the Nairobi guest house. Unfortunately we had to be up again at 5:00 am to make the next part of the journey on two 12 seater planes, booked through an organisation called MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) but all were ‘up for it’ and ready to serve God.



On arrival at Hope and Kindness we were greeted by the children. Their singing was beautiful, all the young people were in awe of their welcome. Mattresses, blankets and mosquito nets had transformed classrooms into the dormitories where we were all, at last, able to get a full nights sleep!

During the next ten days our young people organised and led a Children’s club which included songs, games, crafts and drama. The message was simple “God loves you so much!” The week concluded with a very energetic sports day, more singing, more laughter and a real sense of joy. Lots of glue, sequins and glitter adorned the masterpieces created by the children, and just as much was worn on their faces too! I believe it was a little snippet of what heaven is going to be like.

Our team of young people had also managed to raise enough money to build two much needed new homes for two families with very young and vulnerable children. They had a lot of fun in ‘plastering’ the walls but were also blessed to know that when the next heavy rains arrived these homes would provide ‘safe and dry shelter.’



Departing was painful. We had predicted it would be, but nothing can really prepare you for the sorrow that you feel when leaving such wonderful people. Many new friendships had been formed and we were all blessed abundantly.

I cannot stress how hard they all worked. We were so proud of them and were staggered by their commitment, energy and passion. They coped with everything that was thrown at them and overcame many fears and obstacles. It’s now over 2 months since we returned from Hope and Kindness, but the young people are still talking about their time out there. Without a doubt it was the best time of our lives.

Vanessa Appleton





Unforgettable!

Chloe's life changing visit to Kosele

When I compare myself now to how I was before we went to Kenya I can really see a difference. Not just in the way I act but also in the way I think. Being out there among the people at Hope and Kindness was so rewarding and at the same time really eye opening.

They taught me – and the whole group – about trusting in God and also, being less selfish. For example, when I was praying with some of the children, Kevin (one of the cutest boys ever) prayed a prayer for the sick people and the poor. This really struck me because Kevin is an orphan, he is HIV+ve, yet he was praying for people less fortunate -it showed me just how selfish my prayers can sometimes be. Another thing I learnt was something Ed said to us on one of the nights when we had devotions. He said that we shouldn't feel in a bad place with God if we don't 'see' or 'feel' him because that's not what faith is about. We just need to know that God is our saviour. This really stuck with me throughout the time we were there and it has really helped me a lot.



It was difficult to see the level of poverty out there in Kosele. It's one thing to see it on

the television but it's a whole other thing to see it in real life. To see their trust in God was incredible, and it really made me think about my own trust in God and I've realised I really need to trust in him a lot more. All the children had a big impact on me. When we had to leave some of them were crying which made a lot of us cry as well. But I am hoping to go back to Hope and Kindness possibly for my gap year or sometime soon.

I can honestly say that this is an experience that I will never forget. It is one of those things that will stick with you for life. These people are strong, loving, selfless and so trusting, I have learnt so much from them and I intend to help them as much as I can now and in the future! I just am so very thankful to Judi, Terry, Vanessa, John and all the leaders that were there with us, they were incredible!!

(Judi, Terry, Vanessa and John thought *all* of you were terrific too!)

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How can we “love our neighbours” in Kosele?



Anyone who has been to Kosele will know that there is a huge gulf between the standard of living that we enjoy in the UK and that of the average family in rural western Kenya. But just what is life like for people who live near the Hope & Kindness compound, and is there anything outsiders can do that will help bring genuine long-term improvement to their lives?

We've now had the privilege of visiting Hope and Kindness three times. With each visit we gain more insight into the realities of living in a poor rural part of Africa, but also a growing love and respect for the people there – people who maintain their faith and dignity through struggles that would break the spirit of the average westerner.

Last year we visited the homes of most of the day scholars, finding out about their family situations and their living conditions. At every home we were welcomed in gladly, and it was clear that the families really appreciated that their children were getting a good education and being well cared for at the Hope and Kindness School. This year, our plan was to visit the homes of each of the church members, to begin to get to know them and to find out about their lives and their needs. We knew that people in this area are poor, but you can't be fully prepared for the experience of actually seeing extreme poverty face to face. Often we would leave a home thinking “that was such a poor family,” only to find that the next one had even less. Lack of clean water, poor diet, chronic malnutrition and a lack of mosquito nets means that people rarely experience good health. For people in Britain,

falling ill is dealt with by a quick visit to the doctor, but that is not an option for our neighbours in Kosele. Even if they can walk to the nearest clinic or hospital, or can afford the fare by public transport, they are unlikely to have the money that will be needed to pay for their treatment when they get there, or to buy any medication that could be prescribed for them. Death and funerals are commonplace. How much we take our NHS for granted here in the UK!

Apart from the 28 people who are fortunate enough to be employed at Hope and Kindness, hardly anyone is in paid employment. The majority struggle to get by on subsistence farming with some trying to supplement this with making sisal ropes or charcoal, fetching water or doing some casual work on other people's farms. Growing maize and the other staple crops, with only hand tools, is heavy manual work and a bout of illness or an injury can disrupt someone's ability to maximise their crop from a small piece of land. A few people are trying newer ideas and methods on their farms, such as dairy goats, and there is clearly potential for a more radical approach to farming with improved management and conservation methods.

How do we respond to this? For us so far it's just been a steep learning curve, but we know that people have appreciated being visited in their homes and that we have brought some encouragement to them, letting them know that they are not forgotten by the outside world. People that we met in the community were responsive – some who had not been to church for a long time responded to our invitation and came back. Indeed we saw that the church has a big role to play in “loving our neighbours.” Local people understand the culture and know the needs much better than outsiders. They are in a position to be motivated, empowered and mobilised to reach out to their neighbours with God's love in all kinds of practical ways. Together we can build trust and learn to work together, to achieve as a community much more than just the sum of what people can achieve as individuals. We look forward to seeing that happening and being a part of it in the future.

Ian and Hilda McMillan