



KAPASSENI CALLING



AN UPDATE ON THE KAPASSENI PROJECT

Issue 10

November 2004

Kapasseni Update & Fundraising Events On November 27 and November 28

• **Saturday Evening, 7:30, Nov. 27, Isabelle Reader Theatre, Langford** – This evening of information and entertainment will feature Pearson College Choir, guest musicians, and a beautiful collection of images filmed last year in Kapasseni by photographer Ben Fox. Tickets \$10.00 from Kapasseni Committee members or call 478-4149. FMI, Carol Kerr 478-9296.

• **Sunday Evening, 7:30, Nov. 28, David Lam Auditorium, UVic** – Shivon Robinsong will MC an evening featuring Ben Fox's new video and the powerful CBC film *The Value of Life - AIDS in Africa Revisited* – about the unrelenting mission of Stephen Lewis, UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. **At 6:30** we'll have a pre-show screening of *Journey to Kapasseni*, about building the first school in 1999. Admission is free, but donations to the Kapasseni Project are greatly appreciated.

Both events will have presentations from special guests from Mozambique: Pedro Corrente, Manuel Miandica, and Samson Saeni. There will be sales of Mozambican crafts, CDs of valimba music, and "Kapasseni Breakfast" porridge from the school breakfast program recipe. We'll also sing some favourite African songs. Thanks to all our supporters. There is much to be done, so come and be updated, entertained and informed about future plans!

Greetings

This year our trip to Mozambique was marked by joy and by great sadness. We started the construction of much-needed houses for the Kapasseni school teachers, and the villagers had a feast to celebrate all that has been accomplished in five years of the Kapasseni Project. They are full of appreciation for the people who have helped them rebuild their community since the war ended. Joseph and I are joyful that so much has been done. But the sadness we feel is overwhelming. This year, we realised how much Mozambique is being devastated by HIV/AIDS. In Sofala province, which includes Kapasseni, Caia, and Beira, an estimated 20% of the people are infected. The tragedy of HIV/AIDS has hit our project too. Our contact person, Benjamin Simente, who helped us faithfully since 1999, died of AIDS in July. Shortly before that, the wife of Victor Saeni, Kapasseni development officer, died of AIDS, and now he has resigned. My own sister, Lucia, has HIV, and is feeling much better thanks to help from people in Canada. Many of the orphans in Kapasseni have probably lost their parents to AIDS.

Joseph and I put a very high priority on HIV/AIDS education in Kapasseni, especially for women. Kapasseni also needs access to voluntary HIV testing, and medical care opportunities for those who are infected. People with HIV can survive for a long time if they get anti-retroviral drugs, good nutrition, and have the love and support of family and community. We have sent a funding proposal for a Kapasseni HIV/AIDS prevention program to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. We are also in touch with our sister project, the "Caia Connection", which will help AIDS orphans in Caia. When Joseph and I move back to Mozambique in two years, I plan to use my social work training to help people who have HIV/AIDS and their families. We see hope, and we have faith in the future. But for now, Mozambique is in a terrible crisis of human suffering. As always, Joseph and I ask that you keep us and Kapasseni in your prayers.

— **Perpetua Alfazema, Project Coordinator**



The new Kapasseni health centre is providing community health services to hundreds of local people.

Meet Our Special Guests Nov 27/28

Pedro Corrente is a senior official with the Mozambique Ministry of Culture. He has taken a special interest in helping Kapasseni through the formation of a legally incorporated "society" eligible for funding in the areas of health, development, education, and culture. Pedro is passionate about preserving Kapasseni's rich traditional culture. He is also a musician, and hired Kapasseni's traditional music teacher, whose instruction is supported by the proceeds of valimba music CD sales in Canada.

Samson Saeni, who is training to be a teacher, was a great help to the project this summer, providing translation and logistics for the Canadian visitors.

Manuel Miandica is coordinator of the Caia Connection project, and will also visit Kapasseni to promote AIDS education. He has much related experience, including starting a dynamic youth awareness program in Chimoio.

Pedro, Samson, and Manuel have all recently been to Kapasseni to gather information. We greatly appreciate being able to host and work with these special people.

Our thanks to WestJet, which has made this visit possible by providing air transport to/from Toronto.

