

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



friends of cme trust

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Dear Friend,

A Happy New Year to you all as we, with your support, work to assist our friends in DRC to a happier year too! In November we relayed distressing news about the political and military situation in North-East DRC and how this was threatening the hospitals, projects and population that we support. Despite continued fighting, we hope our news will encourage you by showing how we are helping to improve the daily lives of many people in the region.

Civil war in North-Kivu - update

Just days ago, tensions were rising between Congo and Rwanda. Congolese officials blamed Rwandan military, economic, and ethnic interests for their *alleged* backing of Tutsi rebel leader General Nkunda's (CNDP) offensive against Rwandan Hutus hiding in mineral-rich East-DRC. Their advance brought the DRC army to the area to suppress them, causing a quarter of a million people to flee their villages, and provoking a humanitarian crisis in the North-Kivu region (where we support CME hospitals, IDP agricultural projects, and conflict resolution work). However, at the end of January, in what the BBC called "an astonishing about turn", Rwanda arrested Nkunda. We hope that this step towards cooperation between the two countries will lead to sustained peace in the region, that the rest of the CNDP will disband, and the displaced will soon be able to return home.

Fortunately, since the attack at Nyankunde in mid-Oct last year the situation has been stable in the areas CME (*Centre Medical Evangelique*) works so the hospitals in Beni, Bunia and Nyankunde are functioning. The CME AGM will take place this month so we hope to report on the medical work in the next newsletter. The meeting will include discussion of a new Medical Director as Dr Philip Wood plans to hand the role on to another, although he will continue to work for CME.

Nyankunde Schools Project

Many of you support our schools work in Nyankunde – paying local teachers' salaries, purchasing basic materials (books, pens etc) and ad-hoc school building. We have, since 2006, been funding teachers' salaries at £1,100 per month and enabling 3500 children to attend school. Now there are 6030 local children (many recently returned to Nyankunde) seeking education across 21 schools, which we could provide at merely £1,800 a month (**£3.50 per year, per child**)! This includes extra help for orphans (who make up approx. 1800 of the 6030). We currently have sufficient funds to maintain this support until Dec 2009. However, we do need to raise an extra £700 a month for this to be sustainable beyond that time. We are therefore appealing for donations as follows:

Could you help to educate 1 child for £3.50 p.a (30p a month); or 10 children for £35 p.a (£3 a month); or even 50 children for £175 p.a (£15 a month)? If so, please let us know.

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Beni hospital building work (Operating Theatre & Intensive Care Unit)

In November we reported delays in completing the new CME Beni hospital Operating Theatre due to contractor issues. This has now been resolved and work has resumed. An Intensive Care Unit was also required alongside the Op. Theatre (it is too far to transport critical post-op patients in to the main hospital site) but we needed to find the finance for this (\$44,000). Friends of CME Trust is delighted to report that we have now received sufficient donations to complete both buildings! The photos below show the foundations in place for the ICU and the well-advanced Operating Theatre behind it.



So, what next? CME's desire is for a general ward to be built alongside the other 2 units to produce a fully operational complex where patients can be prepared for and recover from surgery. Friends of CME Trust already has \$2,500 towards the expected costs of about \$20,000. We'd like to again thank those who have supported the building work so far. If you'd to contribute further please get in touch.

Physiotherapy Project

Chris Phillips (British physiotherapist gone to develop a physiotherapy project at Nyankunde) arrived at Nyankunde on Jan 3rd, having had a time of adjustment in Bunia first. We have heard that she is happy there and impressed by the quality and people she has met. We'll keep you updated on her work.

Financial Summary for Friends of CME Trust to 31st Dec 2008

- During the year we received income as follows:
Restricted for certain projects: £44,487; Unrestricted: £13,125
- We gave to CME a total of £52,978 and had funds in the bank to support a number of ongoing projects into 2009 including the schools, ICU building & sponsor-a-bed scheme in the hospitals.

Thank you to all of you who gave to us. More details will be on our web site soon.

Finally, if you'd like to receive this newsletter in the different format from which it has been sent you (email or post) or unsubscribe completely, please email info@friendsofcme.com and tell us. Thank you so much for joining with us in helping reduce suffering and bring hope to many in North-East DRC.

Best wishes

Chris

(On behalf of the Trustees)