

# Hello from CONGO!

Yes, we are here at last! After 28 months of prayers, 13 months of intense preparation and 3 flights, we are finally here! **We are finally here because of you!** We do not say this lightly: We would not have made it if it had not been for your support, encouragement and prayers.

**Thank you!' 'Way to go, TEAM!' High-fives all across the globe!**

Sorry that we have been so busy that we have not had the time to write until now. So welcome to our one-off bumper special!

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## LOCATION 1: Hong Kong – where wonders never cease

Back in the 90s, the Hong Kong Tourist Association had an advertising campaign: <Hong Kong – where wonders never cease>. We have found this to be true. An extraordinary lady bought air-tickets for Joyce to go to HK to raise support in January. We were amazed by the doors that were opened to us. In 2 weeks, Joyce had the honour of sharing our exciting project via 4 newspapers, 3 magazines, 1 TV show and over 30 meetings including the Royal Geographical Society and the biggest investment bank in the world! HK may be small geographically, but it has a big kind heart. We are so humbled that the people in HK, who are always so busy that they even have the stock market TV channel airing inside the lifts, would take the time to stop to listen to us, to encourage us, and to help us. We were so inspired by the way that they so readily gave. With the help of HK, **we reached our fundraising target for the first year of our project! THANK YOU and WELL DONE TEAM!**



Speaking engagement

*By nature, publicity and profile make us cringe. However, we are learning to get over ourselves in order to open the eye centre!*

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TV



Newspaper



Magazine

## LOCATION 2: UK - Pre-departure frenzy

We both gave up our jobs at the end of last year to concentrate on fundraising and preparation. Our fundraising activities ranged from being filmed by the BBC to school Christmas fair to our online alternative gift store ([www.newsightcongo.com/priceless](http://www.newsightcongo.com/priceless)). Our preparations were by far the most physically, mentally and emotionally demanding challenge we had ever gone through. **We are in essence setting up an eye surgical centre, a new home, a school, a nursery, a vegetable farm, a charity, a church; selling up to move countries and buying groceries and supplies for the next 3 years** – all at the same time! Some days, **every task feels like a MILITARY OPERATION.** For example:

**OPERATION SHOES:** We purchased some shoes online for our 3 children. The next day, the shoe company phoned us and asked if we had trouble deciding what size shoes to buy. We had to explain that we were buying shoes of different sizes for the next 3 years for 3 growing children!

**OPERATION MEDICAL SUPPLIES & SHIPPING:** We are purchasing and shipping supplies and equipment from 12 companies in 8 countries! We had to list every single item that we are packing in French. The tax exoneration process demands 19 pieces of documentation for each shipment. **Please pray for the process to be free from corruption and inefficiencies.** Otherwise, we may have to pay an additional USD17, 000 in taxes, and several hundred dollars for each day that the shipment is parked in the port if clearance by customs is delayed.



Donated eye equipment



Warehouse in our UK home



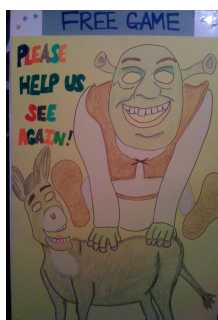
Operation Operating Microscope

**OPERATION OPERATING MICROSCOPE:** This essential piece of equipment has been generously donated by a hospital in Hong Kong. When new, it costs USD40, 000. It took a whole day for a whole troop of amazing volunteers to pack it. We thank God that after many days, we have finally found a way to ship such a bulky and heavy item from HK to the capital of Congo. However, it is very fragile. **Please pray as we look for a way to commission a plane to get it from the capital to our hospital and for it to arrive in working condition!**

**OPERATION AIRPORT CHECK- IN:** It is actually cheaper for us to pay for excess baggage than to ship. So it took us 90 minutes to check in our 16 pieces of luggage and our 5 pieces of hand luggage. One excess baggage that should cost 200 Euros was miraculously paid for before we even got to the check-in desk! The children coped amazingly well despite getting up at 3am and Cherissa falling ill en route.



With Penny Bustin and the BBC TV Crew



Fundraising Stall



The Last Sashimi



The Hardest Goodbye (with Joyce's parents)

We must take this opportunity to thank and honour so many unsung heroes who have sacrificed and donated their time and sweats to empower us to go! Thank you for helping us pack, bubble wrap, label, enter computer data, do our accounts, drive, babysit, feed us, give things to charity, move boxes, buy things, get things, write business plan when we have never used those two words together before! **Thank you for praying for us through the preparations, pressures and painful goodbyes. THANK YOU!**

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## LOCATION 3: Congo – let the adventure begin!

AND NOW WE ARE HERE! Two weeks in and we have already had quite the adventure! As expected, there are many challenges and wonderful blessings! What is unexpected is that the need is even more desperate than we had anticipated! For now, our biggest challenge is raising our game! The original plan was for us to borrow existing staff and facilities from the Pioneer Christian Hospital, with whom we are partnering. However, the hospital is very short of staff and so **we will now need to find our own staff to train**, which is a bit like going on a treasure hunt as they are so rare to find! Moreover, we are fast realising that we can no longer wait until next year (as we had previously planned) to build our own dedicated facilities. The reason in short is that the hospital is already at its maximum capacity with hardly any spare beds and space for our clinic and surgical supplies and equipment. **So we are now fast forwarding our plans and will somehow need to miraculously come up with an additional USD250, 000 in the next months** – just when we thought we can take a breather from fundraising! These days, we have been taking lots of DEEP BREATHS! Please stay put for our next newsletter for all the gossip! If you can't wait until then, please find us on facebook and twitter (details below), and our blog which we will update more often from now on - [www.newsightcongo.com/blog](http://www.newsightcongo.com/blog)

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We would like to end this letter with some thoughts inspired by a blog that we read recently:

**Living in Congo is like fasting – fasting from conveniences such as reliable electricity, water and internet; fasting from the comforts of fully stocked grocery stores, our family's favourite places and qualified teachers for our children; fasting from the joy of being with family and loved ones; fasting from the security of a salary and a pension. Sometimes, people think that what we are doing is brave. We don't feel brave at all. Better words in describing how we feel are reliant and confident – helplessly reliant and quietly confident in the overwhelming grace and incredible provision of God.**

Watch this space! =) Can't wait to write you next time what amazing things God does next!

We miss you and wish we could meet!

**THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

**Lots of love,**

Joyce, Henri, Cherissa, Ezra & Karis

**Our new correspondence!**



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