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# AFRICA 2012

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## INTRODUCTION

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My trip to Africa began in Nairobi, Kenya, where I spent three weeks before taking a coach via Uganda to Kigali, Rwanda. I spent the first three weeks with **Maji Mazuri**, visiting their various projects (as detailed below), and being involved in some aspects of their work. I also joined the **Peace, Healing and Reconciliation Programme (PHARP)** for one of their training days in Karen for the youth of local churches and visited their offices in Kiserian. In my limited spare time, I attended the Nairobi Anglican Cathedral and during my final weekend in Nairobi I took some leisure time and visited the Nairobi National Park.

In Kigali I met Anastase from **PHARP** and visited their offices. I heard about some of their work and met with one of their sewing classes. I then took a bus to Kamembe (formerly Cyangugu) to meet Timothy Presley, a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV), to experience the work he does in a rural school on the Congolese border. I spent three days at the school before we spent a couple of days making the return journey to Kigali. We stopped off at the sites of two other PCVs; each site is different, although the brief is the same. Back in Kigali, I visited the Genocide Memorial. Finally, I was very grateful to Anastase who ensured I got to Kigali Airport safely; I flew home after exactly one month in East Africa.

This report draws together some of my experiences and reflections, and looks forward to the future involvement of CfR with these two partners.

## MAJI MAZURI

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The work of Maji Mazuri is broad and varied; I visited all of its projects. It should be noted that there have been some recent staff changes at the central office, and that Matasia Upper is no longer a Maji Mazuri project. I met Richard Morris, and have been asked to investigate the possibility of setting up a project in Oxford like the one he and Rachael Lindley spearheaded in Cambridge. As I am now living in Paris I cannot look into this until the next academic year (September 2013), but it is certainly a possibility for the future.

## MATHARE VALLEY

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Maji Mazuri was born in Mathare, originally to empower women and to reduce gang violence on the streets. It is now home to three separate projects which link in different ways to ensure a sustainable and continuing support system for the residents.

Mathare is the second biggest slum in Kenya, where over 600,000 people are estimated to live within about one square kilometre. The problems that usually surround slum dwellings are very much in evidence in Mathare. Transporting clean water to the home is a challenge: pots and clothes were being scrubbed with dirty dishwater. From the one tap which I saw where the water does



“ONE NARROW, RELATIVELY SHORT ALLEY THAT I WENT DOWN WAS HOME TO AROUND SIXTY PEOPLE.”

run clear, it must be transported down narrow alleys to the home, in whatever receptacle is available, which included cartons that read “Caution: Sulphuric Acid” on the side. One narrow, relatively short alley that I went down was home to around sixty people. The corrugated iron that the dwellings are constructed from is often rusty with sharp edges, and as there are no windows, the rooms are dark, dingy and cramped. Yet, there is hope at every corner as several organisations like Maji Mazuri are providing schools and youth groups, while micro finance projects are helping to lift people out of extreme poverty.

## MAJI MAZURI HEADSTART SCHOOL

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I spent several days teaching at Headstart School, which is housed in a semi-permanent building close to the main road. The classes range from about 15 to 25 pupils in classes from Baby Class to Standard 8, the last class in Primary education. Each class has its own teacher until Upper Primary classes (Standards 4-8), where specialist teachers teach their own subject. However, these teachers also have some administrative duties and there are no resources to cover sick leave. As a result sometimes the classes must be left unsupervised. When this is the case a student prefect takes charge of the class and the students carry on from where the teacher left off, teaching themselves, or revising what they have learnt in previous lessons.

I taught English and Mathematics in Standard 6 and Standard 4. I found it a challenge to design appropriate lessons with little knowledge of the Kenyan curriculum or their current standard. I formed lessons aimed at broaden vocabulary, particularly of adjectives and adverbs. I had no textbook to work from so I designed exercises where the students could work with partners or in small groups to form sentences to use new words correctly. When I taught Maths the students had just sat their Mid-Term exams, so I based my lessons on the paper they had just done and going back over what seemed to be the most problematic areas. This experience reminded me that I am capable of, and very much enjoy, teaching elementary Mathematics. However, on the whole I learnt the value of teacher training as I would have felt much more comfortable equipped with some tried and tested teaching tools. Furthermore, I think it is important that volunteers spend over three months with a class so that it is possible to get to know the students and their needs. In this way the teaching provided by volunteers can be effective and constructive rather than a novelty.



