

Friends of Londiani Harambee 2013 Report



Harambee 2013 was very successful with sixteen volunteers travelling to Kenya to partake in FOL's ongoing health and community development projects. The volunteers had signed up with FOL by June 2013, and trained and prepared for the project over three training events. The Harambee project ran from 1st November to 23rd November.

During their time in Kenya more than 120 people completed business courses, 50+ stove surveys and 10 stove installations took place; more than 400 children were vaccinated; 60 Lifeskills certificates were presented; 59 Wilderness First Aid certificates; 30 Essential Obstetric and Newborn Care participants; countless GPS measurements were taken to feed into mapping of the area and the team left an indelible mark on the communities they worked with and in.

Volunteers

The sixteen volunteers came from all over Ireland and from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Thirteen were first time volunteers who, from the beginning entered the ethos of the projects. Working alongside the Harambee team were the Mayo General Hospital Link team consisting of 6 Doctors and Nurses who worked in Londiani District Hospital and also organised Essential Obstetric and Newborn Care courses and took part in Outreach Clinics in the wider community.



Project Site

After arriving into Nairobi at 2130hrs on Saturday November 1st, the team overnighted there and set off early the following morning for their final destination, St Kizito's Londiani. Under the gracious hospitality of Fr Martin Barry and Fr Con Ryan they were accommodated in dorms built in the grounds of St Kizitos and utilised the excellent facilities they have built for community use in the district.

For three weeks of the Harambee, St Kizito's grounds was a hive of activity as it was the base for all project planning, along with courses being run in the Church hall. During the two Wilderness First Aid Courses, heavily bandaged casualties were seen to make miraculous recoveries around the site!

Community

Based in Londiani, a District in Kenya's rift valley, FOL work with communities to improve access to health, water & sanitation and education and to achieve economic empowerment.

During the team's three weeks in Londiani they worked with and supported the Ministry of Health, District Medical Teams, the District Water Office, The District Officers, District commissioner, Divisional Officers, Chiefs, Public Health Officers, Community Health Workers, local volunteers, schools, teachers and students amongst others. FOL's aim is to work with communities to help create a better future for themselves by supporting them to make lasting changes and improvements to their lives.

The Harambee team followed this aim working closely with FOL's partners in the community and working alongside other volunteers from the community. They supported the community by sharing with them their skills and knowledge, facilitating opportunities for training to happen and creating cultural exchange by living in the community. They helped build a confidence and sense of wellbeing in the community that comes from knowing that people cared enough to come and help them in their efforts to improve the future of everyone in their community.



Harambee

Three busy weeks followed the team's arrival and tasks completed included - Essential Obstetric and Newborn Care Courses, Maternal Health Course, Outreach Clinics, assisting with house to house Polio campaign, Business Training, Stove Surveys and Installations, Sustainable Tourism, Wilderness First Aid (Remote Emergency Care) Training and Lifeskills Peer Education Courses. These are outlined on the following pages.

Essential Obstetric & Neonatal Care (EONC)

Two courses of Essential Obstetric & Neonatal Care (EONC) were undertaken. The volunteers involved included 3 Obstetricians, two Nurses and two GPs. Two local facilitators were also involved. These courses were held in Fort Ternan Sub District Hospital and in the Youth Centre in Kipkelion. Verbal evaluation from the groups was that the course was very beneficial and relevant to their clinical practice, in particular use of the skill stations using mannequins. The participants voiced many challenges that they face, e.g. triaging care for late referrals in from the community, transportation and accessing remote communities



Maternal Health Course

A maternal health course was run by two Irish Volunteer Midwives for Friends of Londiani Kenya staff and for any interested volunteers. The course content was based on the programme that FOL have been running since 2007 in the region and of which FOL trained Kenyan Health professionals train Community Health Workers. These courses have been found to

have a vital role in improving maternal and foetal wellbeing in the community as it emphasises the importance of antenatal education, recognising warning signs of complications of pregnancy and childbirth and early referral to appropriate health facility. Feedback from both Kenyan and Irish participants were that the course was very worthwhile and especially for the Kenyan staff who had on many occasions found themselves in rural locations being asked for assistance in transferring mothers in labour.

Outreach Clinics

Volunteers assisted the District Health with a number of outreach clinics in rural areas. These areas are very remote with difficult access and so mothers have to travel long distances to reach vaccination clinics. Several of the clinics (which are sometimes located in churches or other similar buildings), had not been visited for many months.

Very large numbers turned up where vaccinations were carried out and Vitamin A and deworming tablets were distributed. Medical assessments were carried out and appropriate plan of care was made.



House to House Polio Campaign

This was a national campaign run by the Ministry of Health in Kenya. In this District it was rolled out by the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation Division of Disease Surveillance and Response. Parts of this location are sparsely populated necessitating climbing up hills and down glens for up to 1-2 kilometres to vaccinate one child. The terrain was difficult and challenging. However the Volunteers had the opportunity to visit families in their homestead and really see a remote community and the challenges they face.

As the vaccination teams were split in two, one group stayed in Londiani town and were able to contrast the challenges facing the urban community alongside those in more rural settings of the community.

National and district Public Health figures have yet to be officially published. However in the course of two days more than 400 children were vaccinated by teams including FOL volunteers in these areas.

