



ZAMBIA CLUSTER

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Welcome to our end-of-year bulletin, which I'm compiling during the Advent season as we await to commemorate the Birth of Jesus. As I reflect on various experiences for the last eleven months since the Brothers came to Western Province, we have a lot to be grateful for the transformation that has happened in each of the Brothers here, and the expectation we hold as we await the Birth of Jesus.

- Samuel Munyua-Editor

Mouvin Fernandes Leaves the Cluster

I glanced up from my desk and through the window saw Mouvin hold briefly onto the clothes-line then move slowly to other parts of the large enclosed compound outside our Mongu house. Saying goodbye. The next morning, we were gathered outside while the loaded car in which he would travel to Lusaka



Mouvin slipped inside for a few minutes. On his return I asked him whether he was saying goodbye to the house – he smiled, nodded and said, “It’s hard to leave somewhere where you have put so much of yourself!” Then he got into the car, leaving behind here in Zambia 15 months of his 18 years as a Christian Brother. But I am certain he left behind a very large part of himself

also wherever he was before Mongu. . From the beginning of our time at the Hub, Mouvin indicated that he was in discernment about his future. While we all hoped this would end up with a decision to stay, we could see the care, openness, advice sought, discernment that eventually led to his decision to try another route in life. He kept us informed as we all shared our search for ultimate meaning in our prayer together and so we too reached the same peace as he with his choice. Even so he leaves a huge gap in our community and Cluster.

- Joe

Welcome John Holden

Br. John below fourth right with members of Luampa Community



Special welcome to John Holden back to Zambian Cluster. John arrived in Mongu after an extended stay in Canada on November 6 and has settled in here in fine style ,taking on various responsibilities including that of community burser,co-ordinator of Cluster Child Protection Programme and Hub study co-ordinator for brothers in the cluster John will be a representative of the Cluster at the African Province formators meeting January 15-20th Lusaka. Good to have you back again, John we pray blessings on you.



Journeying Together

All Eleven Renew Vows

There are eleven of the eighteen Brothers in the Zambian Cluster who are temporary professed. All chose to make and were accepted for vow renewal. That happened on December 8th at Limulunga. Also present with the Cluster were TST members and the local priest. A moving ceremony was prepared by John Holden, Dominic Mwanja and Innocent Kaimbo.

The wider Congregation will join with them in hoping that the learning of this incubation period will give birth to effective cooperative measures to improve the lives of those among whom they live and, in turn, transform themselves as well.



Centerpiece depicting our journey towards renewal of vows

Each Brother had prepared his own introduction to the formal vow formula to express his personal understanding of the commitment he was making for another year.



Brothers enjoying company of each other after ceremony



Visitor of the month to our cluster

Br. John renewing his vows



This was a red-letter day in the history of the Congregation as it sets out on its Way into the Future – this very young Cluster group has tasted the community life and search for God aimed for by this new direction and have found it satisfying and worthwhile. Nine months of living among the very poor in Western Province of Zambia, starting with barely furnished houses and minimal equipment, with only a little Community Engagement training and no real maps for what they were to do, the cluster members have seen the possibilities in this, the Congregation’s new direction.



Br. Hugh second right with some members of Luampa Community.



Journeying Together

Early Projects Designed

The first eight months in the Cluster have seen the Mission Communities trying to find out about the people among whom they live, their concerns, their problems, the reasons for their stark poverty and desperation. The Brothers with Martin Consilia, Project Coordinator, have designed six projects to both address in a small way some of the issues identified and practise the complicated process of project management. The projects are:

Sustainable Agriculture Practices to Empower Youth

This project targets 45 Luampa youths who will acquire basic technical knowledge in vegetable crop production, fisheries and poultry.

Strengthening Community Support and Care Systems

This targets 150 Senanga youths and adults to be identified, sensitised to the needs and trained as basic care givers for elderly and sick.

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene knowledge and attitudes and practices.

The goal of this project is improved knowledge, attitudes and practices on water, hygiene and sanitation among the vulnerable poor children and adults in three areas in Senanga.

