

# VineTrust

Connecting People to Change Lives



## CONNECTIONS

Issue 42 - Summer 2023



Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

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# Welcome to Connections 42!



Just a few weeks ago the Head of the World Health Organisation Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced the official end of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

It was a significant moment in global health and a sense that collectively the world was finally moving on from COVID-19 despite it continuing to affect communities (but in a much more manageable form).

Moving on from the pandemic has very much been at the heart of Vine Trust's planning and activities as we relaunch our volunteering programmes whilst also maintaining and strengthening our partnership projects in Peru and Tanzania.

This edition will give an update on our medical programmes and information on the new primary school at Kazunzu 'Village of Hope' Tanzania, which has already begun welcoming some children ahead of the school's full completion and registration by September when up to 320 children will be enrolled for the 2024 term.

"Education, Education, Education" was a bit of a political slogan here in the UK a number of years ago, but in reality it has never changed as one of the most pressing needs for children both at home and abroad in countries like Tanzania where resources are often stretched with a young and growing population.

This edition might in some ways read like "Health, Health, Health" as we hear first-hand updates from our partners in Peru and Tanzania.

In March, we were delighted to welcome our key partners to the UK for our first ever Stakeholders Conference aboard our barge in Edinburgh, where we enjoyed an exceptional time of sharing, creativity, relationship-building and sharing of ideas between our colleagues in Tanzania and Peru over a five-day period.

Despite funding challenges in Peru due to local political issues in the Loreto Region where the medical team operates, we foresee a busy 2023 and 2024 schedule for both medical programmes and welcome the growing number of medical volunteers now signing up for trips.

Our school expeditions are now booking for 2024 with some already enquiring for 2025.

If you would like to find out more about our school and medical trips, please do call us or send an email. Full details are on our website.

We are also progressing a major expansion of the Jubilee Hope Project's HIV work, details of which we will be sharing in the autumn.

Finally, we are launching an unusual appeal to help us here in the UK with funding for some new communications equipment which is a key part of sharing our message and keeping in touch with our supporters and volunteers. Please help if you can.

I hope you enjoy the read and thanks again for your support and interest in our work.

With every best wish for the coming summer!

Rev. Willie McPherson

*Chief Executive*

# Kazunzu ‘Village of Hope’: Looking to the Future

There are a number of exciting developments to look forward to at Kazunzu in the next year!

We’re hopeful that we’ll finally see the return of our *volunteer trips out to Kazunzu* by October or November this year. This would be a great help for our in-country partners, as well as being an incredible, engaging experience for the volunteers involved.

Plans are also being drawn up for stakeholders to embark on another *Vision Trip* to Tanzania (where they’ll visit Kazunzu) later on this year and see the developments being made.



*Clockwise from top: the eight-classroom set of buildings that will make up the new school, a community gathering at the Boma, stakeholders being welcomed to Kazunzu on their Vision Trip last year.*



Perhaps the most exciting development at Kazunzu this year has been that of the new school, an ***eight-classroom set of buildings*** that is in the final stages of outfitting, funded by a very generous donation from a Scottish family.

This school will be able to host up to 320 primary school pupils, and Kazunzu children will attend while others from nearby villages can apply to enrol (turn to the next pages to see an in-depth update on the construction progress by Site Engineer Leonard Chegene and Programme Director Rev. Samuel Limbe).

As you can see from the photo above, the school has already begun to welcome pupils ahead of the upcoming registration process in September later this year.

In accordance with the common practice in the Tanzanian education system, teachers will follow the English Medium mode of instruction, whereby classes are taught in English even though it is not the children's first language.

This method of teaching helps students to pick up a useful second language effectively and efficiently.

Africa Inland Church Tanzania (AICT) will run the new school, and has plenty of experience in this regard: the organisation also runs several other similar educational institutions across the country.

Project workers have already constructed a set of four buildings that include the base for a Kindergarten, staff housing, and a home for the new school's head teacher.

We look forward to sharing more updates with you over the course of the year on our Facebook and Instagram pages and our main website.