“I TAUGHT ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS IN STANDARD 6 AND STANDARD 4.”

During my observation and teaching I noticed that there was often a lack of pencils for the students as they have to provide their own. For many families it is not possible to replace used pencils as soon as the need arises and students arrive in school without any writing implement. They are then sent home to get one, which may take several hours. This clearly severely disrupts the child’s learning. I therefore suggested to CfR that we provide a supply of pencils that the school can keep to lend to children when they have no pencil of their own. It is not sustainable or practical to provide every child with their own pencil, so the 144 pencils provided will be kept in the headmaster’s office for lending only. He envisages

that this supply will last into the foreseeable future. I also provided 24 colouring pencils as I noticed that these were in short supply. Finally, I noticed that the teachers were using razor blades to sharpen the pencils. Having these blades in the classroom presents a health and safety hazard to teachers and students alike, as well as slowing down the children’s learning, as they have to wait for their teacher to sharpen their pencil. I therefore provided two plastic pencil sharpeners for each of the Lower Primary classes on the proviso that the razor blades were disposed of.

## MAJI MAZURI MATHARE TEENZ AND YOUTH GROUP (MMMYG)

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Maji Mazuri run a Youth Group for young people in the community aged between 17 and 27. They meet every week on a Sunday afternoon for prepared activities that develop life skills such as teamwork and communication as well as social responsibility. The management of the group is largely undertaken by a committee of young people from the Youth Group itself in liaison with a member of Maji Mazuri staff, Samuel Kiriro. Weekly activities for the year are decided in advance.

While I was there, the Group reviewed its constitution, which was a useful way to encourage reasoned conversation, as well as to allow the Group to discuss its own rules and boundaries. This engendered a sense of responsibility to keep to them. The second week I was there the Group held a debate. The motion "This House Believes Prostitution Should Be Legalised" was chosen after a vote and several varied arguments were put forward eloquently from both sides. The debate was held in British Parliamentary style which promoted the workings of the Kenyan government, which also holds its debates in this style. This is particularly encouraging in the current context, when several prominent Kenyan politicians are being questioned in the International Criminal Court on charges of corruption. It is very easy for disenfranchised young people to lose faith in the power of democracy and take justice into their own hands. The motion is even more relevant in a developing country where prostitution is a very real option for many of the women that the Youth Group aims to involve. At the third meeting of the Youth Group I attended a round of an inter-youth group quiz, involving Maji Mazuri and two neighbouring youth groups in several rounds of questions. Teams were selected to represent each group but supporters were welcome and many came. This kind of activity breaks down barriers in the neighbourhood and allows the members of the youth groups to express competitiveness at the same time as creating social opportunities. Quizzes, football tournaments and other activities alleviate tensions between youth groups. The members of MMYG were welcoming and open to new ideas, ready to listen to each other and take their group forward.

Each member of MMYG is required to take part in one of the associated clubs, ranging from photography to drama to the *GREEN HEROES* project. I shadowed Ben, one member of the Green Heroes Project one Saturday. Before this project was started residents dumped their rubbish in the streets, as they were neglected by town councils. This explains the impression that the ground in Mathare is simply made of rubbish. It is not just piled on the floor, but permeates the very soil the make-shift buildings are built upon. The Green Heroes go door to door selling garbage bags for the small fee of KSH 10/= (less than 10p) and collect the filled bag from the previous week. I was taken to small patches of open land that were piled high with garbage until a few years ago, which can now be used as gathering places or even an informal football pitch. Given the very challenging conditions I was very impressed by the zeal and hope that the Green Heroes demonstrated. Ben told me that he has got to know many people in the community through his involvement with this project. It is clear that it encourages residents to take a pride in their environment and work together on something positive. The project is growing and is an inspiration for community workers in other areas of Nairobi's slums.



"BEN TOLD ME THAT HE HAS GOT TO KNOW MANY PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH THIS PROJECT."