Business Training



Following successful courses run during Harambees in the previous two years, three 3-day Business Training Courses were held in Kipkelion and Londiani with a total attendance of 120 people from every community in the area. This team hope to have put in a foundation that will help these communities build on the training received. Kipkelion has a number of interesting developments in the area that should positively benefit business and part of the training was identifying these opportunities and identifying how best to use them.

These developments include a new road currently under construction which will link Nakuru to Kisumu and passes within km of Kipkelion, and also Rural Electrification which is being rolled out in the area. Areas covered on the course included marketing, competition, finance and business planning.



Stove Surveys and Installations

Fuel Efficient Stoves

FOL is working with the Public Health Office in Londiani and in Kipkelion, to introduce a new fuel efficient stove to the District. This new stove has been built in almost 200 homes in the Londiani Area. These will have a major impact on the health of the entire family but especially on the mother (typically the cook in the household) and small children, either strapped to the mothers back or playing around near the old open fire. However the main point of delight for the new proud owners of these stoves is the fuel efficiency, the stoves need only one third of the fuel used by open fires. It costs between €45 and €50 to build one of these stoves, which includes a training programme for installers and follow up visits to each household. The benefits are huge.



During Harambee 2013 50 Stove Surveys were carried out and 10 new Stoves were installed with the assistance of FOL volunteers working alongside the local communities. The information gained in the carrying out of these surveys on the demographics and challenges these communities face play a vital role in planning Community Development and reaching Health targets for the District Public Health and for Friends of Londiani in supporting these programmes



Sustainable Tourism

Anyone who has visited the Londiani Area and particularly areas like Ndubusat knows the beauty of the area. Trekking from village to village, as many volunteers have done in the course of their work is a delight and no one can come to the area and not wonder about its potential as a tourist magnet. However with no tourism infrastructure, the area is not in a position to attract tourism. FOL are working to change that and are actively supporting community groups in that area towards that goal. Previous Harambee teams from Ireland, Australia and New Zealand have focused on the area working with the community on a plan to create a sustainable trekking route tourist destination.



Barazas (community meetings) have been held with local villages, walking surveys and GPS surveys have been carried out, questionnaires filled in and trainings held. 12 villages were included in this project, all now are actively pursuing Healthy Village Status. As part of this Harambee, 22 volunteers joined our Kenyan colleagues in walking the proposed route over the course of the weekend, staying overnight in Tenga Farm, Monastery. John, one of the Irish Volunteers marked all relevant viewpoints and the next step is to produce an accurate map of the area. This is a very exciting project and much still has to be done but keep those trekking boots handy for a trekking holiday in Londiani.

Girls for Girls Programme

Girls in Londiani often miss school one week of every month when they have their period as they do not have access to affordable sanitary products. Additionally, the conditions of some of the toilets at school are very basic, unhygienic and without doors. This means girls choose not to go to school when they have their period due to the lack of facilities and embarrassment. FOL have together with members of WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) devised a training programme that culminates in the provision of reusable sanitary wear for girls.



During our stay in St Kizitos Norah Sirma, Operations Manager FOLK and Caroline Chelangat, Field Officer for the Healthy Schools Programme spoke to the volunteers on how this programme operates and the impact it has had in improving female attendance in schools and continuing education. The health promotion aspects and improved sanitary facilities in participating schools has also been noted to be a huge success and it is hoped for the continued role out of this programme going forward.

Wilderness First Aid (Remote Emergency Care)

Following on from the first FOL run Wilderness First Aid Course in September 2013, 59 Participants, over two courses, comprising Community Health Workers, Community Groups, Public Health Officers and FOL staff attended a 2 day Wilderness First Aid Course, held in St Kizitos in Londiani. The course provided basic emergency first aid and health training to support people working in very remote areas, where calling emergency services just isn't an option. Feedback from this course was very positive.



All participants were given a first aid pack so that they will have vital materials to hand. These items locally sourced,

with the exception of Irish made bags, ponchos and rescue masks are utilised by trained Community Health Workers.

Demand continues to be very high for this course. It is planned to continue rolling out this course in 2014.



Peer Education/Life Skills



Two courses were run and 60 candidates took part in two locations in this region. On the final week a review, of the course content took place in Kipkellion with 27 local trainers, FOL Kenya personnel and Irish Volunteers to gather information for improvements to this course. Currently feedback is being assessed, modules improved and a workbook to go along with the course has been developed.

The impact of this course has been narrated by the local community as being of vital importance to educating the region on improving the quality of life of all the community and of opening up discussions on topics that may have been hidden before.



Thank you Asante Sana!

Friends of Londiani (FOL) would like to thank each volunteer for giving up their time and energy for the communities around Londiani and for their hard work, commitment, enthusiasm, flexibility and good humour throughout the project. It is deeply appreciated by the people and the two-way cultural interaction is a special opportunity for all concerned.



Special thanks also go to Fr Martin Barry and Fr Con Ryan and the Parishioners of St Kizitos for their unfailing hospitality and warm welcome to all volunteers.

Most of all FOL would like to thank the families, friends, supporters and sponsors of the Harambee 2013 volunteers who have given generously to enable the projects to occur. Through your continued support FOL can fulfil its aim to support these rural communities in Kenya to make lasting changes and improvements to their lives.

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