



# NEWSBRIEF

News from Global Care and our partner projects

Spring 2020





# FOCUS ON

**Overcrowded classrooms. Limited sanitation. High teacher turnover. An expensive and confusing new curriculum. Political turmoil. Poor water supply. Hunger. Period poverty.**

These are just some of the challenges facing the staff of Spurgeons Academy, a primary school in Kibera, Kenya, supported by Global Care.

On the outskirts of Nairobi, Kibera has long been infamous as Africa's biggest slum. The challenges facing children are enormous; many live in extreme poverty at high risk of malnutrition, exploitation and abuse.

Currently 437 of the most vulnerable children attend Spurgeons Academy, without fee, where they receive two healthy meals a day, welfare and medical care, and a quality primary education. They also have extra curricular opportunities in ballet, football, debating, a girls group and the Christian Union. Spurgeons celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2020, and has built up an excellent reputation over the years as a school which changes young lives for good.

However, budgetary pressures mean this excellent programme is increasingly difficult to sustain, as the school faces ongoing challenges from all directions. Recent difficulties have included:

- A new school building promised by the government as part of a forced relocation / slum clearance has been put on hold indefinitely, following the last election. Unfortunately this delay came after the government demolished temporary buildings used by the school and repossessed the school's playground, leaving children and staff working in cramped conditions and without play space for more than two years so far. Foundations were laid for the new building, but work stalled in post-election turmoil, and is unlikely to continue until well after the next elections in 2022.
- Another charity supporting the school's feeding programme pulled out last summer and an organisation which provided subsidised medical treatment closed down.



# SPURGEONS

- The government water supply to Kibera has become progressively worse, to the point that water was only available for three hours in a month. The school has to pay to collect water from a local borehole dug by entrepreneurs, which the caretaker brings daily in jerry cans in his wheelbarrow. Water is essential for the school to function.
- The government improved teacher pay in state schools, meaning 80% of teaching staff left at the start of the last academic year for better-paid jobs in the government sector. ('Free' government schools are not actually free, as students have to pay a 'desk fee' which most can't afford. They are also very overcrowded and don't offer the additional welfare support available at Spurgeons.) High teacher turnover and the need for teacher training at Spurgeons is an ongoing issue.
- The new national curriculum has been inconsistently rolled out, causing confusion about what and how to teach. It requires an increasing use of student workbooks, meaning classes need expensive new materials each year, as well as new textbooks (which can be re-used).

So what is Global Care doing to support the beleaguered staff of Spurgeons Academy? Less than half the children at the school have a sponsor (172 children) so sponsorship funds – themselves under pressure from inflation and falling exchange rates – can only stretch so far.

In recent months Global Care has used legacy funding to pay for improvements to the existing building – including putting safety rails on an exposed staircase to improve student safety, and laying water pipes to the school site from one of the new slum boreholes. We have fenced in the land earmarked for the new school, to improve child safety and keep squatters out. If funding becomes available we have permission to use the foundation slabs laid for the new school as bases for new temporary buildings, to improve overcrowding.

We sent out emergency funds to cover feeding costs until the end of the last school year (Sept-Nov), and hope through our Lent Appeal to continue feeding the pupils in 2020, while other solutions are explored. Feeding over 400 students each day is a considerable unplanned cost, yet there are clear benefits to feeding at school, not just in terms of health and welfare, but also in improved attendance and attainment.

CEO John White, who visited Kibera in September, said: "The team at Spurgeons are totally committed to providing quality primary education to some extremely vulnerable children, along with excellent support for health and welfare needs. With 20 years of experience behind them, they know this broad approach is literally life-changing for the children in their care. Please pray for them as sometimes these challenges feel insurmountable, and pray for us too as we seek to help them find solutions."





# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



## LENT APPEAL 2020

For too many  
children in  
Kibera, one meal  
per day is the  
norm

Spurgeons Academy is a primary school which feeds a child's body as well as their mind.

For the ten years a child spends at Spurgeons, from pre-kindergarten at the age of three, to their Primary 8 exams at roughly 13 or 14 years old, they receive two healthy meals a day, five days a week, for ten months a year. For some exceptional cases, feeding is also available in the school holidays.

