

DIGNITY UPDATE: Strategy & Growth

CORE

Overview: Pausing and Pushing On

The early part of the year is where the majority of people actively involved with Dignity slow down for a month or two. On a personal level this works with changing continent for a while. With most of the people involved with Dignity relying on farming, it also works for them. They are able to grow their crops and do the work they need to do. Everything takes a 'breather' if you like. This example is really helpful. It allows us all to focus ourselves on what is important in both life and the work of Dignity. This update contains some reflections on what is going well, opportunities in the future and some general thoughts on how Dignity is 'doing'.



Training the 'Church' and raising a new generation!

This is what I wrote in my last report: "Dignity intentionally doesn't focus on 'positional' or 'hierarchical' leaders. Rather we focus on 'community' or 'practical' leaders. These are everyday people who can make a difference in their locality. Over the last year or so, we've seen the need to train up more people like Jon, Jude, Bernard and others who can take a more strategic role in a larger region." Later in the year we are going to start to try and do this in Zambia, with invitation to people from further afield who have some relationship with.

When Dignity began, what we did was so new and innovative that trying work through a church or an organisation was next to impossible. The idea that you would plant a movement that would 'run away from you' and 'create its own life' was novel. Combined with empowering 'everyday' people who are often overlooked, people struggled to understand it. Some even opposed it! Many years later, the I feel there is a change of season. We have some proven success and people want to know how and why. This gives us an opportunity to 'tack closer' to some of the church than we have before. In other words, we don't need to do it all ourselves. The residency gives us an opportunity to train our own strategic leaders but also to train the strategic leaders of others. Our work really will spread everywhere if we manage to do this, but it won't be 'our' work, it's simply the work of the Kingdom.

On a practical level, we need to build a bathroom to augment the improvements to the site in Zambia. Before leaving Zambia, we finished the foundation slab for this, which is 50% of the building. This was supported by friends in Snowdonia. June – August this year that has to be finished.

Interesting Opportunities and Challenges

The Philo Trust are running some evangelistic meetings in Zambia, in locations where Dignity is not really known. We have agreed to partner with them and will work with Andrew Hawkins their church development director to make this happen. They will train church leaders one day using their material, we will take a second day in locations such as Solwezi, Kabwe and Chipata.

Building upon our work in 2019, Jon especially is looking at furthering the work in Namibia in 2 phases during 2020. The first one being a visit to Namibia end April/early May. This is to build upon the contacts and people met in late 2019. We will essentially have an EQUIP meeting to train and try and for an identity for a team that can work across Namibia. Tying this in with the Residency later in the year is important to create knowledge and capacity.

Meeting with various people in the last few weeks. The leaders of Thornhill Baptist Church in Southampton who expressed an interest in the work in Namibia. I also met with Jon Stockley of Christian Vision for Men in Wales and also a few leaders of other churches who expressed some interest in our work in Africa and how they could link and learn from the work in Africa. To this end we are going to run an event in Wales on 23rd May to do exactly this.

How does 'Collaboration' work?

One thing that we really need to work out is how Dignity looks in different countries. A traditional structure of a hierarchy with a 'director' doesn't really sit with who we are or what we are trying to achieve. Likewise, what people

would consider a 'church' structure' doesn't quite work wither. Progressively, throughout 2020 we need to work out what a 'collaborative' structure means. Does it look like it does in Zambia with a small team (which needs to grow) who take on the structure, and work with hundreds of individuals and lots of small teams. Maybe yes! Can it also look like a partnership between different organisations in collaboration doing the same? Maybe yes! Can it be a number individuals making it happen, Again probably yes! Could it be one church that decides to plant the work but in a way where every other group/church can work with them? Again, yes it could. This is an area which must above all be pragmatic whilst being true to our principles. Progressing the work in Namibia, Kenya and new areas will help us to think about this.

My priority throughout 2020

The image of a 'corridor' from coast to coast in Africa is an enduring one for me. We must take the ideas we have into many different southern African situations. Whilst we are doing this, there is a huge opportunity to spin off ideas and learning to other contexts. I believe very strongly that the best way for groups, churches and individuals to understand what we are trying to achieve is to hear, understand and even apply the DNA of Dignity themselves. The aim is not simply to plant Life Groups, after all they are a means to an end. Even the church itself is a means to an end to worship God and visibly be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. It means life is better for everyone, poverty becomes less, people have hope and enjoy the blessing of God himself. That's the ultimate aim and it's important to keep in mind!

