

Imperial Health Sciences 'adopts' Kenyan children's home

Imperial Health Sciences recently 'adopted' Saidia Furaha, a non-governmental organisation that runs the small children's home situated in Kitengela, just on the outskirts of Nairobi, as well as a number of community outreach programmes.



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Kenya's AIDS statistics include 150,000 children under the age of 11 who are living with the disease, while 1.1 million Kenyan children under the age of 17 are AIDS orphans. "It is a desperate situation," comments Dr Iain Barton, MD of Imperial Health Sciences.

Barton explains that this is a long term project that extends beyond just funding and support for the home. "Our focus is on helping and empowering the young people in Kenya, and another element of our work with Saidia Furaha is an empowerment initiative through which we are offering training and work experience to high school graduates from the home."

Two youngsters also joined the Imperial Health Sciences' team in East Africa in March 2014 to become warehouse operators, reveals Barton.

A safe haven

Barton elaborates: "The home currently has 16 resident children aged between 5 and 17, and also provides for the needs of 67 children under eight who come in daily from the neighbouring village for elementary studies. It provides a safe haven for orphans, abandoned and abused children. It also accommodates teenage girls rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation, which though not as common, is still very much in existence in some of the larger Kenyan communities."

In addition to caring for children in need, Saidia Furaha children's home also operates community programmes, including monthly seminars on HIV and AIDS targeting the youth and young adults in the local community, he explains. The home also has a borehole and sells water, on a small scale, to the neighbouring community.

Saidia Furaha's training center provides training in vocational skills like dressmaking and needlework, as well as apprenticeships in metal work and welding. The home's nursery school was expanded recently, Barton says, so that neighbouring parents can drop off their children for elementary schooling and play, at subsidised costs, for those who are able to afford it.