# Kazunzu: Primary School Update

***Kazunzu Site Engineer Leonard Chegene gives us an in-depth update on the exciting progress of the Primary School***

*Currently, we are experiencing the village's growth and, with the completion of the school, we will soon experience its impact through the many children that will be attending.*

*The need for a Primary School in the village was not only necessitated by the number of children we have in Kazunzu but also the many children in the whole community of the nearby Lukumbi village.*

*At the moment, our children take their lessons at Lukumbi Primary School, and over 1000 children from Lukumbi go to this one school.*

*Every one class at Lukumbi holds over 120 pupils, which makes it a very difficult environment for any child to learn.*

*The Primary School completion is expected to make a **huge difference** to this. Some children are already enrolled and the school will be able to hold and register up to 320 pupils for the 2024 term.*

*The project has been carried out in three phases as follows:*

## ***PHASE ONE***

*This phase included site clearance, structural setting out for eight classrooms and four offices, foundation excavation, foundation constructions, and over site concrete casting.*





## ***PHASE TWO***

*The second phase includes the wall setting out and building for all classroom and office structures, ring beam casting, roofing and plastering.*

Programme Director Rev. Samuel Limbe noted the difficulties of transporting materials during Tanzania's rainy season between March and May, but is looking forward to the coming months with excitement;

*We are **expecting the dry season to start in the beginning of June and run through to September** and that will give us smooth progress as delivery of materials will not be a challenge any more.*

As Leonard Chegene explains, the school is now in the final stages of its development.

## ***PHASE THREE***

*At this phase, the final part of finishing the work is colour painting for the classrooms and offices, toilet construction, and furnishing in all classrooms and offices. We expect to have a fully operational school by September 2023, when the enrollment of new pupils for 2024 will officially begin!*



# Stakeholders Conference

For several days in March earlier this year, we welcomed our key partners and programme leaders from Peru, Tanzania, and the UK on board our barge in Leith for our first-ever Stakeholders Conference.

This was the first time that the leadership and medical directors from both the Jubilee Hope and Amazon Hope Medical Programmes were able to meet in-person and share their experiences, updating everyone on their work and inspiring conversations about how best to effect wider social change in their countries, including sustainable carbon offsetting project ideas.

As is so often the case with these types of events, perhaps the most rewarding moments occurred in the tea and coffee breaks and those periods between presentations when ideas were exchanged and future friendships forged.

Some highlights of the conference included:

- In-depth updates on the work of the **Amazon Hope** and **Jubilee Hope Medical Programmes** by Elena Pila Laviste, Dr Ronald Ramirez, Román Rodriguez, and Dr Uzia Mohamed Uzia respectively.
- A fascinating and insightful talk on corporate citizenship by Simon Shayo, the **Vice President of Sustainability** for our key partners **AngloGold Ashanti Geita Gold Mine Ltd.**
- A talk on the progress of the **Kazunzu ‘Village of Hope’** near Mwanza, Tanzania from Rev. Samuel Limbe.
- A dinner at Holyrood Palace hosted by **HRH The Princess Royal** for our key stakeholders.





By the end of their visit, everyone involved in the conference had experienced the power of in-person connections and deepening friendships with other stakeholders and partners from around the world.

We hope to use this conference's success as a springboard to further *long-term progress as we work alongside our in-country partners.*

## Medical Conference

On Saturday 11th March, a day after our Stakeholders Conference, we held our fifth Medical Conference.

It was great to welcome a number of our medical students and volunteers aboard the barge and see the engagement between these guests and the leaders of the medical programmes in both Peru and Tanzania.

As with the Stakeholders Conference, this day reflected Vine Trust's wider vision of connecting people to change lives across the world.

Special thanks to Mairi Crosby for the photo below!



## *A New Electronic Medical Records System in Peru: Enhancing Patient Care on the Amazon*

At the recent Stakeholders Conference, there was a very encouraging update from the Amazon Hope Medical Programme (PMEAP) team on the new Electronic Medical Record system (EMR) which has now been installed aboard the MV Forth Hope in Peru.

This EMR system is the result of exciting partnerships with both the Texan non-profit corporation the **Institute for Collaboration in Health** and the **Peruvian software company Doctoc**.

