

Supporting Tanzanian
STOW
Orphans and Widows

STOW NEWS

February 2016

Issue number 18



Going the extra mile for STOW!

www.stowcharity.org
Charity registration no 1112424

Dear Members

A very Happy New Year to all you wonderful members. I hope that 2016 has lots of good things in store for you. Last year was a good 10th anniversary year for STOW and I am pleased to say that both monitoring visits went well. As a celebration of our 10th year, the Trustees decided that we would sponsor 5 more children at primary school. I will tell you about them later. As you know from previous newsletters, all the schools we visit ask if STOW can sponsor more vulnerable children and for the last 3 years I have had to say “no”. It felt right that we should be doing this at this time.

Last year was a bit of a roller-coaster year. You’ll hear from Martin, our Treasurer, how STOW first lost and then found some funding (see page 10). What a difference this will make. STOW is now able to continue to support 14 of our Form IV leavers to go on to vocational training. We know from past experience that on completion of these courses our students are almost guaranteed a job. Not only will these vulnerable youngsters gain employment, they will also help out with financing their extended families. Isn’t that just brilliant! Here are updates on just two of our former students to give you some idea of what can happen. STOW started supporting them in 2006.



Issa

Issa finished his course in December and now has a full-time job with a company as an electrician. He still rents the room we funded whilst he was training but is now able to pay the rent and buy his own food.

Magdalena finished her certificate in accountancy last year with very good results. Now she is an accounts clerk in a factory in Dar. She would have liked to have continued to do a Diploma but has to work to help her older sister support Salome, her younger sister (their parents

died many years ago). I am in discussion with our Tanzanian colleagues to see how we can help make Magdalena’s wish come true.



Magdalena

Changes in Tanzania

I was due to go out at the end of January for our usual monitoring trip and to help with the distribution of school materials and make as many home visits as possible. Unexpectedly, I heard from a friend in Tanzania that the \$200 temporary work permit I used to buy for each visit no longer existed. Following calls to the Tanzanian High Commission in London and a visit by Schola to the Tanga Immigration Office, I was advised to delay my visit for some months until the new procedures had been clarified. So we cancelled the trip.

Hopefully things will become clearer soon and the visits to Tanga will be able to be resumed. We may need to revise the tasks we undertake when visiting our partners in Tanzania in order to comply with the changing Tanzanian labour policies.

Fundraising

STOW has many kind and generous supporters. We sometimes put in articles about individuals who take up fundraising challenges but I wonder if Suffolk members are aware of the regular amounts raised at The Red Poll Tea Rooms on Westleton Road. So far they have raised over £300 in donations given for books. If you have books you don't want, we would be glad if you could take them to the Tea Rooms (and have a tasty coffee/tea as well!). Have a browse, you might well find something you'd like to read. Thank you Zoe, David, Martin and everyone there.

STOW is so lucky to have such fantastic supporters. I never cease to be amazed at the creative ways that people think of to raise funds for these vulnerable children.

More changes in Tanzania

We have 21 children starting their first year at secondary school. This is 6 more than we had anticipated as the new Government has said that all students with Grade D and above can go up. It used to be only those

with Grade C and above. This is great news for these 6 children.



I am particularly pleased that Saidi has been able to go on to secondary school. He is a bright boy – little for his age – who has a hard life at home. He helps his disabled father to grow vegetables and used to often be missing from school as he was carrying out chores for his father.

After much discussion with his teachers and his father, Saidi's attendance at school was carefully monitored and he became a regular attender in the last year or so. He had much to catch up on and did well to get Grade D. Well done Saidi!!

And more changes in Tanzania....

The extra cost of these 6 students to STOW will not be significant as the new Government has also decided that all children studying to Form IV (GCSE level) will not have to pay school fees. STOW of course will still need to buy uniforms, shoes, books etc. but we will be able to divert the money in the budget from school fees to other costs such as bus fares, bikes, mattresses, bednets, extra tuition, food etc.

Previously, when I visited in February I always asked the new secondary starters how they manage to get to school, how long it takes and if there are any other hardships. With so many of our sponsored children starting at secondary schools – which are always much further from the children’s homes than their primary schools – we would probably have bought some bikes during our visit this February. We will need to work around that and ensure that, if they need bikes to get to school in good time, they will be provided with them.

New children taken on

Before leaving for Tanga the Trustees agreed that STOW should support an additional 5 children in Primary School. It was a difficult decision, as always, which of the many children that are in need of help STOW should now support. With guidance from Schola and Esther and in discussion with the teachers, we selected the following 5 children.



Amina and her mama

Amina is 13 years old but is only in Form II. She was a late starter to school because of difficulties at home. It was a long walk for us from the road where we left the car. I tried to imagine what it was like for Amina who has to walk ALL the way. Amina told us it takes her 1 hr to walk to school on Monday mornings and back home Friday afternoons. The rest of the week she sleeps with a friend of her mum’s. She said she misses seeing her mum every day.

