

Update on Naomi 24.8.24

Hi Everyone.

Some of you may not be aware that the Energy Regulation Board in Zambia has disclosed that the Kariba North Bank Power Station, which is the largest source of Zambia's hydroelectricity, is set to shut down in September due to excessively low water levels in the dam reservoir. At the moment Naomi has a little electricity but never knows when it will be. She asks us to pray, please, that there will be enough power to use the photocopier so that she can get documents ready to give out to the teachers in their training week this week. She has written most of the documents – there's just one left to do, but has a whole pile of documents to be photocopied.

Naomi says to praise the Lord that all the storeroom shelves are in place and sorted. (As usual she had to do a lot of the work on them herself!) She has been putting things away on the shelves, some of which are above head height, and has consequently strained her wrist. She is wearing a wrist support but asks us to pray for healing.

As most of you know, the Lord has answered our prayers for a new teacher: Gertrude is a true believer and Naomi is really excited about it. Gertrude is expecting to be able to leave her school in Ndola in the middle of September although it is just possible that she might be asked to stay on longer. She lives in Ndola and will have to travel the 11 miles there and back by bus – along the Mufulira road! Please pray that the Lord will provide accommodation for her nearer the school. Please also keep praying about Naomi's future accommodation.

Naomi also says to praise the Lord that the man who was repairing the nsaka roof did come back (and also praise the Lord that Naomi was able to buy some more chicken wire) and he has completed the job. However, he pointed out to Naomi that one of the poles holding the nsaka roof up needs to be replaced. Naomi has to source a very strong pole as the nsaka roof is really heavy. She will need to have the pole delivered as it will be too heavy for her to collect.

Naomi asks that the Lord will enable her to contact a solar panel guy who has done work for other mzungus (European/white people) who have been pleased with his work. Naomi has been reluctant to look into solar panels previously because she feared the work might be sub-standard and she didn't want to waste people's money. Please also pray that he will be prepared to supply and fit solar panels for Arise/Kapumpe. Praise the Lord that a church in this country has offered to pay for the work.

Naomi seems to be surviving on nuts and biscuits due to no power for the fridge and virtually no cooking facilities/no light to see what she's doing! Gas canisters for her Campingaz cooker are, not surprisingly, hard to come by - with no power to speak of, a lot of people are probably turning to using such cookers. The children are able to have hot porridge for breakfast because Doris cooks it on a charcoal stove. Naomi has to give them crackers/biscuits at their other meal rather than bread but does try to get pasta and a sauce when she can.

Another problem caused by the lack of power is the impossibility of contacting the local government offices by email, as you are supposed to. Trying to phone is an exercise in futility.

Paul and Becks insisted on Naomi visiting them for a short break. On the morning she was due to leave she found she had a flat tyre. One of Paul's workmen changed the tyre for her although the spare wasn't very good. She went to a garage that had been recommended but was uneasy and so went elsewhere. She eventually got the tyre repaired well enough to drive home.

Naomi recently discovered (by talking to one of the men working on the Mufulira road who then got his Chinese supervisor) that there are no plans to lay a drive from the Mufulira road to the school – only to the Bible College. Naomi has got to apply for one for the school. Please pray that the application will be successful, given that plans will have to be changed. The Chinese people (presumably from the mines) are in charge of building the road as the government hasn't got any money!

Given that the border with Congo is only 6 miles away and lorry drivers are constantly toing and froing, Mpox is a concern. Obviously in the bush there will be no means of verifying whether someone has Mpox or not (scabies is also rife) so all Naomi can do is send any affected child home and ask the guardians not to send them back to school until the spots have gone. Children with Mpox in Congo are dying because their immune systems can't cope due to lack of food. Naomi is hoping and praying that Kapumpe children will fare better because they do at least get food at school.

There is some doubt over whether Cranleigh School will be able to take the 15 suitcases in October as promised. Some parents last year were not happy that their children were being asked to carry an extra suitcase each, plus the British Government is advising that anyone travelling to countries adjacent to Congo be vaccinated. This might put some parents off and then the trip might have to be cancelled.

Just recently, the grandmother of a 5-year old Kapumpe boy got into a fight after drinking and had a brick thrown at her. She was found dead the next day behind her hut. It may actually have been the little boy who found her. A neighbour who, it turns out, is a sister of the dead woman, is taking the boy in. She already has children who are in AriseKapumpe and so he will be able to go to school safely with them.

Naomi has recently discovered that it is possible in Zambia to train as a teacher by distance learning – a one year course with no teaching practice!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Praise the Lord again for Gertrude!

Every blessing,

Fran M.