Children receive porridge for breakfast, and githeri – a local dish of beans and corn – for lunch. The impact of this regular healthy food is a crucial part of the school's success.

The health benefits are obvious, and there is also a clear link between food and academic achievement: Hungry children cannot concentrate, their cognitive development is stunted, and their emotional resources depleted.

School attendance dips, as children seek sources of immediate income in order to eat.

But when food is available at school, attendance improves dramatically and the conditions are right for a child to learn. Food enables flourishing. Flourishing means acquiring the skills and resilience a young person needs to build a better life for themselves.

It's genuine food for thought.

This Lent we would like to raise £13,500 to feed the students at Spurgeons during 2020.

We hope this will give our partners the time they need to explore other ways of funding the feeding programme, so this important part of the school's welfare support does not have to end.

Could you give £30 to feed a child at Spurgeons in 2020?

It costs just **£30** to feed  
one child at Spurgeons  
Academy for one year



You can make a donation at [www.globalcare.org/Lent-2020](http://www.globalcare.org/Lent-2020)

# SPURGEONS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME

**Ten year-old \*Gerrard is HIV positive. His father died of AIDS when he was aged just two, and his mother, who is also HIV positive, was ostracised by the rest of the family, who blamed her for his father's death.**



As an outcast in their village, Gerrard's mother had little choice but to move away, and came to live in Kibera, in the slums of Nairobi, where she scraped a living by washing clothes and doing odd jobs to support herself and her son. Life is tough, as they have little money for medical bills, and both suffer frequent illnesses because of their condition. They often go hungry.

However, Gerrard was enrolled in Spurgeons Academy when he reached school age. There he receives a free uniform, two meals a day, and a top quality education. Free of charge. In addition, the Spurgeons team frequently help with the cost of medical care and extra feeding. In 2019 he had to spend a whole month in the hospital, and the Spurgeons team helped with both fees and food supplements to improve his health.

Gerrard's mother says: "Spurgeons has always been there for me. My son would be out of school and perhaps dead today, if it were not for their support."

## PERIOD POVERTY

**Staff at Spurgeons are proud to have more girls than boys on roll, in a culture where girls' education is often undervalued, even though the positive lifetime impact of girls' education is so well-documented.**

However it brings unique issues, including 'period poverty'. Girls often miss up to three days per month of schooling due to menstruation, because they don't have adequate ways of managing it.

Sanitary towels made in Kenya are as expensive as in the UK. The school give two packets of six towels per month, to 121 girls who need them, in order to minimise the impact on their education. However this costs £256 per month, creating more budgetary pressure.

### Ballet classes

at Spurgeons, funded by a UK arts charity and delivered by a Kenyan charity, have drawn significant international attention. However, to the frustration of staff, this has not resulted in any additional income or support for the school.



## COULD YOU SPONSOR A CHILD AT SPURGEONS?

More sponsors for more pupils means more stability for all the children at the school. It costs just £25 per month to sponsor a vulnerable child, and help grow a strong adult. That's just 82p per day!



Go to [www.globalcare.org/sponsor](http://www.globalcare.org/sponsor) to find out more.



# Our **BIG THANKS** for Your **BIG GIVE**



A huge thank you goes to all those who gave to our Christmas Appeal – 'Back to School in Syria'.



We are delighted to report the appeal raised a total of £45,046, including £40,054 raised in just one week in December, through the Big Give Christmas Challenge, a match-funding campaign. Thank you so much to all our pledgers and donors! We so appreciate your generosity.

This guarantees funding for more than two years for the School Clubs in Syria, not only securing the provision of education support and therapeutic care for the extremely vulnerable 5-8 year-olds attending the clubs, but also allowing us to turn our attention to the needs of older children in this extremely challenging community.

We have sent £1,000 to fund a research project exploring ways of helping older children, especially street children, many of whom have been thrown out by their extended families, who simply cannot afford to feed or house them, and told to fend for themselves.

In such a lawless environment, if they survive at all (girls rarely survive), they are extremely vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and being drawn into criminal or extremist activity. How do we help those on the streets, and how do we prevent others from joining them? We hope to explore these questions in the coming months.