Kapasseni School Notes

Five teachers' houses and a storage building are under construction, with completion expected in January. Teachers have often left Kapasseni due to the small huts they had to live in, and we hope the new housing will encourage teachers to remain. The current enrolment of the school is 373 (348 children and 25 adults), in grades 1 through 5. Most of the children are boys. Of the adults, there are 17 men and 8 women. Of the children who completed grade 5 last year, three boys are going into grade 6 in Magagade, about 15 kilometres away. It is difficult for the children to get there when there are heavy rains and flooding. The village has requested that the school be expanded to grades 6 and 7 for next year. We consider this a priority, if we have sufficient funds.



Jill Claus with school headmaster Chico Fungulane, who asked her to teach English during her visit.

Project Celebration in Kapasseni

By Jill Claus

This summer, a feast was held in the village to celebrate five years of the Kapasseni Project. Government representatives came from the Ministries of Education and Health, and villagers came from all over. The celebration started with a tour of the facilities, including the school and medical centre. The delegates were very impressed with how much the project had accomplished. The tour was followed by speeches and presentations to the project workers, and then by games for the villagers. One game was particularly fun to watch – women raced to a finish line with empty coke bottles balanced on their heads and their babies still strapped to their backs! The games were followed by food for all and dancing to valimba music. It was a wonderful day, punctuated by the birth of a baby girl in the maternity ward. My trip changed my perspective on life. It is hard to believe that we have so much, when there is such need in the world. God willing, I will return next year with my teenage daughter. She will learn more about the world and what is truly important in life from one month in Kapasseni than she could doing anything else. I strongly encourage others to make the "Journey to Kapasseni". It was the most rewarding and humbling experience of my life.

P.S. I took lots of photos! Check them out at:

<http://jillclaus.smugmug.com/share/zEJPOX1Z2wy6z>

Growing Awareness Of HIV/AIDS

By Shivon Robinsong

Hearing of the millions affected with HIV/AIDS in Africa, the countless orphans and child-led households, those dying agonizing deaths without palliative care, there is a tendency to want to shut out the news, which can seem too devastating for anyone to make a difference. And yet, I've learned over the past five years of working with the Kapasseni Project that by simply saying "Yes" to the call to get involved, we can indeed make a positive difference in people's lives on the other side of the world.

When I first visited Kapasseni in 1999, HIV/AIDS did not seem to be an issue in this isolated village. Now, Kapasseni is on the map. It has a growing reputation, even in the city of Beira, as a happening place. A school, health centre, jobs for teachers, nurses, builders, a new market place – all have created optimism and hope. But this success has also made the people more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Just 70 kilometres away, in Caia, a truck-stop town on the main route from Malawi to South Africa, the rate of infection is estimated to be around 26%. With increased traffic to and from Kapasseni, we must make HIV/AIDS awareness a top priority, or all our assistance of the past five years could become meaningless.

Dr Olivier Wingi, Chief Medical Officer for Caia District, emphasized this on his visit to Victoria last June. With the help of Elena Kanigan, who volunteered as HIV/AIDS advisor to the project, we outlined a proposal for an HIV/AIDS prevention plan for Kapasseni, including education, testing and counselling. The Alfazemas took this draft to Kapasseni in July, and it served as the basis for a discussion in the village and the development of a more comprehensive proposal. An HIV/AIDS awareness committee was formed, made up of elders, health care workers, and other villagers, adopting the motto: "Tipulumuse Manugo Athu", meaning "Save Our Bodies".

Stephen Lewis, the UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, is very clear that "unless there is recognition that women are most vulnerable ... and you do something about social and cultural equality for women, you're never going to defeat this pandemic". In light of this, we will continue to seek ways to encourage and enable girls to stay in school. By responding to the Kapasseni women's request for a corn grinding machine, we will be relieving many girls of the burden of spending hours each day pounding the family's grains, and enabling them to stay in school longer. We are also raising funds to support the villagers' HIV/AIDS prevention efforts.

In the face of this overwhelming crisis threatening the whole continent of Africa, what else can we do but reach out, say "Yes", and bring hope and caring to one small village that has touched our hearts.

Benjamin Virnijo Simente, 1974 - 2004

With great sadness, we tell you of the death of Benjamin Virnijo Simente, at age 30, of causes related to AIDS. Benjamin was in Kapasseni in 1999 when the first school was built, and became a hard-working contact person for the Project. He was a policeman. Joseph and Perpetua visited him in Beira in July, and took him to hospital, where he died on July 11. Benjamin left a wife and three children, one of whom was only a week old.

