

# KAPASSENI CALLING

AN UPDATE FROM THE KAPASSENI PROJECT COMMITTEE

November 2002

## Update Presentation – Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>

Each year we report to our supporters about the progress made during the year. Our Fall event will be November 30 in the David Lam Auditorium, UVic (MacLaurin Building) at 7:30 pm. Deborah Gruben, who accompanied Joseph and Perpetua to Kapasseni this summer, will share a slide and video presentation. Our MC will be Shivon Robinsong, co-director of the Gettin' Higher Choir. The evening will include singing by members of the choir, a performance by the Moja Africa Singers, refreshments and Mozambican crafts. Admission by donation (\$10/\$5 suggested), with proceeds to Kapasseni School. At 6:30 there will be a pre-show screening of the acclaimed film *"Journey To Kapasseni"*, about the project's beginnings.

## Greetings

We had a very full visit to Kapasseni this year, and are happy to report that the school continues to expand successfully and that the health centre is now almost complete. Our friend Deborah Gruben was a great help, and has shared some of her journal as part of this update. However, all is not well in Kapasseni, as the area has been hard hit by drought this year and food is quite scarce. We are continuing to assist the villagers to develop projects for food security. Thanks to all of you who have helped and take an interest in Kapasseni.

– Joseph and Perpetua Alfazema and friends



Two girls wearing the new school uniform, which will be made locally through the school sewing program

## Kapasseni School Keeps Growing!

In 1999 the villagers built the first school out of saplings, mud and tall grasses. Now the village has a handsome, three-room permanent school constructed from village-made, oven-baked, painted bricks and cement, with tin roof. A Mozambican flag in front of the school is raised every morning to wave proudly over the village. The 2002 enrolment is 212 children and 30 adults. The fourth classroom, currently under construction, will be double-sized, with a partition to provide a space for the new sewing school.

This year the Ministry of Education has provided permission to expand the school to Grade 7 in the coming years. Then Kapasseni school will serve students in grades 6 and 7 from the larger catchment area beyond its own district. Among the 3 teachers, two are certified and their salaries are paid by the Sofala province government.

Perpetua was sorry to learn that bright teenage girls still in school in 2001 were now married and carrying babies on their backs. She hopes they will attend the adult classes when possible. In his speech to the village, the District Commissioner spoke in favour of later marriages so that girls would receive more education.

Twenty more desks have been added to the school. The original 40 desks were paid for with a \$3,500 grant in 2000 from the Canada Fund of the Canadian High Commission in Maputo. Though the children sit three to a desk, some of them must still sit on the floor.

## "Something Opens Our Wings" Concert

Our fourth annual benefit concert was a huge success! The event was held on May 18 at the University Centre and featured Nelly Furtado as guest host. Special thanks to the Gettin' Higher Choir, the Moja Africa Singers, the Hermes String Quartet, and special guest musicians. We are very fortunate in having the support of such generous, talented performers who give so much of their time. Thanks to the many people who supported this concert, \$20,031 was raised. The sale of Kapasseni breakfast porridge proved very popular!

## Travel Notes From Perpetua

We arrived in Beira on June 16<sup>th</sup> with our good friend Deborah Gruben of Victoria. Our contact person, Job Saeni, had arranged for us to rent a private apartment for our six week stay in Mozambique. The building was in a busy location, fenced and protected by guard dogs. The owner allowed us to use the car garage as storage for the many supplies we purchased.

In Beira we accomplished many things. Our contact persons updated us on issues regarding the school, school children, teachers, water and wells, the health centre, government, and the community in general. Then we divided tasks among ourselves. Deborah and I shopped for two sewing machines, fabric, blankets, and breakfast program supplies. Benjamin Nhampopo was busy with building materials. Benjamin Vernijo arranged for transportation to Kapasseni and financing. Joseph met with government officials and kept all records. Job was our communicator. Also, we had volunteers who helped in many ways.

