

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15 v58

Dear Friends,

Last month marked the 4th anniversary of The Potter's House CBO and we thank God for how far we've come and the many lives we've been able to touch in some small or big way. The last few months have been busy with the start of a new project for us that we are calling APT Kenya. Beatrice was taken ill in December, but we thank God that she was able to get the treatment needed and has made a good recovery. We are thankful for the other staff who worked hard to fill the gaps and kept everything running smoothly while Beatrice recovered.

Appropriate Paper-based Technology (APT)

Despite the overwhelming need for supportive seating and standing frames for children with disabilities, families rarely have access to such devices or even if they are available, they can't afford them. Unable to balance themselves and without equipment to help, children are confined to their home and usually spend their days lying on the floor or bed and are not able to participate in family life. Due to their poor positioning, the children develop further contractors and deformities which then make it even harder for them to move.

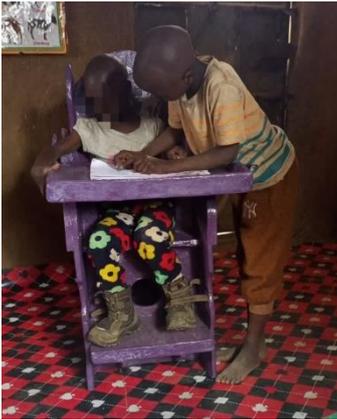
In January we partnered with APT for Social Development to train community members and therapists about postural management and Appropriate Paper-based Technology (APT). The week of training in January was followed by another two weeks of training in February and culminated in the setting up of our new workshop in Njoro where we will provide children with disabilities with the seats and standing frames they need.

APT is a low-cost, sustainable solution for bespoke postural supports for children with disabilities using recycled cardboard and paper. Working together with a local occupational therapist, who attended the training, the children are measured and prescribed a device to suit their individual needs. Items are constructed using engineering principles and are both strong and lightweight. Three layers of thick corrugated cardboard are layered and glued together using a paste made from flour and water. After cutting, the cut pieces are slotted together and then tied with strips of used nylon tights. The structure is reinforced with strips and rods of thin cardboard, which are then covered with newspaper and glue and finally thick paper, such as those used as bags for flour or animal feed. Decoration of the device completes the process.



These devices help the child to maintain a comfortable and functional position in either sitting or standing. They help prevent contractures, spinal deformity and can improve digestion, bowel function and maintain skin integrity. Having this equipment also enables the child to play and communicate with those around them, increasing both the amount and the quality of their participation in home activities, as well as increasing independence, communication, and quality of life.

We have already seen these devices change lives. During the training 10 children were prescribed devices and four of those children will now be able to go to school. One 14yr old child has spent every day of his life lying on the floor and being walked over, unable to communicate or participate in family life. Now he has a chair and can sit with everyone else and be included. Another is now able to feed herself because the chair stabilises her and frees up her hands for her to use. She also really enjoys drawing now. We really thank God for the opportunity to provide something to that makes such a difference to children and families and are praying that many more will be helped.



Illicit brew.

One of our biggest challenges in Njoro is alcohol addiction and it understandably makes working with a parent very difficult. Nevertheless, we persevere knowing that nothing is impossible for God and that the children in the family need our support even more. Recently in Njoro and surrounding areas there has been an increase in deaths due to homemade brew. It is believed that those selling are adding something poisonous to the mix, we assume to add volume and therefore sell more.

The government's response to this problem has been to demolish the homes of those selling the illegal brew, without warning. They not only demolish the homes of those selling, but because the homes are joined, the neighbours' homes are also demolished making many families homeless. This is not just a heavy-handed approach, it does not address the real issues and creates more problems. The ones selling just move to other areas and start again. Prayer is needed for those who have lost their homes.

Sadly, a few weeks ago, one of the parents we have been working with for a couple of years suddenly died after drinking the brew. As you can imagine it was traumatic for her children to watch and a shock for everyone. Please pray for the children and husband of this family.



Some of the homes demolished by the government.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- *Please pray for the children and husband of the mum who recently died.*
- *Pray for the APT project and the provision to continue it.*
- *Pray for the holiday bible club that starts next week.*
- *Pray for two young children who have been in hospital due to malnutrition.*
- *Give thanks for Beatrice's recovery.*



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