

DIGNITY UPDATE: Strategy & Growth

CORE

Overview from Jon

This month, Dignity celebrated our 12th birthday! Whilst we have grown and morphed over the years, the work of Dignity has remained true to our roots, focusing on pioneering, people and working together. Our work can be messy, difficult, and sometimes a little chaotic, yet it holds together. The number of Life Groups continues to grow with 62 being planted so far this year; we thank God for each one! This is a slightly lower rate of growth than we saw for the same period in 2018. I have recently heard numerous stories and testimonies of how Jesus has met people and changed people; again something to praise a God for and for us to focus upon. Our work is not about Life Groups or education, they are a means to an end, it is about people. ([Check out the stories on our website for yourself](#) or follow us on social media.)



The current situation is that things are generally ticking over well, albeit with some frustrations. The frustration comes from the reality of working in low income and low education areas of rural Africa. A substantial amount of 'firefighting' is required as respond to face problems or challenges. All that said, an exciting picture is emerging...

Prayer: The direction God is leading us

By the end of October people that represent Dignity will have worked from the Atlantic Ocean on Africa's west coast to the Indian Ocean on Africa's East coast. This is a journey by road, Swakopmund to Mombasa, that is 4122 kilometres along which you would pass hundreds of Life Groups. Currently there are gaps where there are no Life Groups.

With that in mind consider what I wrote in our previous report: "Years ago I remember a friend of mine Graham Beggs speaking about a move of God that he saw coming to Africa. It was a mission movement but different from what had gone before. Where previously, the mission had seemed to be about power, control and colonisation with the church having got all wrapped around these 3 things, this time it was to be about servanthood and releasing the people of Africa to be everything that God has called them to be. Dignity is part of that movement."

Imagine a corridor from the western coast of Namibia to the eastern coast of Kenya. Imagine Life Groups meeting throughout this corridor. You would also have shown that Life Groups can operate in every single type of terrain and people group within rural sub-Saharan Africa. From the San and bush people of the desert in the west to the Islamic areas of the east. That alone would be a fantastic achievement. It's reminiscent of Christian groups trying to reach along the old silk roads in Asia. This is now a feasible reality!

Next imagine from there that the corridor expanded north and south? It could embrace different organisations, different people, different churches. These partners could not only plant Life Groups (after all they are simply a tool) but release God's people to pursue his calling personally and in their community literally right across Africa. Can you imagine the impact that would have? It is staggering! The map below shows what I increasingly believe is part of our story. The red shows where Life Groups currently are present, the blue where they need to go to make a corridor across Africa.



DIGNITY UPDATE: Zambia

Overview

There seems to be a heaviness on our teams at present within Zambia. They are doing ok, some even very well, but maybe as the work has grown the structure and personnel need to flex and grow as well. It's easy when you've been involved for a while to sit back but we all need to be open to God's renewing of our hearts and minds as well as continual learning and personal growth that takes us beyond our current position. This is something to pray about.

Life Groups & Leadership

- One thing that I've managed to get re-going is the **quarterly leadership meeting** of representatives from different areas in Zambia. Inexplicably this hadn't met during the first half of 2019. This is an important forum that Bernard, Royd and the others can use to share vision, solve problems and move the agenda forward. Progress can feel "panono, panono", Bemba for slowly. We have agreed together the importance of this group of people meeting regularly.
- At the meeting itself there were a number of **fantastic testimonies from various areas within Zambia**. 2 spring to mind.
 - Pilius shared how a Life Group met close to the home of an elderly widow who was struggling to feed herself. The Life Group grew a casava field for her so she wouldn't starve. They paid for this themselves. The neighbours were so impressed by this act of kindness that they also joined the group. They became Christians. An alcoholic who passed by every day came to the group also because of what he saw. He too became a Christian and sadly died 3 weeks later. However, he is now sat with Christ, what a timely intervention!
 - Festus spoke of a man, Morgan, who was visiting their village when he became sick. The Life Group there cared for him and he asked, "What is this group that you have?" The man, not a Christian, on returning home organised his village to find out about and be trained about "the group". Festus and his team visited and a new Life Group began in this Morgan's village. Morgan became a follower of Christ along with many others.