Previous donations from a range of supporters have provided the Green Heroes with overalls, rubber boots and wheelbarrows but I noticed they had no protection for their hands. I therefore suggested that CfR provide rubber gloves for the team. I was able to leave them with four pairs of heavy-duty chemical gloves and a further nine pairs of rubber gloves. Should the project grow beyond this provision money has been put aside to provide more gloves.

To bridge the gap between children's activities and the Youth Group, Maji Mazuri have created a Teenz Group. This has similar aims to the Youth Group. While I was there, a volunteer from **Duara**, a partner organisation based in the Netherlands, was working with the Teenz Group. She worked on anger management to try and disperse tensions that become a danger as the young people grow up. Perhaps one of the more touching moments of my trip was seeing a young girl become emotional remembering how angry her mother had made her feel by forbidding her to go to school on Saturday.

In order for a volunteer to work effectively with the Youth or Teenz Group, it is important that he or she has training to transfer skills to the groups' members. As I lacked this training, I became more of a participant than a volunteer. This was however a very useful experience for me in understanding the situation of some of the young people, people like me, living in and around Mathare. The picture may look bleak on the outside but it certainly isn't straightforward and being involved on the same level as the members, rather than the staff, of the Youth Group was one way of seeing more of the bigger picture. I hope to spend more time with the Youth Group in the future.

## MAVUNO MICROFINANCE PROJECT

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Microfinance has recently been hailed as the new solution to widespread poverty. By providing small loans to cover start-up costs of small businesses, microfinance projects allow individuals to improve their own standard of living in a sustainable way, eventually creating a self-sufficient, cohesive, functional community.

'Mavuno' translates as 'Harvest' from Swahili. Members must come together as a group of five people, although they may have different business ideas, and save a certain amount of their own money before Maji Mazuri provides them with a loan. Loans start from sums as small as KSH 200/= (roughly £15), but this is enough to start up a business with sufficient income to keep up with the weekly repayments. When the first loan is repaid members may apply for a second, larger loan to expand their business.

For the first few years of this project the number of defaulters was found to be unacceptably high, peaking in 2007 with the Post Election Violence (PEV). In order to tackle this problem and to make the project more sustainable for Maji Mazuri, a training programme was set up for new members. Along with the physical means to set up a business, new members now also receive training in business and entrepreneurship. This ensures that the money they receive is used wisely and sustainably, and that it is feasible to repay the loan according to the time scale agreed. With this training programme in place, the number of defaulters has dropped to well below 10%.



"JOSEPH HAS BEEN A MAVUNO CLIENT FOR AROUND TEN YEARS, HAS EXPANDED THE SIZE OF HIS BUSINESS, AND HAS TAKEN ON A HANDFUL OF STAFF."

It should be remembered that a certain level of defaulting is to be expected, particularly in the harsh environment of the slums, as unforeseen circumstances force businesses to close for periods of time. In the case of a family emergency Maji Mazuri allow a grace period of three months before repayments must begin again. This means that the project is suited to the community it serves.

I was taken to see several of the more established businesses that have benefited from the Mavuno project. Firstly, I went to see Joseph, who owns a carpenter's business. He has been a Mavuno client for around ten years, has expanded the size of his business, and has taken on a handful of staff. He has also been able to buy land on which he has planted a garden, making it easier to provide food for his family. It is clear that microfinance has not only benefited him and his family, but allowed him to provide opportunities for other people in the local community, thus helping them and their families.

As the business continues to grow its benefits in the Mathare valley will also grow exponentially.

I also visited a man who held a potato stall. By peeling his own potatoes for sale he has found his profits increase vastly as he has something to offer that other sellers do not have – his Unique Selling Point (USP). This is a basic business skill but one that might have been disregarded without the training programme provided by Maji Mazuri. In visiting this business, questions arose regarding the impact of microfinance projects on other small businesses in the area. However, if Maji Mazuri businesses continue to grow, they will take on more staff, providing an income for more of the residents. This will mitigate the possibility of other businesses slowing due to the success of their competitors.

