

Supporting Tanzanian

STOW

Orphans and Widows

STOW NEWS

Feb 2022

Issue number 30



*Inauguration of the rainwater tanks at Zingibari secondary school,
STOW's first involvement in fixed assets*

www.stowcharity.org
Charity registration no: 1112424

Dear members,

It seems a while since I last wrote and much has changed since then!! The UK finally took Tanzania off the “red list” in December last year and I booked a flight out soon after the announcement. Of course, there were several hoops to jump through—two lots of tests, locator forms etc.—but it was worth it. I got back last Sunday after two weeks in Tanzania, and I am raring to tell you all the news.

In a way, it was strange to find everything looking the same. I thought that some people might wear masks in crowded places, but no one did, except Schola, Esther and Freddie when we were in the car.

Classrooms were just as crowded as before, maybe even more so. One head told me that the population has increased significantly in the last couple of years but gave no explanation. On that note, many of the schools I visited had new classrooms being built. I was also told that whole new schools were being built and would be ready to take students at the end of this month. However, the Head teachers I spoke to told me that some of their staff had been moved to neighbouring new schools and they would not be getting re-placements until October.



New classrooms at Zingibari and Mleni

Water Tanks for Zingibari

Last newsletter I wrote about STOW planning to fund two rainwater tanks at Zingibari boarding school. I am very pleased to report that they have now been installed together with appropriate guttering and I was able to attend the official opening ceremony.



Members of Tanga Rotary



Esther, Schola, me, Head, Education Officer

Apart from this event, we were able to visit all the schools on the itinerary and see how our sponsored children were doing. They all looked well and were bright and cheerful.

I went to see how the rebuild of Issa's house by Matatizo (one of our ex-Tanga Tech students) was getting on, and provided more funds to get it rainproof. A bit different from the picture in the last newsletter!



Issa's house—2021



Issa's house—2022



TUMAINI's new office space

They were not the only people to have new premises: TUMAINI have a new office space, which they have renovated. It's really handy and right in town near the Immigration Office so we were able to go back and forth as required. I am not permitted to do any visits without the local Immigration Officer's approval, so it is always the first thing on the itinerary!

Bikes

We seemed to be buying bikes every other day but when I counted up, we had only bought 5! I suppose that is because after choosing a bike (always second-hand), you later have to go back to collect it after it has been serviced. We also brought bikes into town for repair work. We have managed to keep the price almost the same as when I was last out two years ago - hard bargaining!



Loan help towards independence

We had a really productive meeting with several parents and caregivers. It was great to catch up with those who had been given loans during lockdown. We were also able to give out two new loans and some top-ups. Bakari's mother had been given a small loan last year with money sent out by STOW. She used to sell snacks in the local primary school grounds but this had been stopped as the school had started selling meals from their own kitchen. So she built her own café just down the road! We topped up her loan

at the meeting so that she could buy flour and other ingredients in bulk and make a better profit. She had two customers when we arrived—one stayed to finish his meal.



Bakari's mother's new cafe



Satisfied customer

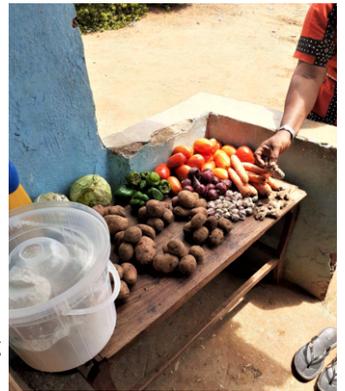
Cosmos and Margaret's sister, Teresia

One lady who got a first loan was Teresia. Her young sister Margaret came with her and read out a letter about her hopes and dreams. Teresia is a seamstress—she inherited her



Seamstress

husband's machine. She only makes ladies' and children's clothes but there is not much profit as she has no capital so customers pay in advance and often buy the material themselves. With a loan she would be able to buy materials herself enabling her to make a larger profit. She has also started selling vegetables from a table in front of her house.



Stallholder

Not only that but as we were leaving I saw a pile of both broken and unbroken rocks and asked her whose they were – mine she said! She breaks the large rocks up with a small hammer and a lorry comes back to collect the small stones.



