10 Years on: where are we now at Mater Comprehensive Care Clinic Kenya Nairobi

In October 2006 Sisters of Mercy had a dream and from that dream a seed was born which over the last ten years has grown into a big tree. The tree is the Mater Comprehensive Care Unit Nairobi Kenya for the treatment and care of HIV infected clients.

With Catherine it began with two. At the Mater it began with 80 clients who transferred from St Mary’s Mission Hospital Langata Nairobi. 10 clients who were enrolled on the 3rd of October 2006 are still with us a tribute to the great care they have received over the past 10 years.

The Comprehensive Package of Care for the HIV Client is Clinic and Community Based. The community aspect of the tree has many branches e.g. priority home visits, community testing for HIV, psychological support groups and Socio Economic Empowerment through IGAs (Income Generating Activities). Opportunities for the setting up of small businesses are available. Empowerment and training in everyday practical and survival skills are provided thus improving the client’s life situation for the better.
The care is delivered through a multidisciplinary team of Project Manager, Clinician, Nurses, Nutritionist, Social workers, Pharmacists, Counselors, Customer Care, Finance and other Support. The seed planted ten years ago has now blossomed over the years to 3,135 clients and is firmly rooted. As I write our numbers active on care are 3,135.

Since the beginning of January 2016 we have added 367 new clients’ to the program. The women in our program number 2, 120 double the number of male clients at 1,015. Pediatrics are (aged below 15 years) 156, Adolescent/youth 162, HEI babies (HIV exposed infants) 222.

We take special pride in the fact that infants born to our HIV positive pregnant mothers (are followed up to 2 years of age then discharged). In 2015 all infants were born free of the virus thanks to the care, monitoring and evaluation they received throughout their 9 month pregnancy through our ANC/MCCC(Anti-Natal Care/Mater Comprehensive Care Clinic) program. Presently we have 27 pregnant mothers under our care waiting for delivery and 26 have already delivered safely.

90% of our clients are from the Mukuru Slums which is adjacent to the main Mater Hospital Nairobi. The Mukuru slums are among the largest slums in Nairobi, with a population of 600,000 people. Life is difficult for our clients living there. They lack the basic services like food, housing, sanitation, electricity, health care, education, security and justice.

There are many risks in the slums especially outbreak of fires which leaves our clients without anything other than the clothes they are in. The children go to school in the morning and when they return there is no home to go to. People have no option but to live in the slums, because, they do not have the means, to live, elsewhere.

The greatest achievement in the clinic over the past ten years is the quality of care given to the clients. This was recognized in 2015 when we received an award from CHAK (Christian Health Association of Kenya) our main donor for having the best Adult/HIV Care and Treatment, Nursing Care, Adolescent, Youth and psychosocial Support Services year 2011-2015.
In September 2016 we were recognized as the best facility for innovative services provided in the country to HIV infected children and adolescents. This recognition was from National Aids and STI Control Programme (NASCOP) Nairobi Kenya. Both awards are a tribute to the Sisters of Mercy, staff and clients who have overseen the provision of HIV Care and treatment services at the Mater Comprehensive Care Unit Nairobi over the past 10 years.

Our care is holistic grounded in the mercy values Christ- Centered, Compassion, Integrity, Respect and Excellence. As a team we take one value per day and live that value in all its aspects avoiding behavior contrary to the value. We pride ourselves in making a difference in the lives of our clients. Catherine wherever she went made a difference and we who have inherited her legacy try to do the same in our facility. We do this by ensuring that once a client is diagnosed he/she begins treatment successfully. Is empowered and supported to remain on care for life, has 100% adherence to drugs ( treatment for HIV is lifelong) and promote behavior change that contributes to our ultimate vision of an AIDS –free generation supporting by the United Nations Campaign “getting to zero” zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero Aids related deaths.

Nothing remains static. This year we are developing another branch of the tree. A new bud has developed Trocaire one of our donors has integrated Gender Based Violence with HIV Comprehensive Care into their project. At the moment we are just dealing with Gender Based Violence Awareness raising and referral but are working towards care and treatment for the victims of GBV into the future.

Much had been achieved but the lived experience of the development of this project and the realization of our commitment to the care, support and treatment of people living with HIV in the Mukuru Slums would not have been possible without our many donors over the ten years. Christian Health Association
of Kenya, Trocaire Ireland, Misean Cara, Terre des homes, Hilton Foundation for Sisters, Sisters of Mercy, Mater Hospital Nairobi and our many friends of the project.

Our sincere gratitude and appreciation goes to each of you who by your prayers care and support actively participated in the development of this Mercy Project in Kenya for the past ten years from October 2006—October 2016......

Asante Sana. Thank you very much.

Sr. Brigid Marnane Project Manager.