Finally, I visited a man with a small shop that sold a little bit of everything. He also offered a phone charging service. This is important because nearly everybody owns a mobile phone, allowing them to keep in touch with family, friends and employers without a fixed address, but not everybody has a house with electricity. Due to the support that comes from being a Mavuno client, this man was able to move from rented property to a small stall that he had bought. This made his business more secure, providing greater opportunity for it to grow.



THANKS TO MAVUNO, THIS MAN WAS ABLE TO MOVE FROM RENTED PROPERTY TO A SMALL STALL, PROVIDING SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH.

As the pictures show, these businesses are not big or flashy but they do provide a tangible benefit that does not rely solely on charity. Therefore the Mavuno microfinance project will eventually cease to be a charitable organisation and will become a growing business of its own. As many prominent economists argue, this is a much suitable approach to aid, on a social, as well as financial level. The people who own or work for these businesses have a pride in what they have achieved and a desire to achieve further. This encourages individuals to take the initiative in growth and development, which will address the needs on the ground rather than those perceived, sometimes erroneously, to be important by outsiders.

## KISERIAN

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Maji Mazuri runs a primary school, a secondary school for girls, a farm and a health clinic, in a relatively spacious complex 10km from the road out of Kiserian. I spent three days there, staying overnight as the journey is too difficult to do three days in a row. This was an amazing cultural experience, with no internet or television. It allowed me to escape Western culture and experience “authentic” Kenya.

I spent time with classes of various ages just after they had taken their mid-term exams. I took one class in Maths completely alone, which was a lot of fun as the students really enjoyed the subject and were very active in class, allowing us to go through their exam paper at quite a rate. At one point they even had to correct me! I was also present in the Standard 4 class for their corrections of their Social Science paper. This subject includes elements of what we would call Geography, History, Religious Studies and Personal, Social and Health Science (PSHE) - so the papers cover everything from farming methods to Biblical history. I was particularly struck by how HIV/AIDS is taught to this class, who are about 9 years old. Questions with multiple choice answers not only included what dangers to look out for and when, but also taught inclusivity and discouraged excessive paranoia that would lead to isolation of AIDS sufferers. It is clearly important that these lessons are learnt at a young age because AIDS strikes families and neighbourhoods, affecting people of all ages.

I also joined one Lower Primary class for their PE lesson. The facilities comprise a large open field with football goals and basketball hoops where several classes can do PE at one time. The children

I was with were quite young so PE involved stretches and games but it brought home the value of having open space in a school. There is no such space in Mathare for the children to exercise or even get out and let off some steam and I think it is likely that this affects work levels.

One evening I joined the Secondary girls for their weekly assembly with the Headmaster. I was asked to say a few words but quickly opened up for questions to allow a conversation to develop. There was genuine surprise that at the grand old age of 21 I was not married, or at the very least had a husband in mind. When I explained that in England my priorities were finishing my education, getting a good job, finding a house, and then potentially looking to marry and have children – in that order! – there was spontaneous applause. For the first time, I felt like a real role model, simply living by example. We discussed a range of topics, from healthcare to travel and it was clear that all these girls were self-aware and concerned about current affairs. Many of them have ambitions to go to university, which is quite an achievement as some of them come from tribes where girls' education is undervalued after primary level because they can be worth more through dowry, or as house helps. When asked what would improve their time at Kiserian Secondary, they replied that a school bus to bring them to school at the beginning of term and take them home at the end, totalling six times a year would make a world of difference. Some of the girls had to walk for four hours to school, which understandably puts some girls off continuing their education. I intend to approach the Green Bus Company to discuss ideas on how we might make this school bus a reality.

I stayed with Emma, the resident doctor. The health clinic serves both the students and local community. This is a big help to the students as health issues don't necessarily have to have a huge detrimental impact on their studies and contagious maladies such as chicken pox and ringworm can be easily contained. For the community, which stretches geographically over many square miles, the clinic is an essential facility that supplies a deep need.

The farm is an aspect of the Kiserian project that is still developing. Maji Mazuri are currently consulting agriculture specialists to find out what will grow best and how to maximise the potential of the land. One four-tunnel greenhouse already houses tomatoes and it is hoped another one will be installed shortly. The vision is for a bountiful farm that will feed the school and provide enough to sell in Kiserian, lowering costs of running the school and creating an income generator. Electricity is also produced on the farm from animal and human waste. It is hoped that eventually the site will be completely self-sufficient in terms of energy, finance and carbon footprint.

