

Bethany Visit 10th – 24th February 2022

After 2 years 6 months I was able to return to Bethany to see the (building) changes and (children/pupil) progress. My overall impression was very positive although it was obvious that our building maintenance programme was not on track. It is a fact that new building projects can easily distract from the day-to-day upkeep and so the maintenance schedule drawn up by Karen Ross (just prior to my visit) was triggered and time related so that we can measure the impact during this year and the next.

The building projects comprise new toilet and shower facilities to each of the 3 dormitory wings of the small girl's building, a new septic tank and finishing off the new 2 classroom block.

An Improvement Plan 2022 was also drawn up involving various buildings e.g new toilets, roof improvements and replacement of an open wastewater trench with an underground pipe.

There are 160 children at the Home looked after by dedicated careworkers. The older children play their part in gradually taking personal responsibility for their own wellbeing and keeping an eye out for the younger children some of which are barely 5 years old.

Matters discussed with the Coordinator (Jesca Paulo) comprised

- Charitable Status
- Home Licence
- Title Deed

The overall school performance measured against targets, national and district exams results is quite astonishing given the intake of the pupils of which at least 50% come from the village and so English is not their first language and because of extreme poverty receive free education from Bethany, a breakfast and lunch before returning after the school day. Through God's provision this is such a success story and as I gaze on the children as they make their way to school, I feel privileged to play a small part in all of this.

I observed teaching practice using my experience as a governor in a UK primary school and spoke to the Headteacher (Emmakulatha Zephaniah) who was trained in the UK about teaching resources, special needs provision and active learning. About 80% was good with the remaining 20% satisfactory. At the request of the school I conducted 4 training sessions

- Education on God's Heart
- Motivation
- School Vision and Values
- All in it Together

I investigated financial propriety and due diligence and whilst the overall outcome was Good steps need to be taken to improve management tools and oversight.

I advised on the importance of Policies and crucial Documents in place and the need for an annual review to protect the integrity of Bethany. I particularly discussed safeguarding and wellbeing of the children/pupils and staff.

The Exit Policy which focuses on the approaching day when our young people have to leave was also reviewed. This is a difficult matter which has needed amending frequently over the years although the objective of finding a job has not changed.

Whilst I was on site Sunday worship was led by students from the local Nasa Theological College. Recently a new development which was particularly enjoyed by the children. Always good to experience different forms of worship.

David Borland
Trustee and Treasurer