



New Dawn Association Newsletter June 2008

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New Dawn Association is an international, humanitarian, non-profit making association, initially working in Sub-Saharan Africa. Inspired from the Gospel, New Dawn Association's aim is to help the most needy, and more specifically, orphans and widows, without race, social or religious discrimination.



After having to postpone our planned trip at the very last minute, due to the violence following the December elections in Kenya, we were able to rearrange our visit and spend the month of April 2008 with the Kogony project in Kisumu. For us it was a rich time of work and learning. We became acutely aware of how dramatically **HIV/Aids is affecting whole communities, literally wiping out a generation of parents between the age of 15-49**, leaving grandmothers (often sick themselves) and surviving families to cope with the children. The need for help has never been more apparent. Statistics in the joint UNICEF/UNAIDS report, "Children on the Brink" are alarmingly accurate. Sub-Saharan Africa has the greatest proportion of children who are orphans and every day the number is rising, and is projected to continue to do so, for at least another six years.

Without intentionally following the "framework of help" outlined in the "Children on the Brink" report endorsed by all United Nations agencies, we are discovering that the Kogony project is naturally applying the key strategies, *"Strengthening the capacity of families to protect and care for orphans and vulnerable children, mobilising and supporting community-based responses, and ensuring access of orphans and vulnerable children to essential services including education and healthcare"*.

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Now in its second year, the "**Arise and Shine**" Kogony Orphanage, situated in Kisumu on the edge of Lake Victoria, started as a small orphanage and today has 22 resident orphans. However, the project is becoming, out of necessity, much more than just an orphanage for children in crisis. It is now reaching out into the bush community surrounding the orphanage compound to assist the widows, grandmothers and many other needy children. Four days each

week a porridge meal is given to the needy local children, thanks to the "Ladies in Action" group, and Saturdays has become an "Open Day" at the orphanage when the local children can come onto the orphanage site to receive food and take part in organised activities. In addition, home-based care is being offered to the very needy widows to help raise and extend the quality of their lives. It is recognised that the longer a child can remain in a family environment, the better the chance he or she has of maturing and integrating in to society.



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April 2008 trip.

- We helped Nancy and Jonas, the Kenyan couple heading up the project, to set



up a "**Widows Empowerment Program**", which embraces 97 local widows, teaching them how to run and sustain small, income-generating mini-businesses, such as selling cooked rice and beans on the market, and providing each of them with initial materials to start their businesses, with follow-up monitoring.



- In addition, a group of 20 "**Desperately Needy Widows**", was identified by the community, who are either too old or too sick to be able work or care for themselves properly. Monthly packs of food and basic items will be provided for these needy women.



Also, with the help of the staff and older children from the orphanage, fortnightly home-based visits are being made to help do a "clean up", do their washing, and collect firewood and water. We visited each of these widows in their homes in the bush during our stay, to take them



their first packs. Their stories are often tragic. Many of them are elderly sick grandmothers whose children have died of AIDS leaving them to care for as many as up to 14 grandchildren.

- Thanks to the generous help and support of **Edinburgh Direct Aid (EDA)**, a Scottish charity, a much needed **dining room and kitchen** was being built on the site while we were there, supervised by John Home Robertson of EDA. This is being co-funded by EDA and New Dawn Association. Additional funding will be required to complete the building but the good news is that the roof is on protecting the building during the rainy season. EDA is also in the process of raising funds to send a container to Kogony, via Mombassa, full of much-needed items, where they will convert it into workshops to provide facilities for widows' activities such as sewing, bead-making and soap-making.



- Initiated by a cheque specially donated to buy toys for the children, a gift of a suitcase full of cuddly toys and books which we were able to take with us, a **"Toy Box"** and a **Children's Library** were **inaugurated** while we were there. The children of the orphanage were introduced to the principle of being able to borrow and share toys and books. The joy on the faces of the children when they discovered that they were able to keep a book for a week, or play with a toy for probably the first time in their lives, had to be seen to be believed.



- We were able to organise the **first Medical Camp at Kogony**. The services of two doctors were hired for a day, the office was used as a surgery and the classroom was turned into dispensary. Between 9am and 5pm, with the help of a group of three devoted ladies, over 400 people, mainly women and children, all received individual medical attention. 389 prescriptions were given out for on-the-spot free medication. This event was an exceptional service for them which we hope to repeat on a regular basis.



- A special treat for all the resident orphans and staff was a **day's outing**. Everyone piled into a hired minibus and we visited a museum in the morning, had a picnic lunch and visited an historical landmark in the afternoon.

- A 6,000 litre water tank was installed to collect much-needed rainwater from the roof of the dormitory block.



On our return to France we held our **6th. Annual Sponsored Walk** at our home to raise further funds for the project. A new record of over 70 people attended the event on the only sunny Sunday of the whole month of May. We are also currently **selling roses locally** during the flowering season to bring in more funds.

The **first call on monies** raised from our Sponsored Walk, and another held by Jennie's sister and her husband in Switzerland in August, will be for the monthly running costs of the orphanage. **Any surplus funds** will be placed personally when we visit the site, to help meet other urgent needs.

A **New Dawn Web Site** is in the process of being set up, hopefully within the next few weeks.

The project is rapidly taking shape and there is much more still to do. We are planning a **three month visit to Kisumu between December 2008 and February 2009** to continue to encourage them in every way we can. (We would like to point out that none of our personal travelling or subsistence costs while we are in Kenya are taken out of the New Dawn account. All monies donated go directly to the work on the ground).

Urgent needs: a **4x4 vehicle** to replace Jonas' car which has been run into the ground.
Electricity or solar energy, and water to the site.

We are hoping to make a **fundraising trip to the UK** this September and would welcome any ideas, opportunities or invitations to help us raise funds.

We wish to **thank all of you** for your loyal financial support for this work, without which the project could not continue. It may seem like a drop in the ocean but we wish you could see how much difference it can mean to a desperate widow or orphan's life. An umbrella to a widow with a leaking roof, a blanket to someone who is cold at night, a new dress for somebody with very few clothes – small things perhaps but what a comfort for these people to know that someone cares.