We hired two big trucks for the two-day journey to the village. After they were loaded, we sat on top of the materials. Although the roads were bumpy, dry and dusty, they were passable. We were in Kapasseni village for three weeks, and then returned later for five more days.

The Kapasseni village committee shared with us their concerns and successes. They see that strong community leadership is needed to initiate and oversee projects. Efforts are underway to establish a fourth contact person, living in Caia (only 2 hours away by car) who will facilitate leadership training, enabling villagers to take ownership of their own future.

### Health Centre

A blueprint from the Sofala Ministry of Health guided village builders in constructing a 4-room centre made with sand and cement blocks, having glass windows and a slate roof. A veranda to be used as a waiting room will supplement a treatment room, examination room and a medical room. Furniture, medical equipment and supplies are now urgently needed. A house for the RN has also been constructed. The Ministry of Health through its Sena office will hire a suitably trained RN. The RN will work in conjunction with traditional village medicine and midwives. Since pregnancy, birthing, and infant care will be a priority, a female nurse is preferred in the Sofala culture.

The health centre will serve children and adults suffering from treatable and preventable illnesses, such as ear and eye infections, diarrhea, bilharzia, malaria, dengue fever and yellow fever. A token fee will be charged patients, to go toward medicine and clinic maintenance. For further treatment of life-threatening ailments patients will be transported to Caia central hospital 80 kilometres away.



*Njira is able to smile again, after having facial surgery*

### Islanders Help Njira

In the May newsletter, we told you about Njira, a young Kapasseni boy with a severe facial disfigurement from a cleft palate. On July 19, the Times Colonist published a letter from one of our members appealing for financial help to support corrective surgery. 110 generous donors responded to the letter with almost \$6,000 in donations. Added to the \$3,000 grant from Transforming Faces Worldwide, the sum of \$9,000 brought us within \$1,000 of the total required for documents, travel, surgery, lab, hospital and housing costs. In July, Njira and his mother, Assida, travelled to Pretoria, South Africa, where Dr Butow transformed Njira's palate, making possible intelligible speech and an engaging smile. At the end of August the whole village turned out to celebrate the happy return, and next January Njira will be enrolled in school. If you would like to help with the remaining funds required to cover Njira's surgery, please send a donation to the Ernesto Fund, c/o Redeemer Lutheran Church, 911 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria, BC, V9B 2N8.

### Joseph Follows His Dream

Joseph Alfazema was accepted as a mature student at the St. Catharine's Lutheran Seminary in Ontario this fall. Perpetua and their 3 children have moved with him while he pursues his life-long dream of becoming a pastor to his people in Africa. The Kapasseni project committee has been able to stay in close contact through email and telephone. There will be many challenges ahead for the Alfazema family as they begin this new chapter in their lives. Reach out and touch the Alfazemas by email at [Kapasseni@becon.org](mailto:Kapasseni@becon.org). They would love to hear from you.

## Deborah Gruben's Adventure Journal

**Imagine All That!** – Imagine paying to go on a six week vacation in a country that has experienced 26 years of war. Imagine riding on the back of a flat bed truck for 18 hours only to find out this was also your bed for the night. Imagine teaching someone to sew who has never seen or handled a pair of scissors or a needle and thread. Sound like an unusual dream? Well, for me this dream came true this June and July when I travelled throughout central and northern Mozambique.

**Beginning In Beira** – We arrived in Beira, the second largest city in this country of 17 million people. There were beautiful beaches and lots of mosquitos. Our task was to buy a year's worth of supplies for the remote village of Kapasseni. We shopped until we dropped! Ten days later, we braved the bumpy, potholed, dirt and dusty road and the occasional encounter with wildlife (mostly monkeys) on the back of an 18-wheeled flat bed truck.

**On The Road** – Our first stop was Dondo, a neighbouring community to Beira. Here we picked up 8 year-old Njira and his mother Assida (see the story above). I gave Njira a Toronto Blue Jays sweat shirt to replace his tattered T-shirt, and it nearly covered him from head to toe. Regardless of the fashion statement, he was warm, snuggled into his mother's arms, and accepted the rough ride without complaining. We arrived in Caia at 10:30pm, exhausted and hungry, and slept on the flat bed truck.