## "When I am Here the World is Beautiful"

Seven year-old \*Rima's father was a soldier in the Syrian army. One day a militant group in their home town of Daraa stopped him, took him to the desert and shot him.



Rima's terrified mum fled to Damascus with her six children. Her husband had always said 'go to Damascus'. So now he was gone, she did.

Life is hard for the family. They are very poor. Mum doesn't have a job, and their only income and support comes from what Rima's maternal uncles can send them. It's not much.

Rima joined House of Hope's School Club in the initial pilot phase. Her academic skills were very poor, but little by little she is making progress. However, our partners haven't just helped her with reading and writing, but also with her grief over the loss of her father.

Our partners say: "She tells us at House of Hope she feels loved. When she is at House of Hope she feels that the world is beautiful."

Rima's world, and the world of millions of children like her in Syria today, is far from beautiful. A staggering 83% of people live below the poverty line. Violence is all around and crippling fear is part of daily life. The country is on its knees, and the future for millions of children is bleak.

We're thrilled to be providing a safe space to give children like Rima positive experiences, to know joy as well as fear, to know they are loved, can learn skills and achieve. Thank you for your part in making this happen.

# A HAVEN FROM HURT



**Eight year-old twins \*Farid and \*Fatima live with their mum and 15-year-old brother in an apartment in Damascus, Syria, in very poor condition. Their older brother is the breadwinner - he has a job in a restaurant - and their mum supplements the family income by collecting and selling bread.**

Their parents are separated. Their dad used to beat their mum in front of the children and verbally abuse her, saying the ugliest things to both his wife and children. The separation caused problems between the two sides of the family, and support is limited. Life is tough for this little family.

Originally they lived near the Iraq border in an area controlled by ISIS. For a year the family were unable to leave the house. All the schools closed and ISIS opened their own schools, but many people refused to send their children there. Afraid, and feeling the danger was escalating, the twins' mum decided to leave. On foot. The family walked for miles to an area named Al Jazeera where they lived in a tent for a year.

It was a very difficult time, and has badly affected the twins. They were frequently afraid, waking in the night, screaming for mum. Learning hasn't been much of a priority. When the twins joined our School Club they were barely able to keep up, but recent months have seen some improvements.

Our partners are also helping them talk through their feelings about their dad – they are so angry about the way he used to treat them, they say they 'don't care' but also express a lot of pain. House of Hope offers them a true haven. Our partners say: "Because of the deprivation they lived in, now anything we offer to them brings joy, you can see it straight away on their faces."

# COULD YOU BE A 'PLEDGER'?

**Could you be a 'pledger' for our 2020 Big Give campaign, probably in support of a new project in Ethiopia?**

Pledgers are donors willing to pledge larger sums of money (minimum £250) to be used as match-funding in next year's Big Give Christmas Challenge.

Pledging is a uniquely strategic way of giving, as pledge gifts effectively quadruple in value throughout the Big Give campaign. If that sounds confusing, hopefully this graphic will make it clear:



How a  
**£250** pledge  
becomes a  
**£1000**  
donation

We would like to secure pledge funding of £10,000 again this year, to underpin another successful Big Give campaign. In 2019 some of our donors pledged on a one-off basis to mark a special event in their personal lives – including a wedding and a family 100th birthday! If you have a special event coming up, could you mark it in this way?

Pledges are agreed in the summer, but money is not paid until December. Pledges can also be paid by cheque, for those donors who dislike online giving. If this is something you would like to consider, please contact Jordan on [donor.relations@globalcare.org](mailto:donor.relations@globalcare.org) or on **030 030 21 030** and we will get in touch with more information in the summer.

**Thank you!**





# BUILDING ABILITY IN DISABILITY

## In Rukungiri, Uganda, Global Care's new disability initiative made a flying start.

Using funds raised in our 35th anniversary year, we are helping children who were excluded or limited in their participation at school due to mobility difficulties, and monitoring the effectiveness of different solutions. Throughout 2019, we worked with 19 children.