Stonebreaker

STOW is supporting Teresia's younger brother and sister. Cosmos has just started at Maweni secondary school (where we have three other sponsored students). His sister



Margaret with new phone

Margaret had done well in her GCSEs and will be going on to study science at A-level. The government decides which schools students will go to and we are waiting to hear where this will be. All A-level schools are boarding. Here she is wearing a dress made for her by her sister and showing off the phone we bought her, which she will need for her studies.

Mwanahamisi

Another lady who received a top-up loan was Mwanahamisi whose grandson, Iddi, STOW is sponsoring at boarding school (where he is about to



Mwanahamisi with her aromatherapy balls. Note the wood leaning against the wall

take his GCSEs). Mwanahamisi has several small businesses on the go: she sells wood and makes chapatis but she also makes aromatherapy balls. She goes across to Pemba on a boat from Tanga once a week and spends the week on the island collecting petals and herbs and making them into massage balls (as shown in the tray). Apparently, you put oil on your skin and roll the balls across it. It is very soothing.

Mwanahamisi also told us how she buys wood from lorries that are allowed into the forest. She hires a cart and donkey and brings the wood home. She then chops it up into smaller pieces to sell in small quantities for cooking fires.

At the end of the meeting all those present exchanged telephone numbers and agreed to meet regularly to support each other, with Esther being there to pull things together – a very uplifting meeting.

Update - Upendo, Silas and Richard

I told you last January (see Issue 28, page 3) about the sad news that these children had lost their mother suddenly and how we were helping them. It was so good to see them all during this trip. Upendo did not settle at her government boarding school. She had disturbed nights and the school were not managing this well. Schola arranged to move her to a private boarding school where STOW already sponsors another very vulnerable girl. This has proved to be a good move and she has settled in well. The nuns are giving her counselling and she is finally starting to enjoy life a bit more. She still gets upset often but, when I talked to her about this, she seems to be sympathetically responded to by staff.



Upendo—looking a little happier

Richard too is doing well. I took him swimming in the hotel pool on Saturday afternoon and we had such fun! Schola had Upendo and Richard to stay with her for Christmas. When term started, Upendo went back to boarding school but Richard refused to go back home. He is still living with Schola!



Silas



Juma and Silas in their rented room at Tanga Tech



Richard

Silas, now head of the family, is studying masonry at Tanga Technical College. He stays nearby in one of our rented rooms, which he shares with Juma who is also studying masonry. At the weekend Silas goes back to the family home to run the vegetable stall he started with funds sent out by STOW last year.

Visiting students farther afield

Lushoto—in the Usumbara Mountains

Lushoto is a completely different environment from Tanga – much higher and colder. We first went to see Yustina who is studying A-levels in Arts subjects at Ubiri College. It is in quite an isolated area but there was lots of activity with students going from class to class, teachers chatting and generally a purposeful and calm atmosphere. She was thrilled to see us and ran up and hugged Schola. Yustina is hoping to become a secondary school teacher so once she has passed her A-levels, she will go on to a Teachers Training College. As with most of our older students, the “pocket money” she needed was considerably more than last time I visited. For a start, she has to buy all her own drinking water!



Schola with Yustina

We then went on to see Elizabeth at the Montessori Teachers Training college. We had a good look around the college but as Elizabeth was on a placement at a nursery school nearby we moved on to see her. We met with her study supervisor who told us “she is

doing good”. Elizabeth finishes her course this December so will be looking for a job – maybe even at this nursery school! We have another student, Prisca, who is about to start her teaching course here. Elizabeth said she would look out for her.

Dar-es-salaam



Elizabeth at her placement



Deo at the Aga Khan Hospital

Deogratias is in his last year of medical school studying at the main Dar-es-salaam hospital – Muhimbili. However, we met him outside the Aga Khan private hospital where he is doing a 6-week placement – you can just about see the hospital sign to his right. We also bought him a reconditioned laptop to make his research a little bit easier. Deo wants to continue to specialise in cardiology – what a great ambition!

Another great visit on the outskirts of Dar was to see Mwadora, who is now studying at a sports academy. What a happy, excited young man he is now he is studying here. A far cry from the youngster who used to be absent more often than not from his secondary school as he wanted to be playing football all the time! Because he didn't have the required qualifications, the academy put Mwadora on probation for the first 3 months. He has now passed all required tests and is a fully-fledged student at this football academy. Over 11 years of STOW encouragement and support and not giving up on him has finally paid off!



