

## Prayer Letter

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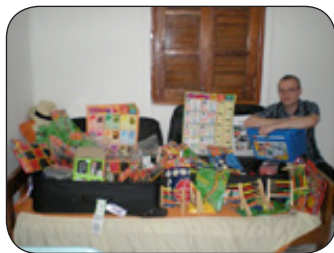
### July 2009

Hi folks,

Well, it's been quite a busy time over the last month or so and I'm in a brief pause before everything gets busy again. It's been a time full of blessings for me and for PEPE too.

We've been blessed with visitors bringing resources, organisations giving donations and individuals bringing gifts from home for PEPE.

Paul came from my Aberdeen Link Up Group with two suitcases full of educational games. Thankfully he had no problems at the airport and most of the materials have been handed out to the different PEPEs. He spent time at each PEPE in Luanda and managed to communicate well with the teachers over lunch, despite not speaking much Portuguese. Smiling, a dictionary, photos and gestures went a long way. The teachers really enjoyed having a visitor too. We're very grateful to all who contributed for Paul to come.



Paul arrived on the same flight as Fiona, our new mission worker. She was thrown in at the deep end a bit as we all went on a trip to Uige with the church leaders, and what a trip that was. In Uige city we were able to visit one of the PEPEs and Paul taught them some games, but that afternoon it was off to visit villages in the countryside around Uige. I was interested in seeing what conditions and possibilities might be like for PEPE out in some of the villages and it would be an opportunity for Fiona and Paul to see some of life outside Luanda. We visited a church about an hour's drive from Uige and joined the people in a short service there. It was much cooler and I enjoyed the rain in Songo. We left about 4.00pm, after a meal, and headed to Kimbele. We arrived to singing and dancing about 9.00pm. The people had been waiting a few hours for us. There was no electricity in the village so we had a brief prayer in the church building in the light from a lamp and a couple of mobile phones before going outside for Pastor Nafilo to talk to the people by moonlight. They sometimes have generator power, but not that night. What a welcome we received and were showered with handshakes and kisses. I don't think they had received many missionaries in the town and I'm always overwhelmed by the kindness shown to us as visitors. I was almost overwhelmed by the size of the big hairy spider that appeared on the wall as I was



about to go to bed that night, but it was soon dealt with by a kind man with a big stick and a flip flop.

During the next day we had time to talk to the local folk and had a wander through the village. We had soon gathered a following of children, curious about the white visitors. They had obviously met some of the Chinese road builders because lots of them whispered "chinasas, chinasas" as we walked past. Seems this is their new word for "mondele" (white person) which is what children used to say four years ago when they saw me. It just shows the impact the influx of Chinese workers is having on the country.

That afternoon we left on what ended up being an epic adventure. We hoped to reach Beu and Sacandica and had been told that the road was passable and the rains had stopped but soon discovered we had been misinformed. There were two cars in the convoy, our Land Rover and a Land Cruiser with a winch on the front. A lot of the journey was spent digging into the road to make it passable and pulling each other out of the mud and across the bridge that had water running over the top of it. Eventually the road just petered out and Pastor Nafilo called a halt to the trip. We turned round to face the journey back as the rain started to fall again. We stopped briefly in a village to eat something at about 11.00pm. Some of the locals came out and said that not even once a week does a lorry try to travel on the road out; lorries are the only vehicles that can make it. The village was out of soap and salt because no one could make it through to sell these things. There was such a sense of isolation around the people and the place. Now it is really the dry season, the road should be passable in the next few weeks but it must be so hard for the folk living in these villages.

We drove through the night stopping for a two-hour sleep break and then to Uige and back to Luanda. I was exhausted and the poor drivers had been doing much harder work than me. It was quite an adventure – Paul and Fiona had never seen anything like it, and I don't want to repeat a journey like it in the near future. I think I've gotten soft with all the new roads that have been built to Uige and to Benguela and Lubango!

Another visitor, Janet, was waiting for us in Luanda. My kind neighbours had picked her up on Saturday morning and we got back on Sunday evening. Janet came to teach the PEPE folk how to make toys and games out of cardboard, newspaper, toilet roll tubes and glue made from flour. We had 20 folk learning in Luanda and 24 in Uige. It was a great course and amazing what we were able to produce in just a week at each place. I had e-mailed photos of the kind of thing we would be doing to Maria Antonia at Unicef and she contacted people from Minars, the government body responsible for pre-school. We had two folk from Minars at each training session, all very keen, and Unicef would like to reproduce the course for other groups that work with children. We are looking at the possibilities of those who learned this time, teaching others and are praying Janet would be able to come back next year to take us further in the training. This time we concentrated on games, maybe next time it will be stools and chairs. We are really grateful to Janet for coming out and her family who helped make it possible.



*Uige Group with their toys*

It was back on the Friday for a meeting with PEPE teachers on Saturday, farewell to Janet on Saturday night and then teaching children from the international church how to make some of the toys at their special children's day on Sunday. Praise God we all stayed healthy and free from tummy bugs while all the visitors were here. I was ready for a rest on the holiday Monday and was promptly hit by a bad cold which I have just got over. It has been all go!

During this time we were given donations of from the American Women's Association to buy tables and chairs and received bags and bags of second hand clothes from the ex-pat community spring clean which I have still to pick up. We were donated a second hand laptop which is now being used by Januario in Uige and various items of equipment and stationery for PEPE. Last week I picked up lots of beautiful sets of wooden blocks, animals, dolls and books in Portuguese, donated by Unicef and 400 mosquito nets with another 200 to follow. We have also received money gifts from individuals to help with snacks. We are praising God for the generosity being shown. Thanks for all your prayers – in God's time they are being answered and it has felt as if the floodgates have opened over the last few weeks.

Please keep us in your prayers as we pick up the donations

and distribute the materials among all our PEPEs. We need to organise teaching times with the parents and carers of the PEPE children, so they can learn why a mosquito net is important, how to put it up and how to use it. Although HIV gets a lot of publicity, malaria is still the number one killer of children in Africa and using a mosquito net can make a big difference to that. Pray that we will be able to put a proposal together with Unicef to replicate the toy training course with others.

We are so pleased that another PEPE opened in Lubango with 50 children. Please continue to pray for the mission educators, that they would be encouraged and stay firm in the work and for us to find some way to give them more financial help each month.

Pray for the co-ordinators and for there to be new candidates for training sessions. We have been having a few enquiries from different church groups about PEPE and have a list of about ten people interested in doing the course. They are spread across the city so we are hoping to run two courses in Luanda on this side of the city with me and one at Petrangol on the other side of the city with Manuel. Pray for the organisation of these and suitable dates.

Pray too about the financial situation, especially snack funding as we are already halfway through this year and as yet have nothing concrete on the snack front for next year.

The PEPE teachers have asked if we could have a retreat for a few days. The plan would be to go to Uige and have some spiritual teaching as well as work related seminars. This would be an encouragement for the teachers in Uige and a treat for the Luanda teachers as well as strengthening relationships, team spirit and I would hope help us all to keep our commitment strong. Pray that God would open doors for this to happen.

I am hoping Joan will be back with us on 20 June. Andrew North, our boss, will be visiting from 25-30 June and then I may be travelling to Lunda Norte for Executive Committee church meetings in July.

Please remember Fiona too as she settles in to life in Angola. It's such a beautiful country, with beautiful people, but with lots of challenges. Pray for Fiona's visas. Pray for the second car; it's still in Congo and we now need another document from the church which the church doesn't have. Pray for long-term accommodation for her, that all would work out for her to stay in the house where she is.

*Thanks for all your prayers and encouragements,  
Love Lynne*