

# CHC flying high as it hits 10



Following a trip I took to Nairobi to visit an old friend," says Lufthansa Boeing MD-11 head of fleet and CHC founder Captain Folkko Doyen (pictured below).

"I had been sponsoring a separate organisation, and then I drove past Mothers' Mercy Home (MMH). It was in a bad state and I felt that there was the potential for me

to improve things," he adds.

Doyen initially highlighted the primary problem as one of limited medical care and poor living conditions. Mothers' Mercy Home was founded in 2001 by the women of Mount Kenya South Diocese of the Anglican Church of Kenya. They had taken it upon themselves to care for the orphaned children living in Nairobi's slums.

"The buildings, as they stood in 2003 when I first came across MMH, were dilapidated. But more than that was the issue of lacking medical support. It struck me that there may be German doctors willing to spare their time to come out to Kenya and help," Doyen continues.

Doyen and the team began paying, at their own expense, for doctors to travel out to MMH, until Doyen realised that the MD-11, which was flying daily into Nairobi, had space to accommodate a few extra bodies. Upon first request the board of Lufthansa Cargo were sceptical. Eventually, though, they acquiesced to Doyen's request, on the proviso that it was not publicised. Alongside the assistance from Lufthansa Cargo, CHC began a fundraising campaign, which has resulted in the construction of an onsite medical centre and new dormitories and washrooms for MMH's residents.

Ten years later and CHC has expanded its reach, is looking to new projects and MMH is seeing its first group graduating school at the

age of 18.

"Education is a major problem in Kenya. Legally, you are only required to attend primary school, but without a secondary and tertiary education there are little job prospects," says new CHC board member and doctor, Thomas Berger.

While the problems of poverty are hard hit in the cities, Kenya's rural regions have difficulties of their own. In the North Eastern province 80 per cent of girls are not in school.

"This is down to tribal law," continues Berger. "Tribal elders make the decision as to who attends school, even at the legally binding primary level," adds Berger.

In an attempt to tackle the schooling issue, CHC has partnered up again with the Anglican Church of Kenya for a project in Marsabit in the country's Eastern province.

"Our initial interest in Marsabit was the provision of food and aid following a drought in 2011, which hit the communities of Karare and Kombol. This saw us cooperate with the Anglican Church of Kenya's bishop for Marsabit, Robert Martin. From here we developed a relationship and turned our attention to providing funding for a new nursery school, which the Church would run," says Doyen.

That first school was completed in October 2012, and work is now under way on a second project.

"Within walking distance from the nursery is a



DOYEN

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secondary school, but there is no primary school, so we agreed to finance the building of one. Prior to this children were having to walk four or five miles to the nearest school, and that is if the tribal elders allowed them to go," says chairman of the board, Gerhard Meyke.

"When we started I doubt any of us saw this level of success," says Doyen.

Much of this success has been down to the backing of CHC's partner, Lufthansa Cargo. The carrier not only provides flights for CHC staff, but also logistical advice and transport assistance.

"Without Lufthansa Cargo's support, CHC would not be a viable option, and we would not be treating the 2,000 patients that come through the medical centre each month," says Berger.

"Lufthansa Cargo has been invaluable to CHC's success, and has helped keep costs down. Most charities have an operating budget of around 10 per cent or more, at CHC we have basic admin costs that total just 0.8 per cent of the funds generated," says Meyke.

As to what the organisation will do next, there are a number of options on the table waiting to be discussed at the next board meeting. With 55 per cent of Kenya's city dwellers living in slums, Doyen is pushing one project enthusiastically.

"For me, I would like to see some sort of retirement home opened. Kenya is not a country for the young or for the old, and yet plenty of them exist and are left to fend for themselves. For me it is the logical choice," concludes Doyen.

Over the last decade Kenya's importance in the airfreight community has grown inexorably. Figures published in 2010 valued the country's export market at 27.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), which has reported growth in excess of five per cent annually for the last three years. Now the government is set to launch the biggest bond sale in the country's history as it seeks to borrow approximately \$1.5 billion.

For all its apparent economic success, little of this has been seen by the bulk of the populace. According to Unicef statistics, the country is ranked 152 of 177 on the Human Development Index with over 50 per cent of the population living below the poverty line, surviving on \$1 a day.

Many of those suffering from poverty are orphans. At the last count 2.4 million children, five per cent of the population, had been orphaned; 1.2 million the result of the HIV epidemic that has reduced the country's life expectancy from 63 years in 1990 to 44 years now.

As a result of the problems facing the country, aid agencies have flowed in en masse. Lufthansa Cargo-supported Cargo Human Care (CHC) is just one of the many charities tackling the plight of Kenya's orphans.

The concept for CHC took root in 2003, fol-