

'...helping to bring hope to the people of the democratic republic of congo.'



friends of cme trust

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Dear friends,

When we last contacted you in March, I doubt any of us would have been able to predict the impact the Coronavirus would have on our lives – and millions of others' around the world. The DRC continues with restrictions of movement. Thankfully, in the north-east the number of cases has been few and Ebola has not come back. Most of the virus cases are in the capital, Kinshasa, where Remy Toko (one of our Trustees) is currently visiting his family following the death of his brother in June. The funeral arrangements were severely impacted by COVID-19.

Construction Update

This photo shows the new children's ward nearing completion. Construction was delayed by the virus but the ward is now anticipated to open in a couple of months. This will be the 5th ward at Sose near Beni and take bed capacity to 140. The other two CME hospitals at Nyankunde and Bunia have 172 and 92 beds respectively. In total, over 13,500 people were treated in these beds last year; over 44,000 received consultations; 4,857 children were born; and nearly 5,000 operations were carried out. 677 students studied at the CME nursing school and University.



Children's Work

As in many countries, schools in DRC have been severely disrupted. The standards of education and facilities are pretty basic to begin with and the children had already lost so much time due to Ebola and the insecurity. At Nyankunde, the primary and secondary students in their final years sat exams wearing masks and socially distanced (see photo right). We pay the exam fees for 119 orphans who otherwise may not have been able to take these important exams. Schools were due to re-open for the new year on 5th October.



These two pictures (left) show the distribution of food to the orphans at Oicha. While school didn't take place, we were able to ensure that children and their host families still received daily food. Of the 339 children who were enrolled in the project, 18 left because of the virus or insecurity but 321 children received sacks of rice, beans and

soap. Not always easy to carry home, as the photo of the little girl shows!

Because the Ebola epidemic followed by Covid-19 kept schools closed, fees and materials were not needed last year. We therefore still have funds for the project remaining. We are waiting to hear how many of the 339 children enrolled for school on 5th October and then we will know our costs for this school year.

Dennis does the *Three Peaks Challenge* for us!!

Despite current lockdown limitations/restrictions, our long-time supporter Dennis Tailor managed to squeeze in a *Three Peaks Challenge* at the beginning of September, climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in just under 27 hours. Because of unexpected traffic delays, he had to descend Ben Nevis and Snowdon in the dark in high winds! We are so grateful to him and he expects to raise £1,500 for our work and another £1,500 for another charity in Africa. It's not too late to sponsor him so please get in touch if you'd like to.



Urgent Equipment Needs

In our last newsletter, we asked if you could help raise funds for a digital X-Ray machine and other urgent equipment for CME. As a result of your donations, we have been able to buy the X-Ray machine and 3 oxygen concentrators. Working with MedAid, these were sent to Heathrow late-September, together with a host of free medical equipment donated by MedAid; physiotherapy parts sourced by Chris Phillips who has worked at Nyankunde; medical books; and other gifts from friends. Here are pictures of the crates leaving MedAid and some of the equipment. So thank you to MedAid and all of you who gave. It's our first ever supply like this and we pray for onward safety as the items fly first to Uganda then travel by road across into DRC.



As always, thank you for remembering the people of north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Trustees
Chris Almond