

July 2012

Issue number 11



*Forward..... STOW!*

## Dear Members

Some of you will have been to our really fun fund-raising evening on 7th July so may find that some of the stories in this newsletter have a familiar ring!

**May monitoring trip** We had two meetings with AFRIWAG (see page 4). They are our partner organisation in Tanga who buy and distribute the school uniforms and books, pay the school fees, visit the children at home and at school.



*Shopping Tanga style*

We eventually managed to open a bank account for STOW in Tanga.

We went shopping and bought – just at this one shop – 45 school bags, 57 pairs of socks and 22 shoes.

We visited 21 schools: 10 secondary schools (out of 13 where we have children) and all 11 primary schools, plus two Technical Colleges.

We also visited 86 homes. Many are far away and we spent quite a lot of time going along bumpy roads and then on often small paths to get to the houses.

**School visit** When we went to Gombera Secondary School we talked with the Head Teacher about Mariamu, who has no family apart from her two older brothers who are also at secondary school. The three of them live from hand to mouth. We suggested that STOW supported her to go to boarding school, not too far from where she currently lives, where she will have daily food and pastoral care



*Talking with Head Teacher and Mariamu*

from the teachers there. The Head thought this was a good idea – and so did Mariamu!!

We later saw the Regional Education Director and got his permission to make this transfer.

**Home visit** This is Asha Amiri's home where she lives with her grandmother. She walks 5 miles to school every day, with her friends and says that she tries to get there every day, even when it is raining hard, as she likes school and wants to learn. We were very glad to be in a 4x4 vehicle as it was mainly a track rather than a road to reach her house!



*Asha Amiri's home*



*Asha Amiri and her grandmother*

**Thank you** None of the help we give is possible without the support you so generously give, year after year. As I always say to new members, I can't emphasize enough how important the commitment you make is to the success of STOW. It offers security of income and long-term support – something these vulnerable children don't usually experience.

Education provides a safety net in their lives, empowering them to become active members of their society rather than victims. Every visit, I see the evidence of this and the positive effects that education and self-esteem bring. I hope these newsletters convey something of this remarkable progress to all you kind people.

Best wishes for a bright (and drier) summer!

*Marie Adams – Chair and Founder of STOW*

## Partnership working

We had been given some hints by email from AFRIWAG that all was not going smoothly in Tanga with them after they lost a major funding stream. Many of the staff, including the Project Coordinator, had left the organisation.



*Meeting with AFRIWAG*

We were pleased to learn that, despite this, all the STOW-supported children's school and examination fees had been paid.

However our two meetings were rather challenging as we tried to find out why most of the children had not

had their school shoes, bags and socks bought for them at the beginning of the school year in February as usual.

We had discussions on how to avoid this happening again. Of course, we went shopping to make up the shortfall there and then.

*Marie*

### ***NOTICE of STOW Annual General Meeting***

**3 pm Sunday 19th August 2012**

**at**

**Dennys Farm, East Green, Kelsale,  
Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 2PH**

**The AGM this year will be followed by  
a film and treasure hunt for youngsters of all ages and a  
BBQ with bring and share salad or pudding  
(please let us know which you are bringing on  
01728 603348).**

**Donations welcome for this event.**

## Receipts and payments 1st June 2011 to 31st May 2012 (Draft year's accounts)

### RECEIPTS

Members' subscriptions	£2,157.00
Donations	£17,385.08
Child Sponsorship	£6,852.96
Grant money returned from Oct 2011 Monitoring trip	£500.00

### Fundraising Events

Carrington's Barn 2011	£1,587.60
Bryans Barn 2011	£738
Beetle Drive	£161.60
Saxmundham Primary	£626.61
Gift Aid	£4,319.12
Bank interest	£489.98

**Total receipts** **£34,817.95**

Excess of receipts over payments £2,436.84

Balance brought forward from 1 June 2011 £45,283.85

**Funds in hand at 31st May 2012** **£47,720.69**

### Account balances:

HSBC Community account	£13,409.06
HSBC Community savings account	£13.50
Scottish Widows savings account	£33,298.13
CRDB Bank Tanzania	£1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£47,720.69</b>

### PAYMENTS

Grants to AFRIWAG (2 <sup>nd</sup> 2011, 1st 2012)	£21,960.00
Grant to TUMAINI (1st 2012)	£2,000
Bank transfer charges	£120.00
Grant money taken to Tanzania on Oct 2011 & May 2012 trips	£7,000.00
Grant money paid into new CRDB bank account	-£1,000
2 return flights to Tanzania for May 2012 monitoring trip	£1,223.12
Carr.'s Barn 2011 expenses	£122.46
Temp Event Notice July 2012	£21
Public liability insurance	£371.00
Stationery	£46.63
Printing newsletters & leaflets	£390.25
Website	£126.65
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>£32,381.11</b>

Martin Stevens  
Hon Treasurer

2nd July 2012

## *Reflections and observations on monitoring trip May 2012*



This was my first visit to Tanzania and it really helped me put real children with real lives into the context of confirming for myself that STOW money is spent where it can make the biggest long-term difference.