The “Caia Connection” Project

By *Kathy Canuel*

When Shivon Robinsong came to Kelowna to give a singing workshop in March, she talked about Kapasseni and about the nearby town of Caia, with its 6,000 AIDS orphans in desperate need of help. Shivon pointed out that Kelowna is about the same size as Caia, and suggested that members of our community consider helping to bring care to those AIDS orphans. Twelve of us formed a group to get the idea started. I always knew that someday I would be helping orphans in Africa, and now the time had come. We formed a partnership with a Kelowna HIV/AIDS organization, the Living Positive Resource Centre, which has been a big help. In June, I met Dr Olivier Wingi, the only doctor for Caia’s 92,000 people, while he was in Canada studying. Before I knew it, I was on my way to Mozambique with Joseph, Perpetua, and their Ontario supporter, Jill Claus, to assess the situation of the AIDS orphans in Caia.



Kathy Canuel and Caia AIDS educator Manuel Miandica.

Far beyond the statistics, I discovered that HIV/AIDS had reached pandemic proportions in many parts of Africa, including Caia District. Children watch as their parents die horrible deaths on mats in their huts. The orphans are either left to fend for themselves, or if lucky, relatives will take them in, even though they cannot even afford to feed their own children. The orphans, often infected themselves, are not welcomed and are treated very poorly. There is tremendous stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, and often superstitious beliefs take over when the traditional healers are unable to help those with AIDS. The sick and their families are said to be cursed. Too often, young children are left to care for their siblings, stealing their own childhoods away. There is very little hope for these AIDS orphans. After seeing this, I know how desperately these children need our help.

The Caia Connection group is raising funds to renovate a run-down building and turn it into a community centre that our project will work out of. We will assist families that take in AIDS orphans with monthly food kits, as well as with school fees, supplies and uniforms for all the children in the family. The families will be required to volunteer at the community centre in order to receive assistance. It is also our goal to help these families

become self-sufficient. This will make room for other families taking in orphans to receive our help as well. We plan to create many different programs and activities for the children, their families, and the whole community. We hope that this will help integrate the AIDS orphans back into the community in a positive way. There will be a huge focus on HIV/AIDS education and prevention through drama, singing, and music as well as educational materials. It is our goal to have the community take this project on as their own, to ensure its long term success.

Though most of my trip was spent in Caia, my time in Kapasseni was by far the most inspiring part of the trip. I am so thankful to see what a difference it can make when people reach out to help. Besides the obvious physical changes (the school, health centre, and water wells), it was the hope and joy in Kapasseni that touched me the most. It is this hope and joy that continues to motivate and inspire me to move forward with our project in Caia.

Watch for our December 1st presentation in Kelowna!

If you want to help the Caia project, contact Kathy Canuel at (250) 766-5253, email canuel@cablelan.net, or send your donations to: Living Positive Resource Centre, memo “The Caia Connection”, 10558 Long Road, Winfield, BC, V4V 1N7

Corn Grinding Machine

As we have reported before, the women of Kapasseni have asked us to help them obtain a corn grinding machine. A grinding machine would allow girls more time for studies (including HIV/AIDS education) and provide an income source to the community. Perpetua reports that the villagers want the grinding machine so badly that about 11 families have come together as a cooperative to help, each offering \$100 from the sale of this year’s cotton. This is a huge offer from them because the cotton provides the only income they have. The business model is that the investing families will get their money back over time, based on available proceeds. Profits from the business will be used to support the school and health centre in Kapasseni, and possibly neighbouring villages. We estimate that \$20,000 is required to purchase, transport, and house the grinding machine. So far, we have received \$2,475 in donations for this purpose. Will you help us partner with the villagers for this important step in community economic development? If you would like to make a contribution, please send it to: “**Kapasseni Project (Corn Grinding Machine)**”, c/o Redeemer Lutheran Church, 911 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria, V9B 2N8.

Our Development Officer Has Resigned – Victor Saeni, hired last year as Kapasseni development officer, has resigned. Victor’s wife, Maria, died recently from AIDS related illness, and Victor is concerned about his health. He is living in Chimoio, where he is trying to earn money to support himself and have medical treatment. Feliciano Simone has taken over as interim development officer.

The Kapasseni Project mandate is to help the village community as a whole, and does not allow for assistance to individuals. However, if you are moved to help Victor, Benjamin’s wife, or Lucia, donations can be sent directly to Joseph and Perpetua Alfazema, at: 129 Victoria Avenue, Dunnville, Ontario N1A 1A4, (905) 774-6825. They will get the money to the person in need. Charity receipts cannot be issued for this.

