



Welcome to the Caia Connection Project!

The Caia Connection supports two wonderful projects in Caia District of Mozambique – Ray of Hope House in the town of Caia, and Kuwangisana in Sena township. As many of you are new to the project, here is some background on our history, our people, and future plans. We hope you join with us to make these plans happen!

Ray of Hope House (Raio de Esperanca)

The idea for a project to help HIV/AIDS orphans in Caia District began in 2003, when Gettin’ Higher Choir director Shivon Robinsong had been helping the nearby Kapasseni Project. When she found out there were 5,000 AIDS orphans in the town of Caia, she promised the district medical director she would find help in Canada. Then while Shivon was teaching a singing workshop in Kelowna, a group of eager volunteers stepped forward and formed the Caia Connection.

The group raised funds for HIV/AIDS educator Manuel Mandica and other local people to renovate a run-down building and turn it into Ray of Hope House, where AIDS orphans and families taking them in have been helped with medical care, food kits, and support to continue with school. On-site direction is provided by Jill Claus, who was inspired by the example of Perpetua Alfazema to leave her job in the Ontario banking industry and move to Caia to help where it is so greatly needed.



Jill Claus manages [Ray of Hope House](#), which helps AIDS orphans and families who have taken them in.



Perpetua and Joseph Alfazema with AIDS orphans Victor and Nhao, who have been cared for in their own home.

Kuwangisana Home Based Care

The other part of our story is the HIV/AIDS home-based care program managed by Perpetua Alfazema in Sena. Some of you will remember her as the founder of the Kapasseni Project and an inspiring advocate for the poor in Mozambique while she lived in St. Catharines and Victoria. “Kuwangisana” (pronounced kwang-ees-an-a) means “For the better health and wellbeing of all”.

The program helps people seriously ill with HIV/AIDS and other illnesses by providing home-based palliative care. The program was badly needed, because poverty-stricken people with illnesses were usually dying unaided in their huts with family members helplessly looking on. In four years, the project has expanded with help from the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Medical Teams International, and the US Agency for International Development.

Woyaya — Dreaming in Four-Part Harmony

The [Gettin' Higher Choir](#) will perform fundraising concerts at 7:30 on June 12 and June 13. Come and hear their songs of beauty and passion – including several from Africa. Special guest [Valdy](#) is one of Canada’s favourite spinners of stories and songs. Proceeds will support Caia Connection and the [Kapasseni Project](#). The concert is at the Alix Goolden hall. Tickets (\$20/\$15) are at Munro's Books, James Bay Coffee & Books, Ivy's Books (Oak Bay), and Dig This (Broadmead).

Ray of Hope House Update



These children were among the 77 orphans receiving two meals a day at Ray of Hope House. We hope to increase coverage to 250.

Health and Nutrition Project by Jill Claus

This project provides basic health care and meals for the orphans. The meal initiative began in April 2006 with twenty children who were fed a nutritious porridge for breakfast Monday through Friday. The children came to the program site for meals when there was no food for them to eat in their homes. In 2008, the project expanded to 77 orphans, seven days a week, and two meals per day.

Unfortunately, the meal initiative was temporarily closed in January 2009 due to lack of funding. A local donor approved a grant, but was unable to fulfill their commitment because of financial difficulties. The World Food Program (WFP) has continued to donate maize, soya, and beans, but there are many other items for which funds are needed, such as oil, charcoal, soap, and honorariums for cooks and guards.

Until the meal initiative is fully funded again, we are distributing the uncooked WFP food to the children to be eaten at their homes. However, this has caused problems. Many of the children have lost weight because when the food is sent home it is used to feed the entire family for a short period of time rather than to feed only the child for an entire month. So it is imperative to get the meal program up and running again as quickly as possible.

I have sent many organizations a proposal to restart the basic health care initiative and meal initiative for all 250 orphans, with activists hired to prepare meals, do weekly home visits, and take the children to the hospital when they are sick. The budget also includes some meat, fish, and vegetables, to provide a more nutritionally balanced diet than only maize and beans. Pictures of the meal initiative and our other projects can be found at

<http://picasaweb.google.ca/raiodeesperanca/>

Donations to the Caia Connection "general funds" will help with the Health and Nutrition project. In addition, funds for the Sponsor an Orphan Program are used to provide clothing, shoes, school supplies, food and medicine. More sponsors are needed!

