

# Hands on Rotary - to reduce child mortality



'This Rotary sign stands for high standards and selfless service. I have placed it here because, I believe that you offer to your patients, care that meets these high principles', with these words, Immediate Past District Governor, John Philip handed over to the medical team in a remote part of Tanzania, a modern operating theater, together with £250,000 worth of hospital equipment.

25,000 children under five die each day due to preventable causes. Poor medical care, maternity facilities, malaria and such simple diseases are the common causes.

The vast majority of child mortality occurs in sub-Saharan countries such as Tanzania. Ukerewe is the largest island in Lake Victoria - three hour ferry journey from Mwanza, the second largest city in Tanzania.

The district covers 12 islands has a population of 350,000 and is served by one hospital and a network

## This is what we saw when we arrived



**OPERATING TABLE, ANAESTHETIC MACHINE, THEATRE ROOM, STERILISING ROOM**

## This is how it was when we left



In eight days, we transformed the operating theatre and installed new equipments, making it safe for patients.

This project was led by District 1040, and supported by the Rotary Foundation, Districts 1250, 1290, Rotary clubs of Bookham and Horsley, Saltash, Mwanza (Tanzania), Helsingborg, Sofiero (Sweden), Inner Wheel and many private individuals.

The team of 24 volunteers who went to Mwanza were from Yorkshire, Cheshire and Sweden. There were 14 Rotarians, 3 Inner Wheel members and 7 non-Rotarians.



**THE TEAM**

**FOR SPEAKERS ABOUT THE PROJECT CONTACT JOHN PHILIP (PTO)**

# UKEREWE: AN ISLAND OF 350,000 PEOPLE NEAR MWANZA (TANZANIA) ON THE SHORES OF LAKE VICTORIA

The inspiration for this largest ever international project by District 1040 was D K Lee's call to 2008-9 DG's '25 thousand children die each day because of preventable



**THE CONTAINER ARRIVING IN UKEREWE AFTER A COMPLEX JOURNEY FROM THE UK, VIA DAR ES SALAAM TO MWANZA AND THEN ON A FERRY TO NANSIO!!**

diseases. All the world's children are our children. Let us try to do something to save them.'

In January this year, retired surgeon John and his wife Chris went to Ukerewe and were heart broken by the poor facilities

of the local hospital which served a population of 350,000. The hospital operating theatre and adjacent labour ward were poorly equipped and in a dire state of disrepair, that John was shocked.

He learned that there were more than a 10,000 births each year there, but one in 16 children born in the hospital died, mostly due to preventable causes. On return John launched an appeal which resulted in a 40

foot container with hospital equipments being shipped to Ukerewe and a team of 24 volunteers arriving there to undertake the necessary infrastructure work to install new equipments.

Malaria is the biggest killer of children on the islands. As part of this project, a malaria control programme was also launched with volunteers going from village to village distributing nets working alongside volunteers from REMIT (Rotarians Eliminating Malaria in Tanzania) and local staff. Community members (approximately 20,000) have received new knowledge on Malaria. It is expected that they will share the knowledge with, their families and communities. There is little doubt that these people will be more capable of making informed decisions in life, leading them to a healthier and safe life. REMIT will continue malaria control work on the island.

The team also visited a number of secondary and primary schools and is already considering a follow up visit and further intervention to reduce child mortality by improving water and sanitation, mainly to schools, continued financial support for the work of REMIT by improvement to the health care facilities.

*"On behalf of the District Council, I extend to you all a very warm welcome. I recognise the importance of all that you do our people. I offer you my thanks and say to you WE LOVE YOU ALL - KARIBUNI SANA - FEEL AT HOME." Queen Mwanshinga Mlozi, District Commissioner, Ukerewe*



**For speakers about the project, opportunity to volunteer or to become involved in related future projects please contact John Philip 01484 421032 [johnphilip@btconnect.com](mailto:johnphilip@btconnect.com)  
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