

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



friends of cme trust

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Dear friends,

Thank you for your on-going interest in the work of Friends of CME Trust and its support of the poor in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The country has continued with relative peace since we last wrote and elections are planned for later this year. The Chinese are investing significant money in infrastructure but, many believe, only in order to have preferential access to valuable raw materials. As mentioned last time, the DRC has finally paid off its long-standing overseas debt. Its government budget shows that this will save the country \$360 million in 2011. But while a number of factors point to a brighter future, there is still a long way to go before the vast majority of ordinary people see their living conditions improve significantly. Each day that goes by, tragically, another 1,000 people die from poverty-related matters in the north-east part of DRC served by *Centre Medical Evangelique* (CME). Many of the promises of the government have still not materialised, especially in the east of the country where there seems to be little accountability.

CME's regular work has continued in the last quarter with the running of 3 hospitals; the care of about 4,000 patients each month; the employment of 300 staff; teaching in the nursing schools and university; and primary healthcare education. Additionally, in the 20 schools that we support, 230 teachers have been teaching 5,500 children daily. At Nyankunde, the hospital numbers are up, the staff busier, and the maternity is setting new records for deliveries! This is good for the increased contact with people as well as the hospital's cash flow.



Friends of CME Trust has been sending £4,200 a month to help fund these activities. We thank God for the daily faithfulness of all those involved with CME despite the logistical problems of running 3 sites with poor communication, a lack of many basic medical supplies and staff shortages in certain key positions. Add to this the emotional trials of uncertainty, insecurity and sadness that are regular features of daily life in north-east DRC.



Beside the regular activities, building reconstruction continues at all 3 sites. At Nyankunde, Richard Dix from Samaritans Purse is close to completing the operating theatre to replace the one previously destroyed. In Bunia, Doctors Philip and Nancy Wood have reported the completion of a roof on the local ISTM University building.

Friends of CME trust was established to meet the immediate needs after Nyankunde hospital was destroyed in 2002. To a large extent, we hope that the need for our support will eventually cease as CME becomes self-sufficient. However, for the foreseeable future, CME needs financial help in a number of areas. We recently had a Trustees meeting and made some big

decisions about our support. In the 6 years since the Charity was established, we have received £354,000 in donations. The 3 biggest uses of this money have been £75,000 for building the new hospital at Beni/Sosé, £65,000 for the schools at Nyankunde and £38,000 to subsidise patients at the

three hospitals. The use of the other funds and more information is on our website (www.friendsofcme.org). Going forward, we want to concentrate our funds on subsidising patient care and feeding the malnourished, so will cease our direct fundraising for construction and schools for the time being. This has been a hard decision as explained below.

CONSTRUCTION AT BENI/SOSÉ

The £75,000 sent to CME has now virtually completed the three buildings needed (see photo, right) as the base for the hospital to move. Our thanks to Dennis Tailor, whose '3:2:1' triathlon last summer raised over £5,200 of this. CME has set a date of 1st June 2011 for the move. This will be a fantastic achievement with the operating theatre, intensive care unit and maternity ward being purpose built. It will also free up monies currently used on renting 3 properties in the town of Beni. However, the move poses challenges since the site is 5km out of town. Transportation will be an issue, as will a reliable drinking water supply, an adequate sewerage system and some housing for doctors/nurses who will need to be on call for patient care and to provide security. CME still needs to find about £20,000 to meet these additional needs. Since we had committed to raising the funds for the 3 buildings, we have encouraged CME to seek other donors for this £20,000. However, this will not be easy for them and we really want them to be able to start using the new facilities, so if you would like to and are able to help, we would love to hear from you!



NYANKUNDE SCHOOLS

We started this support in 2006 and have given £65,000, as noted above. Our support was expected to be short term so we have exceeded our initial expectations. In November 2009, we appealed for funding since the monies were running out. The results of the appeal initially extended our support to Dec 2010. We are pleased to say that the schools are now funded until June 2011. However, we currently receive each month £900 in donations for the schools but pay out £2,200 for the 120 teachers who are not paid by the DRC government. As Trustees we recently spent a lot of time considering the best way forward.

Clearly at the moment we cannot continue as we are as the £900 a month is insufficient for 120 teachers (about £7 a month salary). But we know that these children and the community will be devastated if they can't go to school. In the last two weeks we have heard that another 21,000 teachers are to be added to the DRC payroll this month and will be funded by the World Bank. In addition, the DRC budget for teachers' pay has gone up by 40%. This means average salaries will be \$60 a month up from \$45. All this is good news, although we don't know if any of the 21,000 teachers are at Nyankunde or if, as yet, the extra money has been received by the teachers. So our decision, as Trustees, was the terribly hard one to stop the funding at the end of the school year in June with the hope and prayer that the DRC government will pay all the teachers by then. If you have been giving to us to support the teachers, thank you for sticking with this beyond the time we had anticipated. Please consider whether after June you would be able to continue giving instead towards our general activities.

Some will be saying, "what happens if the teachers don't get paid by the government?" The answer is, we don't know. It is a heavy burden on our minds to think of these children going without school. If you feel strongly about still supporting the children and are able to give for this purpose, please do let us know, since we will be keeping a close eye on the situation and may be able to review our decision.

More information and photos are on our website: www.friendsofcme.org. To unsubscribe from these tri-annual updates, please email: info@friendsofcme.com.

Best wishes,

Chris Almond
(On behalf of the Trustees)