**Kapasseni Sunrise** – At dawn we proceeded to Kapasseni. Villagers were quick to extend their hands in friendship and homes were opened to us in hospitality. After introductions and greetings, the supplies were unloaded. The next morning I awoke to the beating of drums. The chief was sending a message to his people, asking them to assemble in the school compound. By 10 o'clock over 100 children had arrived, many with their parents. I was in awe of how this form of communication worked – never a busy signal or answering machine. We distributed 300 warm blankets donated by CLWR. Though it was warm during the day, the nights could be cold. While I slept in a nylon tent with long underwear on, most villagers slept in drafty bamboo framed mud and grass huts. The blankets were greatly appreciated!

**School Breakfast Program** – Each morning began with the preparation of the school breakfast program food. Two women rose at dawn (often leaving their children sleeping at home) and met in the school's cook hut to prepare porridge for the 200 children attending Escola Primaria de Kapasseni. The cook hut was swept, fires were lit, water was fetched, and a mixture of millet, corn flour, oil, sugar, and water was put on to boil. Compared to a Canadian breakfast of bacon and eggs this does not sound like much, but the children love it and for many it was the only meal they may have that day. Assisting with these preparations, I was able to meet the children face to face. Each child came with a plastic or metal cup to receive a 12 ounce serving of hot porridge, and not once did we have a shouting or shoving match. On the contrary, friends often shared their cups with those who did not have one. A single serving of porridge might not seem like a lot, but it helps the hungry children live another day and gives them hope for the future.

**School Sewing Program** – This year a new initiative was started, and this was the main reason for me to go to Kapasseni. My role was to facilitate the making of school uniforms and to start a sewing school. Until now we had imported a blue T-shirt uniform from Canada. Through the new initiative, villagers would use local materials to produce school uniforms, thus supporting the local economy and encouraging the villagers to become self-sufficient. The green and yellow uniform reflects the colours of the Mozambique flag. Green for agriculture and yellow for the corn. Within two weeks 200 uniforms were completed (75 dresses and 125 shirts and shorts for the boys). A sewing school was started to pass these skills on to others. Under the guidance of two local tailors, eight people will learn to make simple clothing and do repairs, enabling them to generate an income. As their skills develop we hope that people will come to order clothing and have items mended.



*Local tailor smiles as he uses a new sewing machine*

**Drought and Hunger** – I found the people of Kapasseni to be wonderfully hospitable, sharing what little they had with great generosity. Because of the drought, most families have had to find meat wherever they can, including eating mice, rats, lizards, and small birds. One woman who offered me lunch asked if I ate meat, and when I said "Yes", she was about to prepare two dead black rats. I shook my head when I saw this, and was fortunate that she was able to offer me some lizard cooking on a nearby fire (it tasted pretty good!). Another woman who I had helped wanted to give me a gift of five dead mice or rats, but I told her that she should keep them as she had lots of children. When I left, one of her little daughters ran after me and slipped a small dead mouse in my pocket, wanting to give me a present of something that she had caught. I later wrapped the mouse in a banana leaf and put it in the pocket of a boy who had come with us. I think the local women talked about me as the lady who would not eat mice or rats!

**We Are Making A Difference!** – After living in Kapasseni for three weeks and travelling throughout nearby Tete province, it was clear to me that the work we are doing is making a big difference to the lives of the local people. Not long ago, people had nothing and were focused on finding their daily requirements any way they could. Now, there are fruit trees and agriculture, the school breakfast program, and a school and medical centre that will not be easily swept away in a flood. People are more confident, and building for the future.

