

## Final Report on CMF's Zimbabwe Appeal

The appeal was launched on 16 December 2008 following requests for help from doctors in CMF Zimbabwe who were in the midst of the worst cholera epidemic Africa has seen for 15 years. They were seeing huge numbers of patients but did not have adequate supplies to treat them. Most government services were not functioning at that time so these doctors were working with a local church-based organisation, Celebration Health.



During the three months of the appeal we raised £33,415 – a great response. We channelled our donations through International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA) who are based in South Africa so were able to source supplies locally and transport them to Zimbabwe.

- £18,000 was used to buy supplies - fluid, giving sets, cannulae and drugs for 3,000 patients
- £15,415 was used for staff costs, providing a basic living allowance for those working in the camps and doing health education
- 13,000 patients were treated by Celebration Health (13% of the national case load)
- Health education was given to 25,000 people
- Three major Cholera Treatment Centres (CTCs) and three smaller units were set up and run until they were no longer needed

**Chegutu CTC** opened on 12 December after a request for help from the Ministry of Health. On arrival the Celebration Health team found three nurses and two nurse aids managing 250 patients at Chinengundu Clinic. Seven doctors and 15 nurses from Celebration Health were sent to help as patients kept flooding in. One of the doctors reported:

*We arrived and started work at midnight and gave 1,200 litres of fluid in the first seven hours. We saw mortality come down from 15 people a day to one per day.*

Celebration Health treated 2,453 patients at Chegutu. When patient numbers finally fell, the centre was handed back to the Ministry of Health and has now closed.



**Kadoma CTC** was being run by the Ministry of Health but the medical staff went on strike on Christmas Eve, so Celebration Health were asked for emergency help. A team of five doctors and four nurses went in that night and more followed later. The case load was very high throughout January. CMF member John Greenall went out to visit and described the scene:



*The number of people is overwhelming – there are around 600 patients in a camp with a capacity for 200. Walking amongst them in the hastily erected tents is a team of nurses, doctors and medical students who are tending to the sick, cleaning up the vomit and diarrhoea, setting up IV drips for some and giving oral rehydration to others. One student is praying for a particularly sick elderly man. As I turn around a 7-year-old is carried in – he looks*

*about four, malnourished, barely breathing. A cannula is sited and we pray he might live.*

A total of 6,200 patients have been treated at Kadoma, with 85 deaths. By the time the camp opened, the first consignment of fluids, cannulae and giving sets had arrived from ICMDA and were put to good use. The average length of stay dropped from 5 days to 2.2 days as medication became available. The case fatality rate was 1-2% in comparison to a national rate of 5% at that time.



Celebration Health ran an effective health education programme reaching 14,700 people in Kadoma. As people learned how to prevent cholera, the caseload fell. Medical students have been key members of the health education team – the medical school was closed during the epidemic due to lack of funds so the students, many of them members of CMF Zimbabwe, used their time to volunteer for Celebration Health.

**Chinhoyi CTC** was opened by the Ministry of Health in November 2008 but experienced a sudden surge of cases in April 2009. Celebration Health was asked to help and sent in a team. 539 patients were seen during a three-week period, with only four deaths (a 50% reduction in mortality after the team arrived.) ICMDA provided fluids but as supplies had now become more available within the country, funds were also used for staff costs. The health education team reached out to 8,000 households and trained 80 volunteers, and the situation came under control as people took effective preventative

measures. ICMDA funded the running of this CTC until it was closed at the end of April.

### **The nationwide epidemic**

Since August 2008 there have been almost 100,000 reported cases of cholera and over 4,200 deaths. The epidemic is now declining and many cholera treatment centres have been closed. The medical school and many government hospitals have re-opened but the healthcare needs remain enormous. Other services suffered as resources were diverted to treating cholera. Celebration Health is now supporting re-establishment of primary healthcare in different locations.

### **Sharing the good news**

The cholera epidemic brought enormous needs, but also opportunities for the gospel, for encouragement and for fellowship. Celebration Health has brought God's love to thousands of people, through the care they have received but also through sharing the gospel. Many gave their lives to Christ and many have received prayer and counselling. One team doctor wrote:

*The impact of Celebration Health has been huge and deep – right to heart level. The hearts of Chegutu people are won for Jesus.*

### **Revitalising health professionals**

With the medical school and most government hospitals barely functioning, morale amongst health professionals was desperately low. It was soul-destroying for them to see enormous needs and be powerless to help. Through Celebration Health, CMF's donation enabled them to use their skills and make a difference. Two of the leaders described the transformation:

*Doctors and nurses who had lost vision are now gaining vision as they serve on the front line – and their faces are shining as they save many lives! Health care workers' and students' lives are being transformed and reformation in the medical sphere is happening before our eyes.*

*I have seen myself expanded, stretched, enlarged as we conquered new territories and so has every member of the team. Now we have a strong team of doctors and nurses ready to go into any city and bring reformation to a crippling or struggling healthcare delivery system.*



### **CMF's Partnership with Celebration Health**

In addition to the money sent, CMF's appeal has sent a huge message of support to our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe and lasting relationships

have been formed. This is what it means to be a part of a worldwide medical fellowship. One of the team said:

*In places like Zimbabwe it's possible to feel abandoned, but your partnership has shown us that we are not alone and we have been overwhelmed by your support.*

John Greenall, an FY2 doctor, went out in January as CMF's ambassador to show our support during the height of the epidemic. His visit was a big encouragement to the team in Zimbabwe, and a life-changing experience for him. Other junior doctors are planning to go out this year to visit the Celebration Health team, who will be moving into primary health care as the cholera crisis comes to an end.

**A final message from Celebration Health:**

*Thank you, CMF and ICMDA, for providing lifesaving medication for this nation, saving many lives and alleviating suffering. The communities of Zimbabwe were truly blessed. May Jesus bless you for your great demonstration of compassion and mercy.*

**Vicky Lavy, 9 June 2009**

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