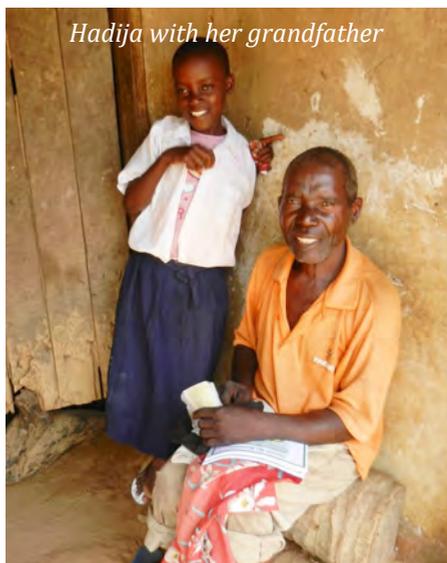
Upendo is 9 years old and lives with her mother, older brother (who STOW already sponsors) and little brother. They live in one room in a compound that belongs to someone else. There is no electricity and no running water in the compound but somehow they manage to keep their little room immaculate. We already knew that Upendo was keen on learning as last year I showed her a story book,



written in Kiswahili by a friend and ex-volunteer. You can see how engrossed she was! Of course I left the book with her! This is one of the families that we always take a food parcel to. There is rarely an adult present and Upendo will often cook the family a meal after school as Mum is out working .

Here is **Hadija**, aged 9 years, with her grandfather. She was crying at the beginning of our visit. When I asked what was troubling her, Hadija told me that she was afraid her mother would disappear again. Grandfather explained that Hadija's mother had been ill with malaria for a long time. This had affected her mental state and she disappeared for 6 years. Grandfather searched and searched for her in many villages and eventually found her and had brought her home only just recently.

We all tried to reassure her that her mother was home to stay. After we explained what STOW support meant, they both cheered up a lot as you can see.



Hadija with her grandfather



Mwanaisha

Mwanaisha is 10 years old and lives with her aunty who runs a café. Her aunt told me she was struggling to support her niece but felt it was important she attended school. Like other people who run small cafes like this, any unsold food at the end of the day is taken home for their supper.

Aunty was so pleased and relieved to hear that STOW would be funding all Mwanaisha’s school expenses, such as uniforms, books etc. She said it would make a huge difference to their lives.

Salimu, aged 8 years, lives with mum, who is a widow. She has 3 children and all 4 sleep in one room. She tries to make a small living by making snacks which she sells to pupils outside the primary school where Salimu goes. She told me that if she doesn’t sell them all she brings them home for the family to have as supper. She also told me that unfortunately she is not making much of a profit, so food is scarce.



Mwanaisha's aunty's cafe



Salimu outside his home with his mum, Amina, on the left

We talked to her about STOW’s loans to widows and she agreed to come to our next meeting (see next page).

Your continued support and involvement with STOW has enabled us to fund these 5 new children. Thank you all so very much. You can see for yourselves from the many stories I tell, what a real and positive difference you make to so many lives.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy 2016!

Marie

Chair & Founder of STOW

Our Loans for Small Businesses Continue

In October last year we were able to help 3 more people

Salimu's mum – **Amina** – came to our meeting of those who have already got loans and those who are looking for one. She talked to the group about her plan to buy fish in Tanga, cook it and then take it "up country" to sell, where she thought she might make a good profit. The group discussed her ideas and agreed that she should receive a loan.



Amina in her kitchen getting things prepared for her new business.

Helen, who is Upendo's and Silas's mother, told the group that she had a small business making doughnuts which she has been selling outside a large factory near her



home. She said she would like a loan so that she could buy the flour wholesale and make more profit. She would also like to buy milk in larger quantities as a cup of milk sells well to people passing by. I know the spot well and have seen for myself that it is a busy junction. The group applauded her and thought she would make good use of a loan.

The third person to receive a loan was **Lydia**. She looks after two girls, her daughter and her niece, both of whom we support. Lydia has started a café and the girls



Helping Lydia out in the cafe

help out after school which gives her time to shop and cook. She wanted a loan to be able to bulk buy and increase her profits. Although at the moment she is just getting by, she has managed to pay for a 3-day course learning to do batik. She said she will bring some samples to the group next time we all meet.

Marie

Helping out again

I was able to go back to Tanzania with Marie in 2015 which enabled me to see several students again and catch up with their lives.

I was delighted to see my sponsored student Nusura who was in her last year at secondary school, with fingers crossed tightly for good exam results. She told me she was considering a nursing course but I now

It also brought worries about El Nino, Tanzania being directly in it's course, and we know that some of the students' homes would not stand up to such bad weather.