Computers have recently been installed at Kiserian, providing the tools for invaluable ICT lessons. This was possible due to the generous donations of supporters through Maji Mazuri UK. Negotiations are now under way to get internet into the site although currently quotes put the price cripplingly high. As I discovered in schools and projects all around Nairobi, ICT is a priceless skill in the job market and not only allows young people access to better jobs, but also allows them to connect more freely with the wider world. It opens up opportunities in media and art that we would take for granted. It should be remembered however, that donations of computers are most effective where they are accompanied by good teaching staff with a real understanding of ICT teaching in the developing world. This level of teaching was evident in all of Maji Mazuri's projects but is easy to overlook from the perspective of someone who has had access to computers all their life.



**"ICT IS A PRICELESS SKILL IN THE JOB MARKET AND NOT ONLY ALLOWS YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS TO BETTER JOBS, BUT ALSO ALLOWS THEM TO CONNECT WITH THE WIDER WORLD."**

On the whole, Kiserian is a bright and encouraging project. It has lots of support from around the world, most notably from Rotary International and the impact of this support is evident. Living at Kiserian would be an ideal volunteering opportunity for someone who has little experience of living abroad, particularly in a developing country as it allows you to be immersed in Kenyan culture without oppressive levels of deprivation.

## KASARANI CHILDREN'S CENTRE

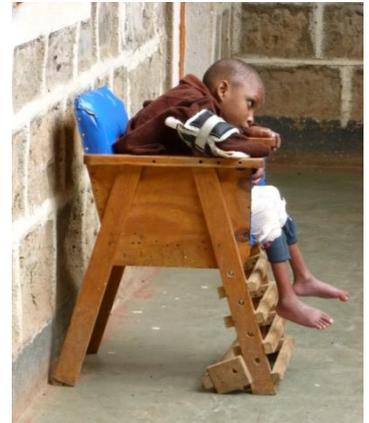
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The final project I visited in the Nairobi area was the Children's Centre at Kasarani. This centre has been running for around 25 years and houses 30 boarding students, 10 of whom have severe disabilities. The most common ailments are Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy, both of which have consequent health complications, and a handful of the children at Kasarani are HIV positive or suffering from AIDS. The Centre also has around 20 day students whose fees supplement running costs.

The aim of the Centre is to educate the students so that they can become fully independent adults. Although this is an impossible task in some cases, there have been success stories. The Centre teaches crafts and business skills, as well as lessons in using mobility equipment so that eventually students can run their own stalls to generate an income. Jackson has recently opened his stall close to the Kasarani premises where he sells small goods such as sweets, and repairs shoes. It is important that some of the students go on to live independent lives so that others may benefit from the Centre's programme.

The major concern for the Centre is finding funds for the drugs that are necessary every day. Although the cost of this medication might only amount to £1 a day per child, this sum of money is a great challenge, particularly over the long-term. Currently Aziz is volunteering at the Centre and is spearheading a team-building programme to ensure efficient and effective care across all the sectors at the Centre. We spoke for some time about the prospect of engaging pharmaceutical companies in charitable donations of drugs for this and other similar projects. There is precedent for such an undertaking by the Leprosy Mission but setting it up would need considerable time and effort.

In the short-term, Kasarani are hoping to make up the 20% on their expenditure that comes from charitable giving through Maji Mazuri by opening an outpatients clinic on the premises. The budget for this project is £86,000 a very manageable sum to fundraise in the UK, but a massive sum in Kenya. This will pay for the materials and labour to renovate two existing rooms, one to house a reception and small pharmacy, the other a consultation room. The clinical officer in place at Kasarani would have enough time to run the clinic herself, but should demand increase there would



“THE AIM OF THE CENTRE IS TO EDUCATE THE STUDENTS SO THAT THEY CAN BECOME FULLY INDEPENDENT ADULTS.”



