



ORPHANAGE AT FIZI DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has been ravaged by a brutal civil war since the mid 1990's. Especially badly affected has been the Eastern Congo, bordering Rwanda and Burundi. In the wake of the violence and disorder, the people live in terrible poverty. Children have especially suffered and there are many orphans; either orphaned because their parents were murdered, or because of the spread of disease and lack of effective health care. One such area is Fizi, which has no drinking water or electricity supply, despite being the administrative centre for Fizi Territory. Women typically have to walk for hours each day over rough terrain to collect water for their families. The area also has a significant number of orphans. Fizi is located on high ground in the mountains above lake Tanganika (see map).



The needs of Fizi first came to our attention through the work of our local partner ALEG (Association Libre Evangelique de Grâce). I visited Fizi for the first time in 2012 and saw the terrible conditions. After this plans were made for building an orphanage. ALEG was granted a plot of land by the local Fizi Territory Authority for church and social assistance projects; construction started in early 2013 funded by donations from the UK. The remote location provided many challenges, but the orphanage was opened on 16 August 2014 by the Chief of Social Affairs from the provincial government in Bukavu in the presence of the local Chiefs, Territory government, church ministers, police and soldiers. This is the first orphanage in Fizi Territory to be registered with the government.

The new orphanage consists of a main building, where 33 children and staff sleep. There is also a second building with a dining/assembly hall (that doubles as a church building on Sundays) and a kitchen. Lighting is provided from a solar panel. There is also a small toilet block (latrines). The land is already being used to plant crops so as to help provide food and give a means of teaching the orphans some agricultural skills. The water supply is through rainwater capture from the roof into tanks, but in the 3 months dry season water is being pumped from a pit/well. I visited Fizi again in September 2014 and September 2016.

The on-going needs of the orphanage are a great challenge, namely the provision of food, clothes and wages for the staff, who are all drawn from the local church. A school was also started next to the orphanage on 9 September 2014 for the orphans and local children, who otherwise would receive no education; for two years, there was only a make-shift school building, but construction of a permanent building was possible at the of 2016. This building was completed in February 2017 and then concreting of the floors completed in May 2017. There is a pressing need for regular funds for the support for the orphanage, the school (given the extreme poverty of the parents who can only contribute a very small amount), medicines for the orphan children; one outstanding need that is unfunded is for a fence around the site.

Any donation towards the orphanage work at Fizi would be greatly appreciated. Please send to "Free Grace Evangelistic Association" at the address below. (For further details – see website www.freegrace-ea.org)



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