For many years, the PMEAP team has faced the challenge of providing high-quality medical care whilst having to rely on paper copies of medical records which each patient would keep and bring back every time they visited the ship. The high levels of humidity in the Amazon, along with a lack of suitable storage space at many of the patients' homes, regularly resulted in these paper copies being lost or damaged over time.

It was clear, therefore, that an electronic system was the way forward, but, as is so often the case in these kinds of scenarios, actually finding an efficient and cost-effective solution proved incredibly difficult.



Over the past few years, PMEAP has worked closely with national and international partners to find the solution which would best meet the needs of the team on the ship as well as match the programme's commitments to supporting the Peruvian national health system's recording of patients and consultations.

After many different avenues were investigated and found to be unsuitable, the Doctoc system proved to be the answer to the challenge: an easy-to-use format, which can be adapted to the needs of the programme, designed and supported by local, Peruvian experts. The system also functions off-line, which is critical due to the lack of a reliable and economical internet option for those medics on board the ship when they're out visiting the remote riverine communities.

A new alliance with the **Universidad Científica del Sur (UCSUR)** will also enable the researchers to use the EMR system to collect and analyse key anonymised patient data, coming up with results that can inform the adaptation and implementation of activities and services which will bring wider benefits to the area.

Initial reports from the medical team aboard the MV Forth Hope have been very positive about how easy it is to use and the benefits that it is bringing to their work.

Over the rest of this year, the system will continue to be adapted and refined, and we look forward to sharing more updates with you about how this new technology is enhancing the level of care and treatment that the programme can give to thousands of patients in communities across the Amazon region of Peru.



# Focus on Mental Health: The Amazon Hope Medical Programme

Vine Trust is passionate about the **impact of volunteering**: it is at the core of our strategy to support our partnership programmes in Peru and Tanzania.

Over the last seven years alone, health professionals from 15 different countries have travelled to work alongside, learn from and share with the medical teams in both countries as volunteers on these programmes.

We've also been very excited to see a recent growth of **in-country volunteers**, Peruvian and Tanzanian professionals sacrificing their own time and resources to join the ships on their expeditions to remote communities.

These opportunities have been transformational experiences for the national volunteers, allowing them to develop their skills and raise their awareness of needs that exist in their own countries.

In fact, the project's recent groundbreaking mental health service, which ran during the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic, can be traced back to two young Peruvian psychologists, Paula Aljovín and Luna Dannon, who became aware of the mental health needs in vulnerable communities along the Amazon during a volunteer expedition in early 2020.

Román Rodríguez, Project Coordinator for the Amazon Hope Medical Programme tells us more:

*“The Amazon Hope Medical Programme of Peru (PMEAP) has provided health services in various Peruvian Amazon basins since 2002, but, until 2020, there was no mental health component to this programme.*

*That was concerning for the PMEAP team because mental and physical health are both inseparable parts of the human being. The team members knew that there were socio-emotional difficulties in the communities that were likely to exacerbate pre-existing mental illnesses.*

*In March 2020, Paula and Luna decided to join PMEAP as volunteers on a medical expedition up the Ucayali river. At this time, mental health services were non-existent in these communities and there was no information about the psychological situation of the people who lived there.*

*As a result of their visit and what they witnessed, Paula, Luna and PMEAP started a pioneering, in-depth, qualitative study based on interviews to explore these peoples' social and emotional situation.*

*This work began almost at the same time that the COVID-19 pandemic reached Peru. It was challenging but possible thanks to the will of these two young professionals and the support of the PMEAP team.*

*They travelled to many communities by the Ucayali basin and conducted interviews with adults, youth, the elderly, and community authorities.*

*The results revealed symptoms compatible with anxiety, depression, stress, and lack of emotional control, while many interviewees suffered from gender-based violence, child abuse, alcoholism, teenager pregnancy, and held poor expectations about the future.*

*Social difficulties such as extreme poverty, misogyny, lack of basic services, environmental pollution, and natural disasters worsened the situation.*

*However, researchers also found some strengths and development opportunities in these communities, which show us that people in vulnerable situations are not only victims but can also be agents of their own development.*