THE ROOM THAT IS DUE TO BECOME THE SURGERY RECEPTION AND PHARMACY



THE ROOM THAT IS DUE TO BECOME THE CONSULTATION ROOM

be the option of employing a receptionist through the fees paid by outpatients. It is felt that this facility would fill a gap in the community for a drop-in clinic where appointments are not necessary and having the pharmacy on site would make healthcare more easily accessible for many local residents. I have suggested that CfR take this project on as a major fund-raising project. Having a concrete and finite project such as this with tangible goals and outcomes will revitalise fund-raising efforts in the UK and ensure that donors stay connected to the causes they give to. There would also be the possibility of sending out some volunteers to help with the renovation, although the ethical issues of this would need to be explored. At no point should CfR send volunteers to do what locals could be getting paid to do, as this would diminish income from areas where it is most needed. If the funds cannot be raised but people can go, we can consider this option.

It should be noted that the Wolverhampton Rotary Club were very much involved in the primary stages of setting up the Kasarani Children's Centre in the 1980's. It would be worth approaching them again, seeking partnership for this new fundraising project. I have informed Emma Reynolds MP, (who I did work experience with in March 2012) of the connection and could potentially approach her for help with the publicity.

## PEACE, HEALING AND RECONCILIATION PROGRAMME (PHARP)

PHARP has centres in several East African countries. Originating in Nairobi, the project soon spread to Kigali to work for peace and reconciliation after the 1994 Genocide. It now also works in Uganda and South Sudan, where internal fighting is a constant concern. I visited the offices in Nairobi and Kigali.

### NAIROBI

In Kenya, the small team at the PHARP office organise training sessions for communities around the country. I was able to attend one of these sessions, in Karen, a suburb of Nairobi. The group comprised about 40 young people from many different churches in the area. The day was split in two, with a different facilitator for each section. The first speaker examined the nature of peace, noting most strikingly that it is not simply the absence of war. To be truly at peace is close to being truly happy: nothing should be a



“THE GROUP COMPRISED ABOUT 40 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MANY DIFFERENT CHURCHES IN THE AREA.”

concern, whether that be security, education, health or the future. Creating a truly peaceful environment then is the whole goal of development work. There is concern that Kenya is going backwards down the road – away from peace. Certainly in the north-east, there is a situation of war. Even in Nairobi, concern mounts about the upcoming general election, creating an inherent feeling of instability. Even if this does not erupt into violence, it does not constitute peace.

PHARP is a Christian organisation, using the Word of God to promote peace. I was particularly impressed by how open and interactive these young people were, opening their Bibles at any moment to reinforce a point.

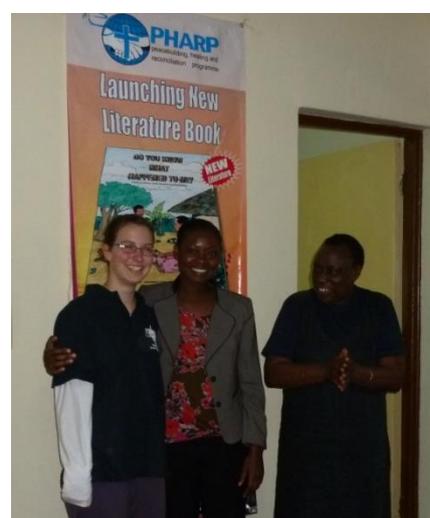
The afternoon session was led by a local pastor. Firstly, we heard about the nature of forgiveness. The importance of active forgiveness was underlined and we were encouraged to recognize that forgiveness is not a natural process, but a choice, made with the help of Jesus, and that we must continue to work at forgiveness. Pushing resentment out of mind does not constitute forgiveness; indeed this is very important in situations where tension may flare up again around a certain event. This is the case in Kenya at the moment as the country looks forward to another general election with the memories of the previous election still fresh in their minds.

The second part of the session was about the nature of reconciliation. It is important to remember that forgiveness and reconciliation are not one and the same thing and that reconciliation is not always instantly achievable. Sometimes forgiveness may be achieved but living together in harmony and cooperation does not come as the natural next step. However, in order for communities to be fully functional and happy, reconciliation is important. It is through working with others that we can 'multiply the effect' and bring about the change we want to see happen. Reconciliation is about opening dialogue and working on projects together for mutual advantage. Through reconciliation we can remove the cracks that break a community until it becomes one whole again.