Nine of the children were already at school, but didn't have appropriate walking aids and struggled to get there. They arrived late, and often found the journey too painful to complete every day. Parents also struggled to pay school fees, making attendance even more erratic. Only one family could afford transport. Once in school, two children were unable to sit at a desk.

The team developed a plan for each child, accounting for physical disability, walking aids, welfare or financial assistance, distance from school, ability to walk, adaptations needed at school and transport options.

For many children with disability, accessible toilets are a key factor in determining attendance. Although some schools had accessible latrines, these were rarely built to the correct specifications and were often unsuitable for wheelchair users, or children unable to stand or squat. Working with schools and education authorities, the team planned accessible latrines at five schools. Three have been constructed so far.

Thirteen children now attend school regularly and punctually. Nine now travel by boda-boda (motorcycle taxi). As well as paying fares we provided a helmet for all children travelling by motorbike – a novelty locally as they are too expensive for most families.

We provided medical care, walking aids, wheelchairs, school fees, learning materials and uniform, according to each child's needs. After the first term, staff reported improved academic performance for most, due to better attendance and punctuality, with further improvements after the second term. The children were included in school activities and their general outlook improved. No longer isolated, or arriving late, exhausted and in pain, children are now excited to start the day with their classmates.

Four children were too young to start school in 2019 and work focussed on getting them ready to start school in February 2020.

One child was too ill for school at all. We provided 14 year-old \*Connor with a wheelchair and commode so his family can move him with ease, and to provide greater dignity. Previously he and his elderly grandmother – his main caregiver – struggled with the challenge of holding him over their latrine. He had to be carried everywhere, which as he grew bigger, meant his life was very restricted. His wheelchair is greatly improving his quality of life – his friends in the village refer to it as 'Connor's Muzungu Car' and now he visits friends, goes to church and can easily attend health clinics.

CEO John White says: "We are thrilled to see how relatively small changes have had such a big impact. While we are excited, it is a steep learning curve for both UK and Ugandan staff as we capture and record information, monitor and evaluate progress. We want to use the work in 2019 to help inform projects supporting children with disability in other areas and other countries."

In 2020, project staff will continue to monitor the children's progress, and support their welfare needs, including school fees where necessary.





**\*Ruth was carried to school by her mum, a 4km journey on rough, hilly paths.**



After just four days, Ruth was asked to leave as she couldn't use the toilet without help.

Ruth's lower limbs are paralysed and she shuffles along on her bottom. Both Ruth and her parents are HIV positive.

When Ruth, now aged eight, joined our project, our team visited the school, now with a new headteacher, with a more inclusive attitude. Several new classrooms had wheelchair ramps, but the so-called accessible toilet was located through a narrow rocky gap, up a rough uneven slope, and built to incorrect specifications. A wheelchair-user couldn't reach the latrine or manoeuvre inside.

Our team commissioned a new toilet, and path, and closely monitored construction.

Ruth and her family were thrilled to receive a wheelchair – now she is mobile and off the ground. Now Ruth travels to school on a boda-boda accompanied by her mother, proudly wearing her Global Care helmet. The project also pays for lunch at school so she receives extra nutrition needed to fight HIV. Ruth still needs to be pushed in her wheelchair, but she is at school, making friends, and learning at last.

## Ruth and Timothy



**Five year-old \*Timothy was born with cerebral palsy.**

When his father died, he was abandoned by his mother and now lives with his elderly grandparents, aunt and cousins.

When Timothy started school, the nursery section didn't have toilets, so the children used latrines at a nearby church. During Timothy's first term, his teacher had to leave all the other children to take Timothy to the toilet. As he cannot stand, he put his hands on the dirty latrine floor for balance. In class, he sat on the floor, as he couldn't sit at a desk.

Our physiotherapist recommended a special seat for school and a stronger walker. A local rehabilitation centre constructed a bespoke seat with a table.

The team also commissioned a full block of latrines, with one accessible cubicle, to the delight of the school.

Timothy is happy to be sitting with his classmates and joining in lessons alongside them. He is growing in confidence with his walker and can move independently to the latrine, now on the school site, safely using the handrails to balance.