2009 Education Project by Jill Claus

The Education Project began in January 2007 with the first distribution of school supplies. The school age children are enrolled in school and provided with school uniforms and supplies. Thanks to donations from the Caia Connection, 61 orphans were enrolled in school for the 2009 school year. The first term is just ending, and the marks of the children will be collected to determine who needs extra help. This information will be used to begin a tutoring program next term.

We started conducting arts and crafts sessions in October 2007 to cultivate creativity in the children. They thoroughly enjoyed these sessions, so we expanded the endeavour to be a full Life Skills Project in August 2008. Emma Dunkley, an intern from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), took on this initiative. The focus is to help the orphans acquire the life skills needed to grow up to be healthy, productive, and self-sufficient adults. Most classes teach skills that parents would have taught them, were they alive. Other activities are selected to help them to develop their creativity, discover their talents and interests, and encourage healthy interaction, hygiene, respect for self and others, team-building, and a bit of agriculture. All the programming promotes gender equality and encourages the participation of all children.

We are also currently working with the World Food Program to enrol the children between the ages of 12 and 17 in their Junior Farm and Field Life Skills Program.



Our New Peace Corps Volunteer

Liz Heavenrich joined us in December. She will be with Ray of Hope House for two years. She is a 21 year old from Huntington Woods, Michigan. Liz has completed a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in International Studies. She will assist the administration of the Education Project and the Health and Nutrition Project. when it is running again. Welcome aboard Liz!

Kuwangisana Project Update



The Kuwangisana community centre buildings in Sena are nearing completion!

The Kuwangisana Story by Carol Kerr

In July 2005 Perpetua Alfazema travelled from Canada to Kapasseni to meet with local doctors and investigate the needs with regards to HIV/AIDS. The statistics were shocking in Caia District, with the medical director reporting that 25% of those tested were HIV positive. He feared the rate was much higher, as it was hard to convince people to get tested and few people were receiving antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. The highest need was for a home-based care program in Sena township. The project was able to begin with grants from the Kapasseni Project, Medical Teams International, the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Ubuntu Choirs and SaltSpring Island residents.

Manuel Miandica (our HIV/AIDS educator and trainer) and Jill Claus got the project started by hiring staff, organizing training, and setting up a small office. Perpetua became the manager when she moved to Sena in July 2006. The goals were met and exceeded, and more funding each year helped expand services. After three years the number of clients has risen to 125, with another 88 seeking help.

I cannot say enough about Perpetua and her fight to get help for people who have AIDS. She made a nuisance of herself to everyone she could talk to in the Ministry of Health. For example, ARV treatment was supposed to be for anyone needing it, but was being kept in the cities for the largest populations. Perpetua made sure the required tests were made available to rural residents, and eventually got a hospital across the Zambezi River to provide ARV to Kuwangisana clients. Staff and families would carry the weakened clients across the rickety bridge on bicycles or in wagons. Gradually the clients got stronger and could go on their own. Now ARV treatment is available in Sena Hospital and a lot fewer people are dying from AIDS.

Before the program started, many orphans wandered the streets alone. Since then, Kuwangisana staff have helped place orphans with foster parents or grandparents. Every day, Kuwangisana feeds hot meals and snacks to over 200 orphans. Clothing and school supplies are provided. Thirty children are classified as "special needs" and cannot attend regular school, so they are taught life skills classes. Music programs have also helped with healing these traumatized kids.

Thanks to all who have provided support, especially this last year when Kuwangisana was between funding grants.

Major Expansion Planned! by Carol Kerr

Kuwangisana is about to start a huge expansion in scope and service levels. Medical Teams International was informed that submissions could be made to USAID for HIV/AIDS program expansion in rural Mozambique. A fantastic proposal was submitted after a lot of teamwork between the Kuwangisana staff, the Mozambique Ministry of Health, local doctors, and Medical Teams International (MTI). The grant was approved, and will provide enough funds to expand services in rural Caia and Chemba districts over three years.