Reproductive Health and Life Skills

This project targets 300 Limulunga and surrounding village teenagers and youth from age 14-35 years and uses a mixture of instruction and youth activities, especially sport. The goal is to embed behaviour change awareness into the sports.

Improving nutrition education for women of reproductive age and adolescent girls in Limulunga.

This aims at improved knowledge, attitudes and practices on nutrition, including “Recommended Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices.”

Second Chance’ GCE level attempt for 17-30 Year old youths who failed the mainstream schooling opportunity- Luampa

This project targets 60 young adults (50% girls and 50% boys) aged 17-30 who are no longer in school but are motivated and enthusiastic to attain their GCE certificate.

Full applications for these projects are being prepared.

While it is not practical to go into the reasons that some of these projects were chosen, I will give this short summary as to why the nutrition project is important.

According to the 2013-14 DHS 40% of children under 5 are stunted, 6% are wasted and 15% are underweight. Ten percent of women aged 15-49 are underweight; they fall below the body mass index (BMI) cut off of 18.5. Only 11% of children 6-23 months are fed appropriately based on recommended infant and young child feeding practices. Good nutrition is critical to children’s growth and development. A child who is stunted may not do well in school owing to brain dysfunction. A woman’s nutritional status has important implications for her health as well as the health of her children. Generally poor nutritional status increases susceptibility to infection. Information from the 2013-14 ZDHS indicates that stunting in Western Province, of which Limulunga is part, is over 30% amongst children under age 5. Given the high number of early pregnancies and early marriages in Limulunga¹, nutritional education for women of reproductive age becomes critical. Evidence shows that undernutrition is responsible for 45% of deaths of children younger than 5 years (Lancet 2013).

The purpose of this project is therefore to “Contribute to improved nutrition knowledge, attitudes and practices, amongst women of reproductive age and adolescent girls in Limulunga East; Limulunga West, Nangoko and Yaka.”

-Martin



Journeying Together

At Last a Driver Has Arrived

The first meeting of the group overseeing the project work of the Zambian Cluster was held on Tuesday, 13th December. The change in governance of the Cluster in early July had disestablished the group readied to plan for and organise the various project activities in the three Mission Communities. The District will establish by next November a Management Board to do those tasks. In the meantime a type of shadow Board called the Cluster Project Advisory Team will prepare the documents for the future Board and scrutinise and advise on project proposals. Local members bring a deep understanding of how it really is for the Zambian poor as well as knowledge of how to tap local means of addressing problems.



Mr. Mooto above, Dean of Students and Business Studies at Barotse University brings a particular experience in entrepreneurship.

Mrs. Moono above right, Jesuit Centre for Theological Studies, brings experience in addressing powerful groups overseas and in mobilising local action for rights advocacy.

Mrs. Mwala below left, Principal of Mongu Catholic Teachers' College, brings wide knowledge of the educational needs, especially of women in Western Province.



Sr. Numba above right, brings expertise as a lecturer in Community Engagement and a knowledge of the particular needs of disabled children.

The other members of the Team are Martin Silutongwe (Project Coordinator), Br. Samuel Munyua (Cluster Project Coordinator), Br. Mark Cody (Treasurer) and Br. Joe Lauren (Acting Chair). The group studied *Journeying Together* (their strategic plan), their Terms of Reference, their Role Descriptions and an Annual Report on the activity in the Cluster so far.

It is always exciting to be starting at the ground floor in building something and that excitement was present at the meeting. The combined wisdom and local knowledge freely given is a rich base for the Zambian Cluster's ministry activities.

Christmas celebrations at Zambian Cluster



Brothers' bits and pieces

- Innocent Kaimbo lost his grandfather and an uncle within a week. Let's hold him in our thoughts and prayers.
- Michael Godfrey is currently in Australia celebrating his jubilee.
- Con Cerejo is currently in India for his holiday.
- Steve Sitali is currently in Mazabuka for his annual holiday.