His family are struggling financially. Timothy's grandparents are both in their 80s and too frail to work, and the aunt who supported the family is now also ill at home. To ensure Timothy stays in school, our team pay his school fees.

## THESE CHILDREN NEED PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN THEM

**Volunteers Dr Tom and Barbara Heyes have been supporting the developing disability work. They visited again in November. Barbara writes:**

“Rukungiri views might be astonishingly beautiful, but the real splendour is the children and the impact of one year of Global Care support. My composure went when \*Timothy climbed out of his special chair and walked to hug me. My heart melted as we watched children play on crutches and walkers supplied by Global Care, when \*Connor smiled as his grandmother told us how his wheelchair ended his isolation and gave back his life.

These children needed encouragement, people who believed in them, who showed them they are as important as anyone else, who will fight for their right to education and dignity, who don't give up when obstacles appear, because they believe in the worth and potential of every child. I'm incredibly grateful for the privilege of working alongside Global Care local staff who do just that, and who are bringing changes in attitudes to disability for families, communities, local governments and education authorities.”





**A new welfare support worker joined the team at the Morning Star Care Centre, in Sri Lanka, in January, thanks to the efforts of our intrepid Dragon Boat racers last summer.**

Our Dragon Boat Regatta raised almost £12,000 to enable MSCC to appoint someone to work with Champa, the long-standing Field Officer. She has the enormous task of working with families in the community, challenging behaviours around school attendance and child protection, notifying authorities, and identifying children who need further welfare support.

The new field officer is Shalaka, a qualified teacher who also has some experience in counselling young people through church and Christian children's organisations.

The MSCC team say having a second field officer means more children will be helped, and both workers will be safer when out in the slums.

They write: "The Field Officer is invaluable to MSCC. She is the strong link for the children who slip through the educational system, who are left in their homes and linger and loiter without going to school. She tirelessly visits the community, whether on the beach or in the interiors of the slums, never flinching at the dirt and the squalor that sometimes surrounds her."

Champa says: "Now I will have more time to spend with the children, and more time to spend with their mothers, grandmothers and other guardians. The more we can do to support these parents and guardians, the more they can do to care for their children."

**Thank you Dragon Boat racers for all your fundraising efforts!**

# Santha's Story

**When \*Santha was five, she arrived in the slums near Colombo, Sri Lanka, with her mum and five older siblings, having left their home on a tea-picking estate when her parents' marriage broke down.**



None of the children were in school, until the Field Officer at the Morning Star Care Centre heard about the family. Through her persistence, the four youngest children joined MSCC, where they started their education and received further welfare support.

The Field Officer not only had to persuade their mum of the value of education, she also had to liaise with the police locally and in their home district, and with their village headman, to get all their births officially registered. Lack of official documentation is a huge issue for children and young people in the slums, as they cannot access most services without being able to prove citizenship.

Six years later, Santha and her siblings have progressed from MSCC to a government Tamil school. Eleven year-old Santha continues to attend MSCC for lunch and the afternoon tuition programme, which is keeping her grades up and helping her achieve.



# APARTHEID BY ANOTHER NAME

Across India, Dalit children suffer discrimination based on the ancient caste system, no matter how many laws are passed against it.

Caste-based hatred has surged under the current Hindu nationalist government.

Near Mumbai, in Patripul, our GCare Centre has had to relocate again, after the landlord refused a new contract because the building was used to educate Dalit children. He said they could use the building free of charge if they taught children from higher castes. Obviously our partners said no! They have now signed a contract with a Muslim landlord who will pay less attention to the caste system.



“I GET A TURN TO  
CLEAN BUT **NOT**  
TO SING PRAYER”

“My name is \*Ashia, I am 11 years old. I live with my parents in Patripul Slum.

I study in the government school in this place. Discrimination is practised against me in my school. The high caste girls, if they get touched by me by mistake, they sprinkle water to purify themselves. I am not allowed to participate in the cultural programs. I am not allowed to sing prayers in my school. Once a week I clean my classroom. I also clean one urinal and one toilet once a week in my school. Thrice in a month I go to high caste people to get leftover food. I also go to do dragging of dead dogs and rats and in return I get one kilo of grains. In my school I get a turn to clean but not to sing prayer. Whenever it is the turn of high caste girls to do cleaning work in school, they come late from their homes and so we have to do the cleaning work. But they do not do the same if we come late to the school. I was not interested for going to school, but after joining GCare Centre, I am blessed some time \*\*Mahendra sir comes with me to school. Now I get good marks.”

