

February 2025

1. **Congo - from Herb**: The Democratic Republic of the Congo and the mission co-workers are unfortunately experiencing a “perfect storm” of events. The Eastern part of the country has been overrun by a militia group supported by Rwanda that is now occupying Goma, largest city in the east (2MM people). DRC minerals and long time ethnic factions are the driving forces in this situation. The international community is not responded to urgent pleas for help. The Congo team has requested funds from the Emerging Needs Fund to help displaced women and children. In addition, the DRC receives a significant amount of aid from USAID; the continuance of this aid is up in the air due to US government review. Finally, PCUSA , due to declining membership in its churches and a resulting decline in donations, is going through a massive reorganization. World mission is being particularly targeted. Its staff is being reduced from 79 to 44. The Boyds are awaiting word on their future in the DRC.

2. **Children of Faith - from Ginny**: Construction is continuing on the new Kitchen/dining Hall funded by donation's at last year's 20th Anniversary Celebration. The foundation is complete and now the structure will really begin to take shape. Updates and photos can be found on the news tab of the COF website. As always January and February are busy times for visitors to the Home. A team visited from a Chicago area church and LOPC's own Dara Youngdale recently returned to the home and spent her visit continuing the sewing lessons that LOPC's team began last year. She also enjoyed reading and playing board games with the children. A doctor from the Bay area is visiting now to help with children's medical records and further relations with local hospital and clinic. A small team from New Life Church in Alamo will be traveling to the Home later in February.

3. **Kapnek - from Phil**: LOPC became aware of the Kapnek Trust (KT) in the 1990's when KT was working to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS during the pandemic in 1990's. You may remember in 2004 it was estimated that 50% of Zimbabwe's citizens were HIV+ . At the peak of the pandemic, a pregnant woman had a 17 % chance of infecting her child. With Kapnek's help the infection rate lowered to less than 1 percent.

More recently LOPC's financial support to Kapnek targeted their Early Children Development (ECD) programs which provided a fortified porridge at pennies a day for 17,000 children, and most recently over-the-counter medicines for childhood medical issues.

90% of Kapnek's work is AIDS related, continuously working to reduce the AIDS infection rate by identifying and treating those infected. In 2024 KT was funded to test 116,000 people expecting to identify 3,700 cases of AIDs who could then receive treatment. Kapnek's expertise was demonstrated by testing over 130,00 people, identifying 4,300 people who then were treated with KT supplying the transportation to get them to treatment.

Additionally, there appears to be a correlation between AIDS and cervical cancer. Kapnek was approved to perform tests and of 24,000 women tested 1,000 women entered treatment. There is also a correlation to TB and KT tested over 190,000 people, identifying 3,500 for treatment.

Kapnek Trust's funds come from private donations, USA organizations, the UN, EU, and 50% comes from USAID. The major organizations reimburse Kapnek (and other programs) after the funds are spent. Simply put, Kapnek performs the work and submits a monthly bill to the funder to be reimbursed for the work done. This is the contractual agreement between the organization (USAID, EU, etc) and program administrators such as Kapnek.

The US freeze on all USAID funds has stopped funding to all recipients, including Kapnek. This means if the work is done and a bill is submitted for the work, there are no funds coming from USAID. Non governmental programs rarely have a financial surplus so freezing USAID support jeopardizes all work at Kapnek.

Additionally, Zimbabwe has no unemployment insurance. The government policy had been that when a person is laid off the employer must pay one year's salary to the employee.

Unsurprisingly, Kapnek (and probably others) do not have the financial surplus to do that. The situation leaves Kapnek and its employees in very uncertain territory. Do they work?

Where do the funds come from to pay for the completed work? Should an employee look for other work? What if the USAID funds are released?

To make matters worse, the US embassies have been put in charge of administering the former grants, and given 90 days to review them. Many USAID employees have been told their jobs have been eliminated, meaning that there are a new people trying to learn their jobs, learn about the programs, learn about the program administrators and their activities. As Dan Robbins has indicated to me, it is a dark time.