

Micah Challenge Update

November 2008 (Issue 11)

Dear Friends,

This Update gives an overview of Micah Challenge activities around **Stand up Take action and Micah Sunday 08**. It also summarises briefly news from various **national Micah Challenge campaigns**, highlights **GCAP campaigning news** and gives Micah Challenge International **Secretariat news**.

Micah Challenge mobilisation for Stand up and Micah Sunday 2008

Botswana: Churches across the country mobilized a total of 12,255 people to participate in Stand up.

Burkina Faso: Activities were focused on three regions: the capital Ouagadougou, Dori (in the north of the country) and Gaoua (in the South). Each region held a conference on the role of the church in the achievement of the MDGs on 17 October. In Dori, Micah Challenge members collected used clothes and redistributed them to local community members in need. In addition, 50 couples were trained on financial management in order to promote family sustainability. These couples were also informed on the progress of the MDGs in Burkina. Churches all over the country were invited to participate in Micah Sunday through broadcasts on the Christian radio station.

Burundi: Micah Challenge Burundi advertised Micah Sunday/ Stand up amongst organisations and radio to mobilize and sensitize people to Stand up against poverty. Seeds for beans, onions, tomatoes and cabbages were distributed to 8,000 vulnerable people affected by the drought in Gitega and Karuzi Provinces. Church leaders of 19 parishes and 74 local churches in Karuzi Province have participated in Stand up and Micah Sunday.

DR Congo: Micah Challenge DR Congo mobilized:

- 22,200 church members,
- 5000 students and
- 37 bishops.

Germany: Daniel Rempe, coordinator for Micah Challenge Germany writes: *'In Germany 45 churches took part in the activities around Micah Sunday and Stand up. As far as we know 924 people stood up.*

You can find pictures [here](#) & videos [here](#). I'm impressed with the numbers that MC Africa has reached!'

Hong Kong: Churches in Hong Kong were invited to pray and fast for the achievements of the MDGs during the period of the UN High-level meetings end of September and Micah Sunday. [Resources](#) were made available in Chinese.

Kenya: Over 130 senior bishops and pastors signed a commitment to take action in their respective churches. Activities on the 17th included prayer rallies, food distribution, clothes collection and distribution, tree planting, a peaceful march through town. An impressive total of 170,520 people stood up in over 20 churches in addition to a mobilisation event at a school with an estimate of 40,000 students standing up.

Malawi: At the last count, 26 579 people participated in Micah Sunday/ Stand up activities.

Lloyd Mtalimanja, the coordinator of MC Malawi wrote: *'Briefly, let me say we had a wonderful day as we held our main Micah Sunday event at Nathenje, in Lilongwe district. The turn up was a bit lower than we had estimated. We could not hire as many tents and chairs as needed (we were holding the event in the open). Currently, the sun is beating mercilessly in Malawi as we are about to transition into the rainy season. As such, some people stood far off or chose not to attend the function because they could not see anywhere where they could sit under shade. These are lessons for the future!'*

Netherlands: Working together with the 'One campaign' (GCAP platform), MC Netherlands participated in Stand up actions and particularly mobilized churches through press releases to Christian media. The Dutch government subsidized their advertisements!

Many coalition partners published Micah Sunday material and MC Netherlands is now facing the challenge to find out how many churches have participated this year!

Nigeria: Safia Zakama from MC Nigeria writes: *'We organised a football match on the 17th of October between female staff from some of the faith-based organisations and members of a newly formed women's cooperative. These women physically crush stones into small pebbles as a source of income. The football match was great. The Deputy Governor ended up sending the Permanent Secretary Special Duties to represent her and it was all fun. The women's cooperative won by 2 goals to 1 and all the corporate gifts we mobilised were given to them. The media gave us full coverage both the Plateau State TV station and The National Television Network (I used to work for 2 media stations so mobilising their support was not so difficult!). We had a total of 372 people in attendance despite the short planning period and we are optimistic that we should be able to do better next year.'*

Peru: As part of Global Week of Action on Debt, Micah Challenge Peru joined the Jubilee Campaign in a conference to analyse and reflect on "The politics of debt in Peru and challenges for the future";

They also collaborated with the Women's Collective to raise awareness of women's rights around the World Day of Rural Women, Oct. 15. The aim was to highlight the contribution of rural women to development and raise awareness amongst the population and the state authorities hoping that this would result in concrete programs that will benefit rural women.