The Tanzanian people are generally very warm, welcoming and friendly but sometimes seem so anxious not to offend by disagreeing that it can be difficult (and frustrating) to get to the bottom of often very concerning and sensitive situations.

Together with local staff, we were able to undertake a friendly but robust check of most of our supported children. We checked, for example, if school fees had been paid on time (they had), that children were working hard (they almost all were) and that they had been given new uniforms, shoes, and school bags (many hadn't). We were quickly able to put this right and ensure future arrangements would improve.

I saw first-hand that STOW money really is making a huge difference to some of the most vulnerable children living in some of the poorest communities in Tanga Region. It is difficult to benefit from school while hungry or sick and when you can't afford basic medication or even the bus fare to go to hospital for diagnosis.

Time after time, I saw how relatively small amounts of money enabled children to benefit fully from their education in the knowledge that STOW support is there for them for as long as they stay in education.

Further, it struck me how well-motivated and proud our STOW-sponsored children are to receive their education despite large class sizes, very basic buildings (by western standards) and often very limited teaching materials.

While some STOW-supported children go on to gain A-levels and a few go on to University, for many others, a good basic education is a real life-changing achievement and is the essential and sometimes only way they can move away from lifelong poverty.

Being able to leave school with a good standard of literacy, numeracy and English enables them to go on to either learn practical and employable skills at the technical schools or find regular paid work.

I saw many children who have grabbed with both hands, and with

enthusiasm and motivation, the opportunity that STOW offers them, whatever their level of ability and despite sometimes very sad heart-rending family stories.

STOW-supported children come from the poorest parts of one of the poorest regions of Tanzania. On top of that, most have lost parents and are being cared for by grandparents, older brothers and sisters or just neighbours. To say their circumstances are fragile and precarious is somewhat of an understatement.

For some of the most vulnerable older children, support from STOW enables them to attend boarding school where they are guaranteed an education along with regular food and other essentials.



*Home visit*

A highlight for me was to meet, both at home and at school, the delightful and confident Agnes, the young lady we sponsor. Agnes is looked after by her older sister who has set up a 'soda café' using a small business loan from STOW. What a wonderful difference we saw when compared to photographs we had seen of their home taken not so very long ago.

As well as visiting children at school and at home, we also decided, as part of our review of how to work better with partners in Tanzania, to open a local STOW bank account. Not the simple task we might have hoped for! It took 6 visits to the bank over 2 weeks with numerous highs and lows along the way – a sort of banking version of Snakes and Ladders.

On my return a friend asked me what the monitoring trip was like. I said I found the children were humbling, exhilarating, and enlightening and the adults welcoming and sometimes frustrating. But the bumpy roads really are a challenge to one's fillings and seat after a few hours in a 4 x 4!

And lastly (with my Treasurer's hat on) I can report that STOW's money is well spent and makes a huge life-changing difference to some of the most vulnerable children one could ever have the privilege to meet.

*Martin Stevens Hon Treasurer*

## Making Ends Meet

I continue to be amazed at how the children and families that we support are ever-resourceful in trying to make ends meet.



Something I had not come across before is children going to the municipal waste grounds, collecting as many plastics of all sorts, bringing them nearer home, sorting them and selling them on.

I spoke to the children - one of whom is sponsored by STOW - and asked how it works. They said a man in a lorry comes by every few months and picks up the plastics, which they have sorted and graded. The amount of



money they were paid seemed to me to be a pittance for the amount of effort they put into this industry. They, however, said it was fun and that the money helped to buy food for their families.

Edward Yacobo also proved to be resourceful in helping his grandmother. The day we visited his home, the heavens had opened up. He arrived not long after us, completely soaked but feeling very proud of himself.



Edward had been cutting down sticks with his 'panga'.

*Panga: a standard machete for the entire African continent. It is excellent for cutting thick brush and chopping down saplings and small trees. Makes a fearsome emergency weapon too!*

He told us that he was going to build a safe house for the chicken he had and planned to keep more so that he could sell some and help his grandmother with the bills. Pretty forward thinking for a 9-year old! I was seriously impressed!!

*Marie*

## FUNd(!) Raising for STOW

We've had two great events so far this year. **The Beetle Drive**, which we had in March, is now so popular with families that we have been asked to have one every year. The families who come really like having the opportunity to go out together, mix with other families in a friendly environment and everyone knows it's for a good cause. We raised over £160. Many thanks to Viv and Richard Wills Crisp and Lindy Potter for organising such a great evening and providing the hot dogs and home-made cakes which went down so well.



