

# About Shikokho

The Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church (CCPC) has been involved in its health care ministry in Shikokho since 1989. Shikokho is located in the rolling hills of the land of the Luhya people of Kakamega County, Kenya. Near Mount Elgon and the Ugandan border, Shikokho is found just north of Lake Victoria on the Yala River. Villagers are of the Idakho sub-tribe of the Baluhya group of Bantu-speaking people. With recently installed electricity but no running water, the CCPC / Shikokho Medical Clinic is an hour's walk from the nearest road into the interior.

**“For we are partners, working together for God.”**

**- First Corinthians 3:9 GNB**

Since 1989, CCPC has built the Shikokho Medical Clinic, Staff House, and the Maternity Wing initially run with solar power and later converted to electricity. CCPC members visited in 1995 to officially open the clinic with Kenya's Minister of Health, in 2004 to officially open the Maternity Wing with the local Member of Parliament and in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2013 to continue medical initiatives and women's business development. It is the first grass roots rural clinic built in Kenya in partnership with a U.S. church and a local women's group. The Kenyan government holds CCPC's medical effort there as a model for collaboration.

Along with the approximately 1,500 residents of Shikokho, the clinic and maternity facility reaches a walking population of about 30,000. At this level of rural poverty, health insurance is unknown and unaffordable. Small payments for service or gifts to the clinic are received if a family has some means to do so. Otherwise, the care of two nurses and lab technician are provided without charge. Child welfare classes are provided at the clinic as well as visits to the area schools for vaccinations and educational assistance. **The Shikokho Medical Clinic is a registered national vaccination center and HIV/AIDS counseling and testing center. A Family Planning / HIV Advisor provides services**

**at the clinic regularly.** All other activities of the clinic are provided by CCPC supported labor and managed by the Clinic Administrator and Shikokho Women's Group and management committee.

**Medical opportunities** include women and children's primary health care, birthing and management of infections, some minor surgery, and public health educational outreach. The clinic is well equipped, the nurses are experienced and there is backup for complex problems at regional facilities. CCPC also supports an orphan feeding and day care program adjacent to the clinic. All orphans and primary and secondary students are served by the clinic.

**Other opportunities** include listening, teaching, and advising at the primary and secondary schools, and assisting with 13 additional community development committees including adult education, small business, energy, reforestation, water, and agricultural development.

The village is overwhelmingly Christian--there are a few Muslims in neighboring villages, but not right at Shikokho. There are independent African/Pentecostal Christian congregations, Catholics, and Quakers, with Quakers and Catholics as the largest groups. The clinic is most closely affiliated with the Quaker Church, which is a stone's throw away from the clinic. There are also a number of smaller representations, Church of God and Baptist being the main small Christian groups. There are very few people who would claim solely African traditional religion, but many traditional beliefs and practices continue among people who also identify as Christian. There is little to no animosity between groups -- all the various religious groups get along well and do not compete with each other. In colonial times, the British divided mission work by geography with one Protestant group and one Catholic order per area. Shikokho received Quakers and the Mill Hill Mission Fathers.

**For more information:** visit the Shikokho display in CCPC's conference room and contact: Dr. Jim Shelhamer, Chair, Shikokho Task Force ([jshelhamer@cc.nih.gov](mailto:jshelhamer@cc.nih.gov)) or Gretchen Hobbs Donaldson, Founder & Chair Emeritus ([gretchenhobbsdonaldson@gmail.com](mailto:gretchenhobbsdonaldson@gmail.com))