Micah Challenge Peru also participated in a "Forum: Fight against Poverty and the Global Economic Crisis" to reflect on the world economic crisis and how it affects global poverty.

Over 800 churches are expected to have celebrated Micah Sunday which was advertised in radio and TV.

Portugal: MC Portugal combined Stand up/ Micah Sunday activities with their 'Hot potato campaign' which was advertised by TV, Radio and cinemas. The main daily newspaper published an open letter against poverty. The campaign is on-going.

Altogether 5,033 participated in Stand up which is a massive increase compared to the 1741 last year.

Rwanda: MC Rwanda mobilized 40 key church leaders for a training workshop prior to Stand up/ Micah Sunday in addition to a radio advert which had coverage in the whole country. The campaign estimates that a large number of people participated in Stand up and Micah Sunday.

Sierra Leone: Micah Challenge joined the GCAP platform to organise rallies in the major towns of the country. So far, they have heard that 35,000 people participated in Micah Sunday/ Stand up activities.

South Africa: Micah Challenge in South Africa participated in the following events of the wider Civil Society which took place after various poverty hearings around the country.

After a march in Pretoria on the 17 October to the Union building, campaigners called on the South African government for the CSG (Child Support Grant) to be increased to age 18, an increase to the limit of free water to poor house holds, a zero-rate for VAT for essential food items, the ratification of the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and to play a driving role in building a global partnership for development, as part of the 8th Millennium Development Goal;

Micah Sunday was celebrated in churches around the country.

Zambia: Micah Challenge mobilized 28,750 and is still waiting for numbers from some provinces. Here is what Lawrence Temfwe writes as a brief summary of events: *'We learned that Father Zulu of the Anglican Church in Ndola gave a moving sermon on Micah 6:8. Father Mwewa of the 1,200 members Nkwazi Catholic Church had the small groups pray through the MDGs. Bishop Chirambo of Narrow Way Assemblies of God said at our inter-denominational prayer meeting "God has rebuked me. Today, I have for the first time looked at the environment in light of Genesis 1. We need to see Zambia from the perspective of the Garden of Eden." Rev. Chanda of Bread of Life led the church in the morning to pray over attaining the MDGs. Rev Chenge of United Church in Zambia, blessed our hearts with a wonderful word from Micah 6:8.'*

Zimbabwe: Pastor Netha writes: *'As you know Zimbabwe signed a power sharing agreement recently. Unfortunately, this hasn't translated into reality. We want to STAND UP and request churches to come together in five areas, Bulawayo, Harare, Gweru, Mutare and Masvingo. We want to speak out and pray that this deadlock can be unlocked and at the same time we will be putting pressure on the government that the issues of Zimbabwe will be solved.'*

240 'ordinary prophets' at Voices for Justice 2008 in Australia

Micah Challenge Australia's annual gathering, Voices for Justice, gathered 240 Christians aged 12-75 from every state and territory in the nation's capital during Anti-Poverty Week. Participants spent two days in practical training about poverty and advocacy, biblical teaching about God's justice, and worship and prayer for the world's poor and the nation's leaders. This led into two days of action at Parliament House. Here some of the results:

- Over 100 visits to politicians to discuss Australia's overseas aid (including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister);
- Cyclists who rode 1500km from Brisbane, with 4 politicians riding the last laps with them;
- 4550 handwritten Offering of Letters given to the Prime Minister;
- Launch of "We Can Meet the Challenge" paper;
- 60 artworks in the Create to Advocate Exhibition, opened by Environment Minister Peter Garrett;
- 50 politicians sign the House of Partnership Canvas;
- 11 politicians speak at Voices for Justice events;
- 28 politicians have so far spoken in support of the campaign in [Parliament](#);
- 1 roundtable discussion with AusAID;
- Several media articles and radio interviews.

For more information please click [here](#).

Micah Challenge Zambia leaders mobilise US Christians and meet Zambian ambassador to UN in New York

In a tour organised by the One campaign, Micah Challenge facilitator Lawrence Temfwe and Bishop Paul Mususu called Christians in the US to speak out on global poverty. For more information please click [here](#).

They were also able to meet the Zambian ambassador to the UN and engage with him on Zambia's progress towards achieving the MDGs. Please see the Zambian [website](#) for more information.

MC Portugal delivers 'Hot potato' to journalists

An 'organic press release' was sent to all main Portuguese journalists to introduce Portugal's anti-poverty campaign and its aims. The package was delivered with a hot potato and a pen drive containing a campaign video.