I also met up with Boniface - one of the older students at Agriculture College in Dodoma. He told us that he needed a laptop for his studies and unfortunately Marie had just



learn that she has enrolled in a secretarial course at a government vocational training college in Tanga. I think this will stand her in good stead as she will have work placements arranged for her and will likely get a government job at the end of her studies. I will continue to sponsor her until that day.

We were further frustrated by the weather which produced some very unseasonal rain and made the roads very slippery and dangerous. This meant we were unable to do a few of the planned home and school visits.

given out all the donated laptops to other students. Thanks to Schola's contacts we were able to try out a very up-to-date laptop at a reasonable price. I bought this for Boniface and consider it a very good investment as he said he was "going to become a millionaire so that he could help children as STOW had helped him"!

Jane Mallinson

Dates for your Diary

Beetle Drive!

Saturday 9th April 2016 at 6 pm



Hotdogs, wine, beer & squash, followed by the
Beetle Drive with a break for ice cream, cake & coffee!

St Johns Church Hall, Saxmundham
(Parking available up the church drive or Waitrose)



Adults: £5, Children: £2
(minimum age 6 years)
Family ticket (2 adults, 2 children) £12

To book tickets phone 01728 663583 or pay on the door.

Midsummer at the Barn!

Saturday 18th June 2016 at 7.00 pm



Welcome drink, supper,
entertainment
auction, raffle
News of our work in Tanzania

Thurstons, Rendham, IP17 2AR

Tickets £15.00 per person
available from:

STOW, Acorn Cottage, Kelsale, Saxmundham, IP17 2QY
Tel: 01728 603348, email: info@stowcharity.org

Tales from the Treasurer – Expect the unexpected, both here and in Tanzania!



Recent weeks have seen unexpected changes and events affecting the money both coming into and going out from STOW, both here in the UK and in Tanzania.

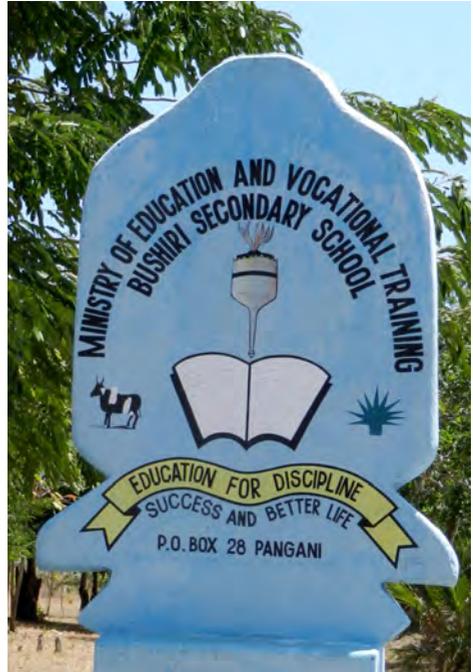
First, our good friends and very generous supporters for the past three years at Realise Futures have let us know that they are regrettably unable to assist STOW any longer as they themselves are in the process of becoming a significantly smaller organisation. Our best wishes go to them at this difficult time along with our thanks for their past very generous help.

However, much to our relief and delight, one of our wonderful supporters on hearing that we would have trouble supporting the next batch of students through technical college has quickly stepped forward with a substantial donation. STOW can now continue with greater confidence with the determined commitment to help all our currently supported children for as long as they continue to progress in their education and/or training.

As you may have seen elsewhere in the newsletter, Marie and Jem had planned to go to Tanzania at the end of January for the usual STOW 2-week monitoring trip. This has now had to be postponed (see page 2). Unfortunately, only part of the cost of the airline tickets were refundable resulting in a loss to STOW of £471.

However, there is potentially better money news from Tanzania. The incoming government has declared that all education up to Form IV (GCSE) will be free including both fees and contributions.

If this is confirmed, then it could save STOW some £6,000 a year. We intend to divert this money to the much more expensive technical education which many of our young people are now moving onto and which greatly improves their chances of securing good long-term employment.



'Education for discipline, success and a better life' - says it all!

So, a somewhat mixed and unclear picture for the moment. Although our reserves have reduced a little, the STOW financial future still looks robust enough to enable us to provide our promised support to STOW students for the foreseeable future.

Martin Stevens

Hon. Treasurer, January 2016

Since STOW's founding in June 2005 we have provided over 2,000 annual school places, helping well over 300 individual children get an education.



STOW's long-term support is enabling Osmund to study medicine



We are on the BT MyDonate website (www.btplc.com/mydonate) to help our fundraisers and to enable people to use a debit or credit card to donate to us. Just enter 1112424 or STOW in the MyDonate search box to find us.

Every penny of the money donated (excluding minimal card charges) comes to STOW including any Gift Aid due. We like to thank our donors so, if you use this service and want us to know who you are, please email us separately.

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