At this sort of training session PHARP provides travel expenses for the attendees where possible, as well as lunch and refreshments. This is key to making sure that no one is prevented from attending on financial ground. However, it does mean that such training sessions can only happen when funds allow and PHARP has no income-generating activity.

Later in my visit to Nairobi, I visited the office where PHARP is based. It has recently moved out of the centre of the city (near where Maji Mazuri is now based) to a quieter spot in Kiserian. Pelagie, Suzanne and I discussed some of the issues facing PHARP, but it was also an opportunity for Wacera to meet members of the PHARP team. There is potential for there to be some form of cooperation between the two organisations in the future. The value of networking, spontaneous or otherwise, was made clear by the arrival of a pastor from the Kibera slums who is looking to set up a project there that is similar to the Green Heroes Project in Mathare. With more communication of this kind the lessons learnt by one organisation can be of great value to another and it will become easier to set up such positive projects.

PHARP asked specifically for the funds or resources to translate a book provided by an American organisation. This book teaches peace without the trainees needing to be literate, which makes it very valuable in Kenya's rural communities. Pelagie and Suzanne feel that if the book were also available in Swahili and French it would be of greater use and could be dispersed more widely. It is a very useful tool that does not require a great deal of training to use and so could be vital in spreading PHARP's message of peace and reconciliation. I have offered to translate the book into French myself and CfR are currently looking to find someone to do the translation into Swahili. CfR has also taken on board the fact that donations are required to fund PHARP's training sessions and is looking into how the way they give might be revitalised to allow for more of these sessions to go ahead through their support.



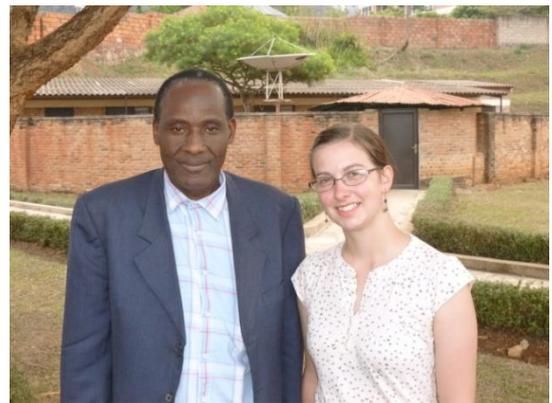
"PELAGIE, SUZANNE AND I DISCUSSED SOME OF THE ISSUES FACING PHARP."

## KIGALI

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After a 27 hour bus ride through Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, I was met in Kigali by Anastase from PHARP in Rwanda. He took me to their office in Kigali, which is also home to a small sewing school for local girls, where I also met Juliette. The work of PHARP Rwanda is primarily in counselling and emotional support, as well as working in communities to foster healthy relationships between previously warring ethnic groups. Counselling is not offered specifically for post-Genocide trauma, but it is found that the majority of cases have causes in the horrific events of 1994. Juliette told of one mother worried by her son's drug abuse and remarked that it is likely that his addiction started in the aftermath of the Genocide. In general, the Rwandan people are now less concerned with analysing the events of the past and prefer to get on with life in the present and the future. This does not mean there are no unresolved issues and PHARP works to encourage people to express their concerns in a mediated environment to ensure they are properly dealt with. It is hoped that this will prevent a reprisal of the 1994 violence as it has been shown that the roots of the 1994 Genocide go back to unresolved grievances from many years previously. This is why the work of PHARP in Kenya, resolving the conflict that remains after the 2007 PEV, is so important.

Outside of Kigali, PHARP Rwanda runs peace and reconciliation workshops in communities that request the facilitation of PHARP's partners in helping them to become whole again. PHARP finds that the best way to do this is through practical means, for two reasons. The first is that poverty remains a huge obstacle in the way of peace as the day-to-day struggles prevent peace taking hold, particularly in the broader sense as discussed earlier. Therefore, by providing a pig or sewing machine or field PHARP help the community lift itself out of poverty, opening the way to peace. Secondly, the practical and tangible goals of these sorts of projects unite people towards a common purpose, encouraging them to work together to achieve clear benefits. Projects where PHARP provide training, such as sewing schools or basket making classes end with a celebration of the community's achievement in a sort of graduation ceremony. This provides a positive environment in which the different ethnic groups can come together and celebrate with each other.