In partnership with other Civil Society organisations, Micah Challenge delivered an open letter to the Portuguese President, Prime Minister and various MPs. Before the parliament voted on the budget, the Civil Society delegation was able to meet all six political parties. Joao Pedro Martin's wrote that the parliamentarians '*were waiting for our suggestions regarding poverty issues*'.

In addition, A TV campaign was launched with the aim to inform and sensitize the Portuguese public about global poverty issues.

Churches were mobilized with the 8 Days to change the world campaign with the aim introduce the 8 MDGs and provide relevant bible study material. Over 5000 Portuguese Christians participated in Micah Sunday this year

You can watch various recent videos at youtube: [here](#) and [here](#).

For more information please see www.desafiomiqueias.com

Swiss campaigners celebrate government's increase of aid from 0.39% to 0.5%

Together with the Swiss anti-poverty movement, Micah Challenge Switzerland celebrates the success of their 0.7% campaign. Gerhard Baertschi & Til Gerber from MC Switzerland write:

'You may have read that Micah Challenge Switzerland was part of a campaign of Swiss NGOs collecting about 200,000 signatures to petition the parliament to increase ODA to 0.7 % of the GNP, but also that the bigger chamber has refused to do so.

Now we are happy that the smaller chamber has at least agreed to go from 0.39 % to 0.5 %. Of course, this needs to be accepted by the bigger chamber which is dealing with the issue again in November. So lets pray that they will approve of this decision and not compromise with the compromise;-)!

You see, this is how Swiss politics work, but at least we can see that the campaign has made a difference.'

More info is available at the Swiss [website](#) (in German).

MC Netherlands uses 'Amazing Grace' movie to sensitize Dutch Christians on poverty issues

Together with the Dutch One campaign, Micah Challenge Netherlands promotes the movie 'Amazing Grace' to raise awareness of issues around modern slavery, global

poverty and justice and to mobilize for participating in Micah Challenge.

For more information, please see <http://www.michacampagne.nl/> (in Dutch)

French Christians are 'Hungry for justice'

MC France mobilized Christians on Micah Sunday to send 544 signed paper plates 'Hungry for justice- 0.7%' (and some cakes!) to city mayors and Members of Parliament. The action aimed to re-enforce the French government's commitments to the MDGs made at the UN High-level meeting in September in New York.

More information at the French [website](#) (in French).

Challenge to President-elect Obama

Micah Challenge USA encourages churches to write to President-elect Obama to re-commit the USA's promise to achieve the MDGs in his foreign policy.

You can find more detailed information [here](#).

MC Australia releases Heart Life VOICE album

Heart Life VOICE includes new songs from Australian, UK and US artists.

Amanda Jackson, MC Australia coordinator writes: *'We believe that our worship involves action, and this album makes the link between hearts of faith, lives of integrity and voices that cry for justice. The album booklet has stories, Bible references and facts to encourage Christians to get involved in action for and with the poor.'*

Find out more and preview the songs at www.heartlifevoice.org and www.micahchallenge.org.au

GCAP's up-coming campaigning events and news

- **G20 Summit – 15 November**

An emergency summit of the G20 will be convened in Washington DC, USA to discuss the financial crisis. If your coalition is in one of these G20 countries you may use this event as an opportunity to reassert the importance of our 116.9 million Stand up mobilization. GCAP will aim to engage the media covering this event and also try to influence the leaders of the G20 countries prior to their departure for Washington.

For more info please see <http://www.whiteband.org/blog>

- **Financing for development, Doha, 29 November**

The Doha Financing for Development meeting will take place at the end of the month. Currently the registration process has closed and attendance is guaranteed for several GCAP representatives. The Doha demands from Civil Society Organisations will be linked to what happened in Accra, the High level Event on the MDGs in New York and the G20 in Washington and ask what needs to happen next.

More information is available [here](#).

- **GCAP international strategy for 09-11**

GCAP is in the process of finalizing its [international strategy for 09-11](#). This might be a useful document for all MC National campaigns who want to plan for the years ahead.

MC International secretariat changes

After over 4 years of dedicated service to Micah Challenge International Regine Nagel will be stepping down from her role as the National Campaigns Coordinator at the end of November.

Joel Edwards will officially begin in his role as MCI International Director at the beginning of January, and he will be joined at that time by Vikki McLachlan as our new Administration & Communications Coordinator.