

Recent Visit to Imprezza

A group from Teignmouth Baptist Church recently visited the school. One of the group, Ed Duffy has written an account of the visit. While there Ed celebrated his 18th birthday!

It really is amazing what situations you can find yourself involved in. For me, one of the strangest encounters I've ever had was having a conversation in a mud hut, with the son of a Massi Chief about Arsenal and Cesc Fabregas, the Spanish footballer. It definitely seemed that football was very important to many Kenyans and East Africans (not just Massi tribesman) as ex-Imprezza student and now friend Titus Mangeni told me *'Arsenal are the biggest team in East Africa, because they play very good football'*.



Titas and Ed

Football may be very important to many young Kenyans but education and academic success was in a league of its own. During my visit to Imprezza Academy in the summer I met many people and all the students I met knew exactly what they wanted to be and were determined to achieve it.

One thing which I found was many of the students, some no older than 12, had high ambitions of becoming doctors, pilots and lawyers, which was encouraging to hear as poverty rates in Busia are as high as 80%, according to the Deputy Governor of Busia, who our group had the opportunity to meet.

However, what was more encouraging was to hear of some of the success stories. One student named Richard told me that he wanted to be a pilot like his brother, who now lives and works in Prague. Another story was how an ex-student Wycliffe Barasa is now a scholarship student at the University of Nairobi and one of his brothers, Nelson, is working as an engineer in Qatar.

Sadly it is not all success stories. Wycliffe is just one of seven and one of his brothers now lives on the streets and the reason is simply because he had a lack of sponsoring to put

him through school. With their parents long since dead from HIV, Wycliffe and his siblings were raised by their grandmother in a tiny, mud walled house with a grass roof and the only light from the door which she has lived in since 1963, along with his cousins and many other children from the village who were also orphaned.

Wycliffe himself told me that if it wasn't for my own grandmother, Mary Aiken who sponsored him through school, he would be on the streets and the gratitude he has for this is truly sincere.



Above - Ed with Wycliffe's grandmother and some of the orphans she cares for.

Below - Living conditions for many of the community.



One thing I myself was able to do for students was teach a handful of them some guitar. I found this rewarding but the students found it more so, as I was able to leave the two guitars we had out there in the hands of two students Velma and Lynett with enough information for them to continue playing, which they were only too happy to do.

So the one thing which really was clear from my experience on the 2014 Imprezza trip was that the smallest amount of money really can make a huge difference. Parking money for us, but for young Kenyans, the difference between a miserable life on the streets with a chance of drug abuse and living a decent, prosperous life which will positively influence the next generations. Small amounts can at least give people education at a young age and a chance of rising out of poverty.

Our thanks to Ed for such a wonderful insight into the lives of the students and community. He is correct when he says that what may be the smallest amount of money to us can make a huge difference there. It made such an impression on me to see what an impact the money sent can have to so many. I would encourage anyone, if you can spare the smallest amount regularly each month then do so. You can find details of how to set up a standing order on our website.

Lesley



Our Mission is to enable students, both boys and girls, who would not otherwise have any access to secondary or decent primary education to succeed.

News From Imprezza

The school are seeing successes with the recently implemented rabbit breeding programme. As you may recall in a previous news update hutches were made to house the rabbits. The meat can be used to help feed at the school and bungalow and any excess in the future can be sold to the community.



Newly born Kits

The school has been instructed by the education authorities to immediately fence around the dormitory and also block off the path between the sites to ensure it is secure. As a temporary solution until we have the funds, small trees have been planted and we are using wooden fence posts and barbed wire. At the moment we are trying to raise enough to ensure that the fencing used is firstly secure and also sustainable. This is extremely urgent so please, if you would like to help with this fundraising project please do get in touch.



Saplings planted and fence posts in

Building is well underway on three new classrooms. These will soon be put to good use once completed.



Three new classrooms under construction

Silas, who is one of our Form 4 students was recently involved in an accident while on a taxi motorbike. He is now back at the school and is on the middle of taking his National Exams. We are all praying that he makes a full recovery and that he can manage with the exams as he was injured quite badly, having stitches in his head, knee and arm. He also lost two teeth.

Any assistance towards his medical costs would help immensely.



Silas after his accident

Following on from the story of Wycliffe, we were all thrilled to hear that he has found sponsorship to enable him to go to university in Nairobi. It was a wonderful moment to receive some recent images from Catherine as he began his first semester. We all wish Wycliffe well for the future. As Ed pointed out, it is due to the generosity of others which enables the children to gain the valuable education that take them out of poverty.



Wycliffe outside the University of Kenya

The agriculture side is progressing also, with crops planted and almost ready to harvest, this will help reduce the feeding costs considerably.



Corn on the cob

How You Can Help

- **Donate online** at www.operation-imprezza.org
- **Donate via Believe** at <https://believein.org.uk/operation-imprezza/>
- **Make a cash donation** to one of the Trustees or Operation Imprezza collection boxes around South Devon, (if you know an establishment that would be willing to have a box on display, please get in touch)
- **Set up a standing order** – contact our treasurer Lesley Smith lesley@operation-imprezza.org for details
- **Send a cheque** payable to Operation Imprezza to 14 Elm Grove, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8SA.