“AFTER A 27 HOUR BUS RIDE THROUGH KENYA, UGANDA AND RWANDA, I WAS MET IN KIGALI BY ANASTASE FROM PHARP IN RWANDA.”

The work of PHARP in Rwanda also involves preaching the Word of God with particular attention to Bible passages about forgiveness and reconciliation. Anastase tells some very moving stories of victim and perpetrator who come to find reconciliation because of Jesus' preaching. Through reading the Bible, victims realise that they must also find a way to forgive and to relieve themselves of the huge burden of bitterness and resentment. This is obviously very difficult in the circumstances of brutality in the Genocide but PHARP's work proves that it is possible. On the whole Rwanda has turned around as a country surprisingly quickly and is now called by many a model for East Africa. Much of the reconciliation that is constantly ongoing in the country comes from Christian teaching.

PHARP Rwanda can also only do as much as generous donations allow. They are currently looking for someone to work for them on a mid-term basis (for one to two years) to coordinate their fundraising efforts around the world. This would allow for more efficient and more effective fundraising as well as allowing PHARP to better plan for the future rather than having to constantly wait for the next donation to arrive.

## CONCLUSION

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One month in East Africa has left me thirsting for more; it has also completely revolutionised the way I consider charitable work and the international involvement of partners in African-based charities. Although we must be ever conscious of the problem of donor fatigue, it really is financial support that is most effective for Maji Mazuri and PHARP. I am never a proponent of unlimited financial funding: organisations, however big or small, must look to be self-sufficient to be fully sustainable for the future. For Maji Mazuri it is clear that this aim is constantly in mind and the various projects take steps towards this goal every day. At PHARP the problem is slightly more complicated as their work provides a service that the beneficiaries cannot pay for themselves, and yet which is very important in the development of Kenyan and Rwandan communities over the next generation. To mitigate the reliance on donors, the work of PHARP is very clearly focused on sustainability: when PHARP facilitators leave, the communities they leave behind have the resources to continue their own journey of reconciliation and peace. I am therefore recommending that CfR renew its commitment to financial support of PHARP and Maji Mazuri.

However, it is necessary to re-address the issue of fundraising in order to be able to improve the partnership with CfR and international organisations. Projects like the outpatients' clinic at Kiserian and the translation of the teaching material for PHARP are examples of activity for which we can approach fundraising in a different way. Where there is a clearly defined, time limited project CfR can run specific events and approach specific partners in order to raise sums in addition to the annual commitments that already exist.

While I originally went to Africa to volunteer, it soon became clear that the scope for doing that for short periods of time is limited. This is in fact good news. Maji Mazuri have the resources to hire trained Kenyan teachers and youth workers and there is little room for unskilled, inexperienced Western volunteers. However, to say that I learnt a great deal from my visit to Africa is an understatement and there is great value in this cultural experience. It informs my view of Western life and culture and makes me both appreciate much of what I have and yearn for a broader life experience. It also informs my opinion of British foreign policy at a national and local level, and opens my eyes to the nature of working for an NGO. Finally, it completely demolishes the received perception of the African continent that is publicised by many Western NGOs in an attempt to evoke sympathy and thus donations. There is a great deal of positive activity going on in Africa that does not involve unsustainable handouts and it is my belief that while these projects benefit a great deal from international partnership, we should remain aware that partnerships are mutually beneficial. I would not hesitate to recommend visits of a period of one month or more to either Maji Mazuri or PHARP to young people connected to CfR, like myself. This will also ensure that CfR remains up-to-date on local developments that will help them to be a more effective partner.

It is clear then that CfR has a lot to consider, and a lot of action it can take in the short, medium and long term. The key to the success of these new initiatives will be communication. This requires CfR to communicate with Maji Mazuri and PHARP, but CfR also requires updates from their partners in order to be able to address current needs. I hope that many others will be able to benefit from similar experiences to my own and that the improved communication will allow Maji Mazuri and PHARP to benefit in turn.