

## Prayer Letter

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### March 2009

Hello folks,

Well, it's the month of March and I was picturing how the countryside and gardens would be back in Britain. I could see the sunny daffodils and cheery tulips waving from the verges and remembering bunches of spring flowers for Mother's Day and then I heard it has been snowing again, so the flowers won't be getting much of a chance. It's still very hot and humid in Luanda but we have had rainstorms recently that have helped lay the dust and cool things for an hour or so. The rainstorms caused huge traffic problems but also the chance to see more of the character of the Angolan people. What do you do if you are a man and want to cross the road but it is a sea of mud and you do not want to get your best shoes and trousers all muddy? You politely ask the strong woman standing next to you, sporting a pair of wellie boots, if she will give you a piggy back to the other side. I couldn't quite believe my eyes and wished I had my camera, but I gave the lady a round of applause as she deposited her passenger safely and mud free on the other side, amidst laughter and comments from other onlookers. In the middle of the filth, chaos and tough living conditions, the sense of humour and kindness to others still shines through. Not so amusing are the outbreaks of disease and threat of cholera as the rain runs through the mountains of rubbish and toilet waste, contaminating drinking supplies and making the mud all the more dangerous.

Not amusing either was the trip I had to make into town on Monday. It took two hours to get there, ten minutes to run the errand and another hour to get back home. How far was the trip? Twenty-six kilometres! We travelled at a speed of about nine km an hour. I



am so grateful to have a driver, but the heat is a killer when you are stuck in traffic. Thankfully we can often avoid the city centre by travelling around the city to get to PEPEs.

The photo on the left is Kianguibeni with the model he made of his ideas of what a PEPE should look like. Well, we may have to wait a bit longer before we have somewhere that looks this good, but PEPE is up and running again this year.

Things were tough in January. There were problems with the car, the driver ill, people unavailable, not enough money for the snacks, books still to be printed and I was feeling completely overwhelmed with all that needed doing, I confess that is a fairly regular feeling out here, and frustrated at not having transport to do it. I had a chat with my friend Diana and she prayed that everything would be ready and in place at the right time. I also realised that I had to pace myself and just do what I could and trust God – it's his work. Friends brought the necessary car part from Namibia and I was on the road again. Another friend introduced me to a printer who had the books ready to a high standard and cheaper than last year within two weeks. Those of you who have prayed about this before will know how much of a miracle this is. TICA group donated a printing machine with extra inks and paper and a huge box of school supplies to the programme and just last week we received a donation of \$5,000 from Grupo Amizade to help

with the snacks. Praise God for his amazing provision and thank you for your prayers too.

The PEPEs in Luanda and Uige opened the second week in February and soon after were on holiday again for Carnival. The regional Pastor tells me that children have started at PEPE in two churches in Cabinda and the teachers in Lubango have managed to get a place to run PEPE and hope to start classes there in two weeks time. They had two classes last year but are hoping to have four classes this year; I'll let you know how this works out. Sadly the PEPE in Benguela will not open this year as there is no teacher available. The last teacher left to join the police force. Pray for Maria Teresa as she works to make PEPE more widely known and plans for a training course in Benguela so we don't have this situation again. Pray for health, strength and encouragement for the new teachers and those who have been working with PEPE for a few years now.

Over the next month or so I hope to visit Uige, Cabinda and Lubango (stopping in Lobito en route to meet with Maria Teresa) to see how PEPEs are going. After the last trip with all its car problems I am a bit wary, but the car has been serviced and I love getting out of Luanda so pray that all goes well. It's important to meet up with the pastors and teachers out in the provinces, so they continue to feel supported and part of PEPE and to plan for future training. To expand we need a firmer funding base and churches to become more involved and this is something we need to target this year.

Saying this, the Presbyterian church has read about PEPE and signed the agreement to have PEPE in their church. An Assemblies of God church is also keen and realise the responsibilities for the teacher and snack lie with them. We are investigating how we can train these members during this year so they can gain some experience in existing PEPEs and perhaps open later this year to try it out. We need more people to work in all the different areas of PEPE!

This last week two representatives from Unicef came to visit PEPE. It was really encouraging to share the programme with them, the opportunities and the challenges. They were able to give some advice and suggestions and will continue to stay in contact with regards to other children's programmes. They have also promised story books and games which will be a big bonus in our lessons. At the moment they do not give financial help, their help is technical support and some materials. Some ladies from the ex-pat community are getting

involved in helping PEPE too, so we are thanking God for all these contacts. We are also hoping to have some visitors in May to visit and work with PEPE.

Thank you to all of you who stand with us in prayer as we face the challenges of keeping the programme running here. It's so good to be able to share some of the answers to your prayers and how faithful God is. We continue to face many challenges and need you to continue to stand with us in prayer as we try to reach children and their families with the love of Jesus.

#### **Praise**

- ◆ Teachers and children in PEPE
- ◆ People and organisations that are helping
- ◆ God's provision

#### **Prayer**

- ◆ Trips and meetings in provinces
- ◆ Planning training-people, resources etc
- ◆ Visitors – visa and flights
- ◆ Documentation, transport and accommodation for new missionary
- ◆ More workers

*Lynne*