This year's **Summer Entertainment in the Barn** was in early July and everyone tells us that it gets better every year! We were so lucky to have a rich programme of entertainment. After Marie gave her update on the monitoring trip to Tanga, we were entertained by **The Tutti Swing Band** who played a fabulous selection of well-known pieces.

**The Tutti Bands** 'Tutti' is a musical term for 'everyone playing together'. Marie Young started them in 2005 in order to bring music to rural areas. Any monies raised at events is used to help poorer children have music lessons and instruments.



A delicious buffet supper was followed by **Neil Catchpole**, the 'Warbling Woodsman', who is an old favourite. He entertained us all with a great repertoire of unaccompanied songs and reminiscences of Suffolk life. He was then joined by **Charlie Haylock** who kept us all in stitches for the rest of the evening. The programme said that his hilarious one-man shows are legendary in the county and his books have all been best sellers. We found out for ourselves why this was so.

Thanks to all who made this a great evening, we raised £1,300 for our vulnerable children.

## How regular monitoring makes a difference

We sometimes get asked why we spend money going out to Tanga twice a year.

There is the principle that when generous people give their money to a charity, it is only right that they know **exactly** how it is spent. By visiting the schools and homes and talking to teachers and children, we have been able to ensure that our money is being used appropriately, in accordance with STOW's aims and objectives.

However, it is often the little extras that we find and put right when we go that make even more difference to individual children.

For example, Marie wrote at the beginning of this newsletter about moving Mariamu to boarding school.

We also found Seleli having a spot of difficulty this year. We went to his school to find that he was not there. This was a bit worrying as he had his mock O-level exams coming up. Also we know him to be a studious young man and this was unusual behaviour.



*Seleli at the opticians*

The STOW team immediately went round to his hostel and found that he had been to the hospital because of severe and frequent headaches. The hospital had given him a prescription for glasses but he couldn't afford them. So off we went to the opticians and got him fitted out with specs!

Marie got a text from him the next day: "No more headaches and I can see my text books now! Thank you!"

## Tumaini

We have now been working with another charity in Tanga for over a year and we have been referring to it as TUMAINI. 'Tumaini' is Kiswahili for 'hope'. The organisation's full title is 'Tumaini – Human Relief for Widows, Orphans and Vulnerable People'. It was founded in 2009 and its founder member is Scholastica Mjawa – whom Marie has worked with since going to Tanga with VSO in 1998.



*Twins reading to Scholastica*

Scholastica was previously a Field Officer with AFRIWAG and has always been diligent in helping STOW keep track of the children. She is well known to all the schools and is always greeted with smiles by the children.

We currently have 50 children supported by Tumaini, including 20 who we took on for just one year as they used to be supported by Oxfam and are in their last year of O or A levels. At the end of this school year, we will review our commitment to them.

We have another 30 children who will receive on-going support.

We were particularly impressed by the Head Teacher of Kasera – one of the schools supported by Tumaini – who came with us on some home visits.



*Kasera Head and pupils*

One of the Tumaini home visits was to Wazili and Fatuma's house, where there are 18 in the family – 16 of

whom are children. All are cared for by grandparents in quite a small house.

Because the Head was so worried that the children did not have enough to eat, she gave a parcel of



*Schola, Head and Grandmother*

her own land to Wazili and Fatuma's grandmother to grow vegetables and to sell on any surplus. The Head told us that this has been working well.

Above is the Head, Schola (left) and Grandmother (right) discussing a slight problem with pests and the need to buy more seeds. We gave grandmother some money to buy more seeds and some pesticides to help the situation.

It is likely that our relationship and work with Tumaini will be growing next year as they start to support the children currently with AFRIWAG.



*STOW is registered on the MyDonate website  
([www.btplc.com/mydonate](http://www.btplc.com/mydonate))*

A reminder that we have joined BT's online MyDonate service to help our fundraisers and to enable anyone who wants to use a debit or credit card to donate to us.

Every penny of the money donated (excluding credit/debit card charges) is paid into STOW's bank account. BT even collects Gift Aid on our behalf to maximise your fundraising.

**One issue** we have discovered is that one-off donations by people who have not registered with MyDonate are anonymous. We like to thank our donors so, if you use this service and want us to know who you are, please email us separately.

To register as a fundraiser or donor go to the MyDonate website ([www.btplc.com/mydonate](http://www.btplc.com/mydonate)) and click on the 'Log in / Register' button (found near the top right of the screen), choose the 'Personal' tab and follow the on-screen instructions. Once you have created your personal account, you will then be able to log in and start fundraising, or sponsor a fundraiser, or donate directly to STOW.

**Tip:** to find STOW easily on the site once you have logged in, enter "Supporting Tanzanian" in the 'Enter a charity name' box and leave the 'Also search descriptions' box ticked. If you just enter STOW, you will have to scroll through several other names before you find STOW, but don't worry we are definitely there!