Kapasseni Project Evaluations

Canadian Evaluation – This summer, the Canadian component of the Kapasseni Project had its effectiveness evaluated by professional facilitator James Pratt. The overall assessment was as follows:

“The Canadian component of the Project has provided the necessary leadership and has mobilized the resources to complete extensive work on the ground in Mozambique. The phenomenal volunteer efforts invested have been successful in raising funds at the grassroots level and in directing those funds to address the priorities identified in the field. In the opinion of the evaluator, there is real value in reflecting on this success while also addressing the challenges faced by the project. This reflection will be useful in enhancing project governance, doing long range planning, and generally building capacity for sustained, effective action.”

The evaluator made recommendations regarding planning, recruitment, decision making, and communication, all of which are being considered by the project committee. Our aim is to become better at helping the people of Kapasseni and Mozambique.

Mozambique Evaluation – To be considered for further funding from CIDA/Canadian Lutheran World Relief, we were required to get an independent evaluation of the project in Mozambique. In July and August, Dr Francisco Mbofana completed the evaluation, after meeting with the village community and Joseph and Perpetua. He had positive observations, and suggestions for improvement:

- The project has commendable achievements, with schooling, maternal and child health services, provision of clean water, and efforts related to agriculture and the environment. The government and village chiefs described the project as *“exemplary, timely, innovative and participative”*, and as a catalyst for development of Kapasseni and neighbouring communities.
- Villagers reported that the project has brought Kapasseni invaluable knowledge and health benefits. One villager said, *“Before we had to walk up to Sena to ask for administrative cleric to read letters which our relatives who live in Beira had sent us ... but now we have our own children who can read the letters for us”*.
- The project should have more structure and management capacity in Mozambique, such as becoming a legally formed society with a clearer vision and mission (terms of reference), a financial management system, better project monitoring and evaluation, and stronger communication between Kapasseni and the project committee in Canada.
- The community should be empowered to take care of its welfare and reduce dependence on external assistance. Most Kapasseni families are too poor to send their children for further studies after the primary level, and gender sensitivity is not being satisfactorily recognised.
- The project should train community members in small business and introduce income generating activities to contribute for community development.

Dr Mbofana has provided a very useful assessment, and we will consider his suggestions in our continued work.

Contact Information – You can contact us in Victoria at (250) 478-6922 (Sylvia Gledhill) or (905) 774-6825 in Dunnville, ON (Perpetua Alfazema). Email: kapasseni@mountaincable.net
Donations to: Redeemer Lutheran Church (memo "Kapasseni Project"), 911 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria, BC V9B 2N8.
 More information and pictures at: <http://www.kapasseni.org>
 - Please consider volunteering with the Kapasseni Project -

Finances – As At October 2004

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Balance from 2003	\$ 39,268
June concerts (Victoria)	10,988
Sales of books/crafts/cereal	2,374
Individual donations	10,188
Corn grinding machine donations	2,475
TOTAL	\$ 65,293

EXPENDITURES

School: Salaries	\$ 2,820
Breakfast program	1,443
Teachers' housing	22,575
Supplies and uniforms	440
Anniversary feast	84
Health Centre: Salaries	1,582
Kitchen, cholera shed	112
Development officer and assistant	2,419
Contact person	213
Coordinators' travel	6,000
Agro-forestry (orchard)	672
Communication / bank fees	788
Office supplies and newsletter	563
Project evaluation (Victoria)	2,006
Pending: Evaluation - Mozambique (estimate)	7,000
Labour for teachers' housing	3,700
Mozambique legal fee	500
TOTAL	\$ 52,917

PROJECTED FUNDS REMAINING \$ 12,376

Notes: (1) The Kapasseni Project Committee is run entirely by volunteers. (2) Compared with previous years, there may be a considerable drop in funds next year unless we attract funding partners. (3) Our ability to work on priorities discussed in this newsletter depends on our partners and supporters. Thanks!!

Scholarship For Top Student

We have wonderful news! Juanita Mario, 14, the first girl to graduate from grade 5 in Kapasseni, has been given a scholarship, and is now in grade 6 at the boarding school in Murraca, about 40 km from Kapasseni. She had the highest marks of all the girls in the whole district. Juanita thanks the Kapasseni Project for helping her achieve her education goals. She wants to take her education as far as she can, and be a role model for other girls to follow. We would like to expand Kapasseni School to grades 6 and 7, which would allow Juanita and other students to stay in the village for school. Congratulations, Juanita!



Juanita Mario, winner of a scholarship to attend grade 6.