Impact Teams – a word from Bernard Witika

- Bernard Witika, the Zambian Impact Team Coordinator, summed up:
 - Mongu a new area has been visited twice. **Initial visits and Intelligence courses for new areas** are planned in Luanshya, Mufumbwe and Mbala during the rest of 2019 and into 2020. Other areas where contacts are being established are Nseluka, Chambeshi and Chongwe.
 - **Regular Impact Team assessments** have been carried out. Generally teams are doing well with a specific things to support in each team: Luapula Central – establishing new members, Northwestern – team dynamics, Luapula North – reconnecting with areas after a team member left, Central South – Gervas is stepping down after many years partnering with us (Huge thanks to Gervas for his friendship and partnership over many years!), Mpika - growing to a wider area and finding the right people to grow the team.
- In September we ran **training for new Impact Team members** from Petauke, Southern and Zambezi provinces. We also ran a local training for new team members in Luapula in August.





DIGNITY UPDATE: Developing Regions

HUB

Kenya

- **Ganze, Eastern Kenya:** Joseph has continued his work in the rural areas surround Mombasa. From this around 10 Life Groups have been started in the last 18 months. One or two individuals have come to the fore. The plan is that over the next few months other areas are introduced and Life Groups are started in other areas with the help of these people, thus creating a team. Jo & Frank helped Joseph run an Intelligence training course for about 30 people to help equip them to plant Life Groups. Joseph travelled to Tanzania with Jo & Frank, greatly widened his experience of Life Groups.
- **Near Eldoret, Western Kenya:** Jo & Frank ran initial Life Group training in the community around the Open Arms Village. About 15 people attended and a few Life Groups have since begun. One group is beginning to think about planting another group already!
- **Nairobi, Central Kenya:** Beatrice has been working with street children in Nairobi. She is exploring the use of Life Groups both with street children and with communities from which high numbers of street children originate.
- We have had some early discussions about running an **EQUIP camp in Kenya**, hopefully first half of 2020.

Namibia

- Jon & Jude are currently part way through 5 weeks travelling around Namibia. Their strategic aim is to encourage what is already going on and find people we can involve in further training in 2020. Jon and Jude are visiting various locations, seeking people and looking for those specific God contacts.
- The existing team members are limited in the time they can offer so, with this in mind, we are looking at training individuals and forming teams principally across the north of the country. This area is "church poor" as well as being financially poor.
- Another logistical point holding the work back is availability of resources and translation of materials. We need to address this.

Tanzania

- **Frenk has continued to serve faithfully in the south of Tanzania.** The number of groups in the region has risen to 34 across a fairly wide area. They are having a fantastic effect on the church and community, building unity and challenging the understanding that Christianity is simply about going to church on Sunday mornings. People are finding freedom as they understand the good news of Jesus in life changing ways. Jo & Frank ran the equivalent of an EQUIP camp here for a number of Life Group leaders, helping them explore why and how they can plant Life Groups wider together.
- The need here is to **support Frenk in growing a team** and planting hubs in other places within Tanzania. This has proved difficult for Frenk to accomplish alone and we need to assist with this. We should focus effort here and widen the effort, perhaps through mounting a campaign the region.
- The **team continues to work** to Plant Life Groups and follow up with existing ones. Jo and Lambert have been working with them to help **provide some strategy to this**.

DIGNITY UPDATE: The Numbers

HUB

From Southern Africa, including Developing Regions

| Measurable | Number to date, 2019 | End 2018 | End 2017 | Comments |
|--|----------------------|------------|------------|---|
| | | | | (*these numbers are cumulative since Dignity began. All other numbers are for the current year) |
| Number of Active Life Groups* | 743 | 684 | 507 | |
| (Number of which meet seasonally) | 52 | 31 | | |
| Number of Life Groups currently paused or stopped* | 69 | 68 | 67 | |
| Total number of Life Groups Planted* | 812 | 752 | 574 | |
| Distinct Life Group Areas Planted* | 260 | 234 | 210 | |
| Number of clusters* | 38 | 34 | 31 | |
| Trained Impact Team Missionaries * | 85 | 73 | 47 | |
| Active Impact Team Missionaries this year to date. | 43 | 49 | 43 | Figure to be updated through ongoing team assessment process. |
| Impact Team Areas* | 20 | 18 | 13 | |
| Impact Team Training course (visit or central EQUIP) | 15 | 17 | 10 | |
| Intelligence Schools of Evangelism | 3 | 3 | 5 | |
| Areas Initial Visit | 77 | 118 | 71 | Data from Zambia & Kenya only |
| Life! Group Training Courses | 32 | 47 | 79 | Data from Zambia & Kenya only (numbers from Tanzania & Namibia to be added) |
| Encouragement visits | 237 | 208 | 25 | Data from Zambia & Kenya only |
| Volunteer hours | 25,444 | 31,764 | 23,296 | *Estimated figures based on 1 leader volunteering 4 hours/month per Life Group. <u>Now also includes</u> 8 hours per initial visit and encouragement visit 36 hours per training course |
| IT Training hours | 1152 | 1692 | | Estimated as 36 hours per training (only Zambia) |
| IT encouragement & cluster visits | 2512 | 2808 | | Data from Zambia only (assumes 8 hours per initial and encouragement visit) |



