

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

9–15 May 2010

Rosalind McLaughlin, a Christian Aid Week representative, travelled to Kenya with a group of other organisers and collectors. She saw the work of Christian Aid partner MNU in Kiambiu slum, and discovered what life is like in Matopeni, where it has yet to start work. This is her story...



'The first things we saw when we arrived in Matopeni were the results of the "flying toilets". There's not a single toilet here, so people go, put it in a bag, and throw it over the wall. And there is no official tap or clean running water. People have managed to reach the water pipes below the ground – but the water is really filthy and carries typhoid.

'A lady called Catherine Kithuku (pictured below) showed us around. It was incredible. We were led along a walkway that runs alongside the houses. It was constructed of planks that were half-broken, and directly underneath it ran the community's drainage system. Catherine said when it rains her family home floods with sewage right up to the level of the beds, soaking the mattresses.

'WHEN IT RAINS HER FAMILY HOME FLOODS WITH SEWAGE'

'The dignity of the people here and the sense of community are very striking. It's about we, not me. Catherine has already formed a group that has organised rubbish collections and educated people about health and other issues. Catherine said she dreams of an environment fit for humans to live in. She said she believes in change.



Catherine Kithuku shows the broken walkway over her community's drainage

If MNU works in Matopeni, I believe she will see it.

'By contrast, the people in Kiambiu are living something like a normal life. With the help of MNU, they have built five toilet and shower blocks and they've employed people from the local community to clean and maintain them. They've also got clean drinking water now.

'But I've also seen that if we're willing to do something, to make an effort, to put other people first, we can make others' lives a lot better. We don't even need a huge amount of money. Relatively small amounts bring massive, massive changes to many, many people.'

'SMALL AMOUNTS BRING MASSIVE CHANGES TO MANY, MANY PEOPLE.'

£16 could buy the materials needed to build five metres of new drainage in Kenya, to prevent sewage flooding into streets and houses, protecting families from disease.

To find out more about how you can be part of these amazing changes, ask your Christian Aid Week representative or go to www.caweek.org

Together, we can bring an end to the scandal of poverty.

POVERTY – LET'S END IT

Rosalind McLaughlin photo: Christian Aid/Antoinette Powell

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Catherine Nyaata and her daughter Blessing collecting clean water from the sanitation block