DIGNITY UPDATE: Zambia

HUB

Impact Teams: Changing & Transforming

- In my last update I talked about changing Impact Teams and the way that they work. Impact Teams are small groups of people who have been trained by ourselves to plant and support groups. **They are missionaries.**
- The growth of Life Groups has led to two situations: some of these teams can get a little overwhelmed. Others find it hard to release the work to others (doesn't that happen everywhere?) As Life Groups grow, both of these issues truncate the efficacy of the team.
- A few of us proposed to liberalise the teams and allow an Impact Team to be a much wider group of people who each take care of their local area. This stops people being overwhelmed and secondly stops people becoming 'too important' to the work. **The net gain is that Life Groups themselves in their local area support and push forward the work.** That's the idea anyway!
- In Mwinilunga, where out of necessity we have been trialling this approach, the early signs are encouraging. During 2019 the team was struggling to make an impact. Now, people seem to have engaged with their local area much more deeply. That's good. Secondly people don't seem overwhelmed and want to be involved. An indicator is an area looked after by Enock. There are 4 life groups in his area. Those groups have planted 2 new groups in the last 2 months since we tried to introduce the changes. In 2019 they didn't do anything like that!
- Chibombo in Central province is another area where we have started to introduce these ideas.
- The net result is that the 'team' can harness the effort of tens and hundreds of people not simply a select few. That has to be the way forward. As these ideas develop, they will become the de facto way that dignity teams and influence and plant our DNA throughout wide groups of people. **Even more movement and multiplication!**

Life Groups

- Keeping track of Life Groups has become unwieldy and difficult. With data from multiple places and multiple people, we only ever get a partial picture. We hear stories like Enock in the last paragraph where Life Groups are planting Life Groups. Of course training and support is happening monthly throughout most of the year. As we train a wider set of people to plant groups and Life Groups do likewise, it's only going to get harder! I know from talking to team members that other groups have started and begun.
- We need to move to having a Dignity wide census at least once a year, if not twice. We have some of the tools to do this, it's more of a case of organising, sending out and following up information from various sources. My current thought is to work with Becky/office to enable her to make this happen, before I return to Africa!
- At the end of 2019, even with a partial picture, over 60 new life groups had begun.

DIGNITY UPDATE: Developing Regions

HUB

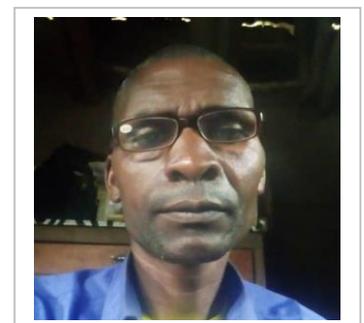
Kenya

- **Ganze, Eastern Kenya:** Joseph has continued to follow up with existing groups and is considering how to accelerate the planting of new groups. He has observed 3 things:
 - Those who have not already started Life Groups following the training in July 2019 probably now will not do so. We agreed that is okay to accept that some people will not take action it is better to accept this and **look for other people who are interested and keen** rather than keep pushing the same people.
 - Life Groups have started in new areas, but at a slow rate. Joseph has seen that Pastor David is very enthusiastic and shares the idea of Life Groups with people wherever he goes which has opened up new opportunities. Joseph wants to emulate this behavior and follow up the opportunities that have and will arise. Together we agreed a cycle of follow up and planting that **Joseph has since developed to be a plan of action for the next 6 months.**
 - Regular communication with us helps Joseph. We have **committed to speak on the first Friday of every month.**
 - There are currently 14 or so groups in Ganze, a new group in Bamba (beyond Ganze) and a new group in Mariakane (Mombasa-Nairobi highway)
- We are in contact with Chris who has taken on the leadership at Trinity Chapel Mombasa (TCM). We all hope to continue the working relationship between Dignity and TCM but we are waiting to send further funds until TCM give us the go ahead. This will cause some delay to the work Joseph has planned.
- **Near Eldoret, Western Kenya:** Alex, Nicole and Zeddy continue to lead a Life Group although it has taken a break due to the rainy season (the river is too high to cross). They hope to **meet with all the others who attended the training in July** to see what they have done and encourage them to plant Life Groups if they haven't already done so. We have sent them copies of Rooted in Jesus and Plant and will keep in touch with them. **Our hope is to see multiplication begin.**
- **Nairobi, Central Kenya:** Beatrice has planted a **Life Group in a prison with 8 prisoners.** She wants to **equip members to lead Life Groups in their own communities when they leave prison.** She also has plans to launch a group with vulnerable women in slums close to her church, one with her church small group and one with a group of volunteers who are serving with children living on the streets. She has requested promotional materials to help raise funds for materials for the groups.
- We need to run an **EQUIP camp in Kenya or Tanzania** for Swahili speaking teams. This should be mid 2020.