– Deborah Gruben

## Food For The Hungry

A drought this year meant there was a lack of pasture and poor harvest, consequently hunger was widespread. During our brief stay we noticed the food shortages — foods that were readily available in June (sweet potatoes and kale) were very scarce if available at all by the end of July. We also noticed that many families resorted to trapping field rats and mice. To help villagers deal with these conditions a new partnership was formed with Food for the Hungry. An agricultural officer from Caia (two hours away) agreed to teach the villagers better methods of planting and production of diversified products (maize, kidney beans, pigeon beans, sesame seed), along with marketing skills. Another officer in Beira recommended the irrigation use of treadle pumps @ \$400-\$500 USD. Such pumps can be used for both small-scale irrigation and to pump water out of a shallow well where the water table is close to the surface. Thanks to a private donation a fruit orchard was planted. Over 50 different tree seedlings were planted. As they mature the people will have fresh oranges, mangos, tangerines and bananas, as well as cashews, all essential for better nutrition. Encouraging partnerships that inform and empower leadership is a priority of the work being done in Kapasseni.



*Woman with the last bowl of pigeon beans from her garden. For vegetables, only limited corn remained in Kapasseni.*

## Caring For The Orphans

According to United Nations statistics, Mozambique will have over 800,000 HIV/AIDS orphans by 2006. Though the village of Kapasseni show no outward signs of people suffering from AIDS, there are 30 orphans in the community. Out of love, village families welcomed these children into their huts, willingly sharing what food and resources they have. As a result of a private donation given to relieve some of these extra burdens, we provided each orphan with a metal cup and plate and a new pair of sandals. These are their only possessions. Would you to help these orphaned children? Please contact us with your ideas.

**Old Village Chief Dies** — The old village chief, Joao Murema, who was featured in the documentary performing the tree planting ceremony for the school, passed away in March 2002. His son has succeeded him and supports the project.

## 2002 Budget and Finances

### FUNDS IN 2002

Balance from 2001	\$ 16,138
Fundraising concert proceeds	\$ 20,031
CIDA/LWR grant	\$ 28,000
Global Village Store grant	\$ 2,500
Agriculture grant	\$ 2,500
Sales of crafts, books, and cards	\$ 1,500
Other donations	\$ 10,465
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 81,334</b>

### EXPENDITURES IN 2002

School building & desks	\$ 8,500
Sewing School	\$ 3,000
Teachers and first aid man	\$ 3,800
Breakfast program	\$ 1,100
Health clinic and nurse accommodation	\$ 40,804
Mozambican contact persons	\$ 1,080
Agriculture, seedlings, equipment	\$ 2,500
Coordinators' travel	\$ 6,500
School supplies & uniforms	\$ 5,250
Blankets, orphans, and other	\$ 4,200
Local transportation	\$ 2,400
Administration & bank charges	\$ 2,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 81,334</b>

- The Kapasseni Project is run entirely by volunteers.
- Funds raised this year will be matched next year by CIDA through Canadian Lutheran World Relief, up to \$25,000. This effectively doubles the benefit of your donations.

## The Kapasseni Project Committee

<b>Coordinators</b>	Perpetua and Joseph Alfazema
<b>Treasurer</b>	Deborah Gruben
<b>Financial Secretary</b>	Sylvia Gledhill
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Mona Achtzener
<b>Correspondence</b>	Doris Bergbusch
<b>Chaplaincy and Wisdom</b>	Pastor Washeim, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Pastor Beiderwieden, Hope Lutheran Church

In addition, Shiron Robinsong and Ian McLachlan have provided on going advice and support.

**Want to Get Involved?** - We welcome any who would like to work with us, including possibly coming on our next trip to Mozambique. Contact us at 478-6922 (Sylvia Gledhill) or send email to [Kapasseni@becon.org](mailto:Kapasseni@becon.org). Donations can be sent to: Redeemer Lutheran Church (memo "Kapasseni Project"), 911 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria, V9B 2N8.

**More Information** - We have a brochure, video and other materials available. Our newsletters, with more pictures of Kapasseni and information about the remarkable start of this project, can be found at the website <http://www.Kapasseni.org>

**Come Meet Us November 30<sup>th</sup>  
at UVic!!**