DIGNITY UPDATE: Central Administration

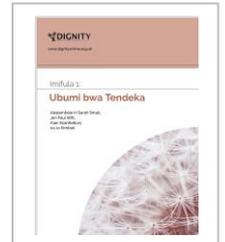
CORE

Overview

Our UK office has been quieter since our last report as Jo has been in Africa for 7 weeks since our last report. Becky and Lois have done a great job of keeping our core functions running. Huge thanks to them both. Our plans for the last quarter of 2019 are kicking into place as we work to finish the year well.

Core: Sharing our Knowledge

- **Foundations 1** is ready to print in Bemba with some initial copies already in use. Translations in Lunda and Lozi are being scheduled with a Swahili and possibly also Kwangali translations also required. Good progress has been made on the Bemba translation **Foundations 2** which should be available by the end of 2019. Final comments have been received on **Foundations 3** and these will be taken on board. All sessions for **Foundations 4** have been written and the edit is to be done.
- Since our last report **Plant** has been completed in Luchazi and the Tonga, Chewa and Lozi translations have also made progress.
- The first draft of **Love Your Children** has been completed and is currently being field tested by a number of Life Groups. Safeguarding principles will be interwoven throughout the studies.
- The first issue of **Awaken** has been published. This is a monthly publication to be sent by email and WhatsApp. It draws on our written training materials and delivers them in bite size chunks for those who are planting or running Life Groups.
- The need to **publish our materials digitally** and create a membership area on our website it becoming more pressing.
- We **recently shipped** 190 Bibles, 168 copies of Foundations 1, 195 copies of Love Your Village and 193 copies of Rooted in Jesus to Zambia. A few went missing in transit, but the majority arrived safely. Our ongoing thanks go to Rooted in Jesus!



Core: General

People

- Our UK team will soon change shape as **Lois** is leaving for a full time job elsewhere. We are so thankful for the creativity and energy she has invested in Dignity while she has been with us and we wish her well in her next steps.

Visits & Events

- Our **'Open Office' on 7th June** worked really well and we intend to repeat this event in November.

Fundraising

- We are planning to round off The Big Walk with **Big Walk, Little Walks** and ask children to walk up to 10k throughout November. The grand finale will be an indoor (bring your own) picnic party! We would like 80 children to take part.
- **Giving Tuesday** is on December 3rd. We want to secure match funding for any donations given on this day.
- Our **2019 Investment Prospectus** has been sent out to our postal mailing list. Our next mailing will be the end of year edition of **Together**.

Finances

- Since our last report we have received gifts from 2 **trust funds** towards our literature costs and Love Your Children. We have 2 live trust fund applications for which we are awaiting responses.
- Since our last report 2 **regular gifts** have been started, 1 has been increased and 1 has been stopped.

The Numbers

| Measurable | Number to date, 2019 | Number at end of 2018 | Comments |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Movement in regular monthly giving | +£237.50 | +£252.50 | Refer to finance report for further information |
| Total number of regular givers | 58 | 55 | Includes churches and individuals |
| Trust fund applications made | 7 | 7 | |
| Prayer meetings held | - | 2 | |
| Events & church visits happened | 5 | 5 | |
| Bibles recycled this year | 106 received 190 sent | 313 received 316 sent | Total Bibles recycled to date = 1022! (of which 69 are awaiting shipping) |
| Volunteer hours (UK) | 25 | 186.25 | |