This means that many more people will receive the care they need in their homes if a family member has HIV/AIDS. More communities will receive orphan support, including food and life skills programs. The staff, including Perpetua and Manuel, will receive training in leadership and program management. More local staff will be hired, and the quality of programs will be enhanced by bringing in more doctors and nurses or special workers. HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs will be significantly increased and will reach many more villages. MTI will provide field teams and on-site support for developing the program's capacity and for oversight and reporting.

The primary target beneficiaries of the expanded program are women and children in Caia District who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS with little access to care, treatment services, or support. The goals are as follows.

Services Over 3 Years	Number of Beneficiaries
HIV prevention education	5,000 men, women and youth
AIDS awareness and information	50,000 community members
Home-based care	1,000 people living with AIDS
Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) protection	3,500 children and infants
OVC care & psychosocial support	800 children and infants

Caia Connection Mission Statement

The purposes of the Caia Connection are:

- to assist HIV/AIDS affected and infected orphans, their foster families and the community of the Caia District
- to promote HIV/AIDS education and awareness
- to develop project facilities in Caia District
- to develop and implement programs for HIV/AIDS orphans and the community of Caia District
- to provide similar or related services
- to work with other organizations having similar objectives



Singing together helps Kuwangisana orphans heal from trauma.

Generous Community Fundraising

The USAID grant is substantial, but does not cover any funds for building projects, so Kuwangisana is working hard to raise funds to complete construction of the community centre buildings and facilities needed so that expanded program services can begin.

Members of the Gettin' Higher Choir community have donated over \$5,000 to fund doors and windows for the new building! And Concordia High School in Edmonton, where Sarah and Rafael Alfazema are students, has raised \$1,695. Thanks to these generous communities, the doors and windows will soon be installed at Kuwangisana! There was also enough money raised to have installed two special front doors crafted by local carvers. The choir community has also raised \$700 from the sale of Mozambican art and crafts. This money will go to the Ray of Hope project. As always, the support from Canada has been generous and timely.

Caia Connection Board of Directors

Governance for the Caia Connection is provided by a new board of directors based in Victoria. Members are Shivon Robinsong (president), Carol Kerr (secretary), Gloria Hansen (treasurer), Ian McLachlan (planning and communications), and Blaise Salmon (strategic advisor). Founding member Kathy Canuel is helping as an advisor. Each is a volunteer and brings a wealth of skills and experience, and a passionate desire to help the people in Mozambique. More information about the board members is at www.caiaconnection.com

We thank previous board members in Kelowna — Kathy Canuel, Martin McDermott, Gail Hodgson, and Terry Griffiths. Their enthusiasm and hard work launched the Caia Connection project and did so much to help Ray of Hope House and the Caia orphans.

How You Can Help

Ray of Hope: Orphan Sponsorship

Much of the funding for programs at Ray of Hope House comes from sponsorships of orphans by donors in Canada and the US. A sponsor's support means that basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, school supplies will be there for the children. Many of the orphans are still without sponsors. You can join our Orphan Sponsorship Program for \$35 a month or \$420 a year. Email us or visit our website for more information.

Ray of Hope: Health, Food & General Needs

You can donate any amount you want towards the general needs of Ray of Hope House, including the important Health and Nutrition project for orphans.

Kuwangisana: Children's Play and Music

Two priorities that require funding from our supporters are building a safe play area for the children at the Kuwangisana site and funding for the music therapy and singing classes that are helping so much.

Making Donations

We are a registered charity and Canadian tax receipts are available—even by email. If you wish to donate by cheque, please make cheques payable to "The Caia Connection" and send them to: The Caia Connection, 560 Boblaw Place, Victoria, BC, V9C 3Z1 Canada.

Please indicate if your donation is for Kuwangisana or for Ray of Hope House (either "RHH orphan sponsorship" or "RHH general donation"). To make your donation online, use the PayPal donate button on our website www.caiaconnection.com

For more info, contact Carol Kerr at (250) 478-9296 or Shivon Robinsong at (250) 386-3181, or email us at caiaconnection@gmail.com

Thanks for your support!



Orphans dancing at Ray of Hope House in Caia.