*As a result of this work, a new mental health project was developed by Luna and Paula in 2021 which would conduct more research in order to better understand the socio-emotional situation of the communities. It would also provide consultations and workshops to give support and help locals to find alternatives to their present emotional situation and to prevent future psychological difficulties. Furthermore, it was recognised that community empowerment was vital through this project, making the people in the communities protagonists for their own development and for the promotion of the sustainability of the programme.*

*In 2021, PMEAP joined the ‘Alliance for the Amazon against COVID-19,’ a project funded by USAID and promoted by Peruvian NGO CEDRO to put this new mental health project into action. That’s how this programme began: sensitivity, empathy, research, theoretical support, planning, partnership, hope, and the will to improve the lives of those in most need.”*

If you would like to find out more about the mental health component of the Amazon Hope Medical Programme or ways you can engage with its work as a volunteer, please **check out the Vine Trust website and social media for more details**, or contact the office to speak to a member of the team.



# Jubilee Hope Programme Targets Expansion of Services

It's been another busy year for the Jubilee Hope Medical Programme, and we spoke to Head of Medical Services Dr Uzia Mohamed Uzia to get an update on the programme over the past few months.

*“Since October 2022, the MV Jubilee Hope has given over 20,000 consultations in and among the 13 islands of the Muleba district in Kagera region, providing free basic medical health services and care.*

*As well as providing outpatient clinics for general medicines, the ship has also continued to offer dental services, eye clinics, HIV testing and counselling as well as specialised care for expectant mothers and young children.*

*A lot has been achieved working alongside volunteers, and we wish that more would come and share their experience so that we get to learn from one another.*

*We have also managed to reform and regroup the women's HIV post-test counselling groups that were impacted by COVID restrictions.*



*Above: Dr Uzia*

*Currently, we have three HIV groups for women who have tested positive, with a total of around 120 women whom we support through engaging them in income-generating activities.*

*We also provide these women with medical support through counselling, testing and treatment.”*

The important work doesn't stop there for the MV Jubilee Hope medical team, as Dr Uzia explains;

*“The team visits orphanages on the mainland in between boat trips to offer free medical care as well as support where possible and where it's needed.”*

As well as doing vital work on the ship during expeditions, the Jubilee Hope management team has also been working hard on strengthening links and communication with the regional health authorities in the different populated island regions, something that is key to the programme's development and sustainability.

Recent discussions have proved very encouraging, with regional authorities impressed by the quality and quantity of services provided by the programme. Excitingly, talks are progressing on how the Jubilee Hope's work can be expanded to include other communities on the Lake Victoria islands.

One particular area of interest is in expanding HIV services to these communities, which have infection rates up to four times higher than the Tanzanian average.

The national HIV strategy recognises the importance of mobile clinics as a key factor to success when it comes to addressing the needs of these remote communities.

As such, the Jubilee Hope Medical Programme is well-placed to support further expansion of this work in collaboration with governmental and corporate partners, building upon its existing services and strong community relationships.

We look forward to future updates on the great work done by all those involved in the programme!

*People line up for medical support on Goziba*



# Technology Appeal

**TARGET: £10,000**

“Communication, Communication, Communication” is an everyday recurring theme for Vine Trust as we seek to strengthen our connectivity with volunteers, partners, and the wider community of supporters within the organisation.

Group Zoom meetings, induction courses, information and training events increasingly are becoming the everyday reality of our operations and the expectations from our various teams.

We are keen to upgrade our somewhat creaking technology within the barge whilst also ensuring our colleagues overseas have good connectivity with us in coordinating the programmes.

Our summer appeal this year is to help support the costs for upgrading our communications hardware here in the UK for the next five years.

Not perhaps as exciting as funding 10,000 pairs of glasses for people in need of spectacles or building some additional homes for orphan children, but a key part of all our work as we connect globally with our programmes and increasingly work alongside universities in the UK, US, Peru and Tanzania in collaborative partnerships.

Your support will enable us to prioritise this key area of activity whilst maintaining our wider support for our projects in Tanzania and Peru.

With thanks for any help you may be able to give or raise through a charitable event, Kilt Walk or any other local initiatives.

Please email [admin@vinetrust.org](mailto:admin@vinetrust.org) if you want to find out more.





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## Thank you!

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**Patron: HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL**

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