

Kenya - Slums of Nairobi

Amazing people are doing an amazing work in the appalling slums of Nairobi, Kenya. Daniel Ogutu and his wife Magdalene are leaders of an outreach to bring the gospel, food, and education to vulnerable children and orphans in the Mathare and Kariabangi slums of Nairobi, Kenya.

A Valiant Couple is Helping the Poor and Vulnerable Children and Orphans in the Disease Infested Slums of Nairobi
In the early 1900s an American missionary ventured into the region of Kisumu, Kenya near Lake Victoria to share the gospel of Christ with the Luo tribe. Among many others, a seven-year-old boy was captured by the gospel story and then disciplined by that missionary. He grew up and later pastored his small village church and raised a large family, all of whom were devoted to Christ. One of his sons was Daniel Ogutu.

After a successful career as an engineer, Daniel could no longer deny the calling that God had for his life. In 1994 he and his wife Magdalene gave up all that they had to care for the abandoned children in the Mathare slums. Since then they have planted churches and established schools in the slums of Mathare and Kariabangi. About 1,400 children are fed each day at school (for many this is the only food they receive all day). Thousands of children and their parents have heard the gospel message and benefited from the work of this dedicated couple.

The Slums in the Mathare Valley and Kariabangi

Located only about 3 miles from Nairobi city center (the capital of Kenya) is the "Mathare Slum". Kariabangi, a neighboring slum with only slightly better conditions is nearby. Mathare is the oldest slum in Nairobi. More than 500,000 people are crammed into this shanty village, which is just a little over a mile long and 300 yards wide. Disease is rampant. Up to half the residents of the Mathare slum have HIV. The Nairobi River that flows through the center of this quarry is an open sewer. Yet this is where Daniel and Magdalene Ogutu work and call home.

Daniel and Magdalene oversee an extremely complex operation that seeks to see children rescued from appalling poverty and abuse and given a way out of the slums. As they search for ways to meet the needs of the children and their families, they also have to deal with the restraints and requirements of the government and local councils, tribal tensions, the organizational challenges of working with large numbers of staff and volunteers, as well as attempt to keep up with a church planting work that is spreading to other parts of Kenya.

The Mathare Community Outreach (MCO)

Leadership Training
The main components of the Mathare Community Outreach which Daniel and Magdalene head up are: a leadership and mentoring program (LAMP); African girl Empowerment Program (AGEP); Education sponsorship; a feeding program; and orphan support.

The LAMP program has evolved in the work they are doing in the schools. Behavior, in such chaotic conditions as the slums, is always a huge challenge. This program focuses on developing good behavior among the students by creating activities geared toward imparting leadership skills and knowledge that will enable them to overcome life challenges. Some of their activities include sports evangelism and a discipleship.

The AGEP program seeks to offer girls a forum in which they can share experiences, ideas, and develop confidence and interpersonal relationship skills.

Their Education Sponsorship Program provides sponsorship for needy children to go to primary and secondary schools, as well as college. This includes sponsoring graduates from school into further education, like teaching and medical training. In 2007 about 35 students qualified to go to secondary school, but due to lack of funds, only 26 were provided scholarships to do so.

Meals Meals are provided to the 1,400 children of three primary schools in the area. Each child receives two meals a day: breakfast and lunch. Often this is the only food the children get. In addition the families of these children are provided with some support when resources are available.

How you can help:

To provide basic support for a child in primary school is only \$15 per month, while in secondary schools, the amount is \$30 per month.

MCO has also started and developed a home for orphaned children. There are currently 80 orphans in the home with house parents to look after them. Funds are needed to care for, educate, feed, and clothe these orphans as well as to provide any medical requirements.