



# Newsletter



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## Lake Malawi Excursion

Tanzania is a country full of beauty and wonder; however, Tanzanian children are often unaware of the country that exists outside their communities.

In June every year at orphaned children's centre, "Renato Grande" in Ilembula annual excursions are organised in order to enrich the children. This year the chosen destination was "Ziwa Nyasa" or Lake Malawi. The children welcomed this decision with much enthusiasm both for the *simple* fact of taking a trip together and for having the chance to swim, an experience not so common in the life of a Tanzanian. On the day of departure, you could feel the excitement in the air. The children and mothers woke up early to prepare food and everything that would be useful on the way.

The arrival of the bus at dawn brought great joy and the journey by was a marvel for both the children and adults. The adults captivated by the beauty of the landscapes and by the many small realities that indicate a culture of which still there is so much to discover, and the children intrigued by everything that does not belong to their everyday life.

On arrival at the Lake, the children instantly ran towards the water and time flew by without them realizing it. Those who did not know how to swim overcame their fears, learned and together they had fun, diving, competing and swimming.

These have been three days of pure fun and a fantastic way to end the holidays and return to everyday life with serenity.



## Orthopaedic Support

In the orthopaedic workshop at Inuka, prostheses and orthoses are made to improve the lives of Inuka's patients and guarantee them greater autonomy.

Steven is a 12-year-old patient with congenital hydrocephalus as well as hemiplegia. Hydrocephalus, or fluid on the brain, causes amongst other symptoms, stiffness and spasms in the lower limbs. Hemiplegia is a condition caused by a brain injury that results in a varying degree of weakness, stiffness and lack of control in one side of the body.

Thanks to the support of the therapists and the work of Inuka's orthopaedic technicians, a brace (AFO - Ankle Foot Orthosis) was created to help him control his movements and maintain balance when walking. Physiotherapists are teaching Steven how to walk with the brace.



## Speech Therapy at Inuka

One of the other rehabilitation services that Inuka CBR offer is speech therapy. During the years, Inuka has provided training for two speech rehabilitation workers who offer high quality communicative rehabilitation.

Owing to different cultures and lifestyles, one of the main difficulties that therapists face is conveying the importance of communicative and linguistic rehabilitation. Frequently in Tanzania, the treatment of physical and motor disabilities is regarded as more important than linguistic. Most of the community are farmers, therefore in order to get help from their children; parents are more interested in the rehabilitation of motor skills.

Speech therapy is divided into two main disciplines: one is oral motor therapy, based on exercises for strengthening and coordinating facial muscles (especially mouth, cheeks and tongue); and the other is comprehension and production of speech.

Most of the children have symptoms that include severe spasticity, dysarthria and swallowing problems, and need to be taught how to use oral muscles in a correct and functional way as much as possible. For the others we try to stimulate and improve speech and cognitive abilities by using pictures of real objects, small toys (like fruits, vegetables or tools of daily life), books with sounds and books showing facial expressions.

Thanks to the support of some specialists who came to Inuka, we have now many stylized and simple pictures that are used especially with those children that will not ever achieve the skill of speaking. Using these visual prompts, the hope is that they will be able to communicate by using signs.

Since 2009, Inuka CBR has provided rehabilitation to children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, delayed milestone, autism, hearing and visual impairment amongst others.

The key idea of the community based rehabilitation (CBR) system is to train and teach the caregivers themselves how to do and continue the therapy exercises with the children at home: therefore, each speech therapy treatment includes both the primary caregiver and the child to empower families in dealing with disability.

- Alessandra Maresca, Speech therapist and volunteer



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