Tanzania

- Frenk is **continuing a regular pattern of training in areas around Mbeya.** We are encouraging him to raise up others to share the work he does. This will increase capacity and resilience.
- Frenk has been poorly a few times recently – **please pray for good health for him.**
- Communications have been difficult recently as Lambert has been unable to help us die to work commitments. We are doing the best we can in written form!



DIGNITY UPDATE: Central Administration

CORE

Overview

It has been a busy season in our UK office as we have worked to finish 2019 well and looked forward to 2020.

Core: Sharing our Knowledge

- We have made good progress on **publication and translation** since our last report.
- **Foundations 3** is now completed. The weekly activities in **Foundations 4** are being updated to walk people through the process of planting a new Life Group. By the time the finish Foundations 4, they should be ready to launch a new group! The **Bemba translation of Foundations 2** is being typeset, with thanks to Alison! **Lunda and Lozi translations of Foundations 1** are underway.
- Since our last report **Plant** has been completed in Tonga and Lozi. The Chewa version is being typeset, with thanks to Fariba!
- The **Life Group Leaflet** has been produced in Tonga.
- The **Love Your Children** team are working on final updates!
- 5 issues of **Awaken** have been published. Further issues are being prepared at the moment.
- We are carrying out a **review of our digital structure** and with a view to making improvements to support of future goals. Huge thanks to Phil who is leading on this process.
- Reeves Creative have provided a quote to help us **publish our materials digitally**. We need to finalise our priorities and requirements.

Core: General

People

- As part of our review of roles and responsibilities we have been reviewing the functions carried out by this team and exploring how we can achieve more!
- We have advertised 3 **volunteer opportunities** (Typesetting & Formatting of translations, Graphic Design and Events Organisation). 2 volunteers are now helping with typesetting and formatting.
- We continue to provide **support for overseas teams** with regular contact between Kenyan, Tanzanian and Zambia team members.

Visits & Events

- Jon recently spoke at The Link with ECF and will be speaking at MEC soon. He is also invited to speak at Ivy Academy.
- March 7th is our annual **Vision Day** where we will review progress against our 10 year vision as written in 2019.
- Friday 20th March is our next **Open Office**.
- A **prayer meeting** will be held in mid-May.

Fundraising

- **Big Walk, Little Walks** did not achieve the success we hoped for as only a handful of children took part. Those who took part have really enjoyed it and done a great job of fundraising. We will explore partnering with schools to rerun this later in the year.
- Fundraising events for this year include **Quiz & Fizz** in April, a **Summer Cycle Challenge** in June and **Birthday Celebration** in October.
- **Looking into 2020**, we need to see a marked increase in our income. We will be writing a fundraising strategy to help with this.

Finances

- Since our last report we have received gifts from 1 **trust fund** towards the cost of supporting Impact Teams.
- Since our last report there have been no changes to **regular gifts**.

The Numbers

Measurable	Number to date, 2019	Number at end of 2018	Comments
Movement in regular monthly giving	+£10	+£217.50	Refer to finance report for further information
Total number of regular givers	57	56	Includes churches and individuals
Trust fund applications made	-	13	
Prayer meetings held	-	-	
Events & church visits happened	2	5	
Bibles recycled this year	-	117 received 190 sent	Total Bibles recycled to date = 1,033 (of which 93 are awaiting shipping)
Volunteer hours (UK)	12	25	