\*\* Staff members advocate for Dalit children in school, reminding staff of their legal obligation to teach all children, and challenging discriminatory practice.



**TAKE A  
RISK  
2020**

**TAKE A RISK for  
CHILDREN AT  
RISK  
2020**

**Were you one of our intrepid  
abseilers dropping from the  
roof of Coventry Cathedral  
back in 2017? Or do you wish  
you'd joined them?**

Fear not! Your chance has come again – ‘Take A Risk for Children At Risk’ will be back this summer with another adrenaline-fuelled event. Watch this space, and keep an eye on our social media channels to find out more!

# RELIEF AID

**A 6.4 magnitude earthquake in Albania in November left 52 people dead and around 3,000 injured.**

The New Day Centre in Bathore, home to our Albanian partners, was undamaged, although one staff member lost her family home. Global Care sent £2,000 in emergency funds, which bought food, mattresses, blankets and beds for affected families.

**Over 600 people in Bangladesh took refuge from Cyclone Bulbul, also in November, in shelters built by Global Care.**

Our partners are based in Khulna, which was the worst affected district, where 25 people died and almost 10,000 homes were destroyed. At the Home of Love the kitchen and dining room were water-damaged, and a newly-renovated pre-school building was damaged by a falling tree. Crops were also destroyed, as the cyclone struck during the main growing season for rice.

Extra donations from supporters totalled £329. The team are working with other funders to assess local priorities.

**Thanks to all who gave to our Harvest Appeal, which raised £11,442 to feed children at the Houtberg Childcare Centre in Zimbabwe, who lost the bulk of their harvest to Cyclone Idai last spring.**

Sadly our partners say the new crops are being stunted by lack of summer rains, compounded by the erratic electricity supply, which is reducing the effectiveness of the irrigation system. The centre's next harvest will not be as abundant as hoped, meaning your Harvest giving was doubly needed.

Pastor Mishack writes: "Zimbabwe cannot support her poor people and the children are the most to suffer. If it were not for organisations like Global Care, we do not know how these children would live."

# RIISING COSTS AND A CURRENCY CRASH

**We last increased the 'price' of our monthly giving programmes, including sponsorship, in 2012, eight long years ago!**

However, since then our costs have risen enormously due to the economic downturn, increased fuel, food and living costs, and plummeting exchange rates associated with the Brexit referendum.

For example, in Uganda, the devaluation of sterling since 2016 has created an 18% increase in costs. Budgets are delivered in Ugandan shillings, so falling exchange rates seriously impact our ability to deliver the agreed budget. Our UK income for Uganda has not seen corresponding growth to offset the deficit created, and this alone has led to increasingly challenging financial decisions, even without taking into account general inflationary pressures and rising living costs for families.

This serious squeeze on budgets has been replicated in all areas, making it increasingly difficult to meet the welfare and educational needs of our sponsored children, or to continue to deliver our high-impact projects, with the reduced money available.

Consequently, throughout the coming year, we will be asking our sponsors and project partners to consider increasing their regular donations.

If sponsors can increase their monthly gift to £25, and project partners increase to £18, we will be in a better position to meet our financial commitments. We understand that not everyone will be able to increase their giving, but hope that many of you will be able to do so. Letters will go out in the coming weeks, or you can increase your giving with immediate effect if you wish. Thank you for your ongoing support – it is our regular donors, more than anyone, who enable us to deliver effective year-on-year impact for vulnerable children worldwide, and we are very grateful for your committed giving.



## ANNUAL REPORT

A copy of Global Care's 2018-2019 Trustees Annual Report is available on request, or downloadable from



[www.globalcare.org/resources/annual-report](http://www.globalcare.org/resources/annual-report)

\*Names have been changed to protect the identity of children

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