Mwadora outside his sports academy

Finally...

The visit was really worthwhile, as always, and I was able to see for myself how well Schola and TUMAINI had kept things going in the difficult two years since my last visit. Many thanks once again to all members for your steadfast support. My very best wishes, for a happy and healthy 2022! *Marie Adams, Founder and Chair of STOW*

Vaccines in Tanzania

Covid

After finally joining the COVAX initiative that supplies vaccines free of charge to poorer countries, Tanzania received a total of 4.8 million doses between July and December 2021. Shortly before the end of 2021, Tanzania reached the figure of 2 million people having received at least one dose of a Covid vaccine (3.4% of the population). This is similar to Zambia and Malawi but well behind Kenya (7 million), Uganda (8 million) and Mozambique (9 million).

Apparently, there was no sign of anyone in the areas Marie visited taking any precautions regarding Covid — no masks or social distancing. However, people seemed not to worry too much and although she met people who had been quite ill with the virus, they were carrying on with life as normal.

Malaria

The annual death toll from malaria is over 400,000, with most of these deaths amongst children in sub-Saharan Africa. There has been little improvement noted in the last 5 years despite the large amounts of funding allocated to bed nets, insecticide spraying and antimalarial drugs. An efficacious vaccine is needed to try and reach the WHO goal of reducing malaria deaths by at least 90% by 2030.

However, in 2021, researchers from Oxford University announced that their Matrix-M malaria vaccine candidate had become the first to surpass the WHO's threshold of 75% efficacy. They started a phase-3 trial in the summer of 2021 with 4,800 children in Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Kenya. Results could be submitted to regulators later this year. Fingers crossed!

Jeremy Adams

Note: you can buy tickets or donate to us by a variety of methods.

1. By BACS online transfer to 'STOW' sort code 40-40-20 account number 61264370
2. By cheque made payable to 'STOW' and sent to Acorn Cottage, Kelsale, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 2QY
3. By credit or debit card via our CAF page (<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/19885> or use the 'Donate' button on our website at www.stowcharity.org)
4. Contactless card payments now available at events!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – REVISITED!

Beetle Drive!



25th March 2022 at 6.30 pm

Bacon butties, wine, beer & squash, followed by the Beetle Drive with a break for raffle, 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 —
by card or cash!



**Orwell River Cruise to Harwich
Harbour on the Orwell Lady**

Sunday 12th June 2022, 2.30-6.30pm

**Live music from The Wednesday Men
Tickets £25.00 each**

To book your place contact Bernard on 01473 438730 or
Marie on 01728 603348 or email info@stowcharity.org

Our students are banking on STOW — stability but a few changes are afoot



First, I'm delighted that Marie has recently returned from her first monitoring trip to Tanzania in two years.

By all accounts the progress of, and support to, our funded students was found to have been going largely to

plan. Our trusted colleagues in TUMAINI have worked wonders to 'keep the show on the road' and where necessary take good decisions without the usual recourse of twice-yearly face-to-face consultations with STOW. To my mind this clearly demonstrates that the trusted and tested relationships built up over the years with those working on our behalf in Tanzania really came into their own when the pandemic struck. So a big thank you to Schola and Esther — our partners in Tanzania.

Changes to card donations and banking

Our online card donations arrangements worked well for STOW for a number of years but, sadly, first the BTMyDonate platform and latterly VirginMoneyGiving decided to cease operations.

We have now moved to the Charities Aid Foundation at:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/19885> which will accept credit and debit card donations and also arrange for Gift Aid to be collected from HMRC for us where appropriate for a modest administration fee. This site can also be accessed via the 'Donate' button on our website: www.stowcharity.org

In addition, we have acquired a Sum Up terminal which allows us to accept card payments in person at events. However, for anyone familiar with online banking,

we would prefer that one-off donations or ticket purchases be made online via BACS (account name STOW, sort code 40-40-20, account number 61264370).

This is because it was with surprise and sadness that we were informed by HSBC head office that they are now charging STOW, along with other not-for-profit customers, a fee to pay in cheques and cash at branches as well as a fixed £5 monthly account fee. We estimate these changes will be to the benefit of HSBC and cost to STOW of some £150 a year.

We have enjoyed an excellent, helpful and supportive service from staff at the Saxmundham HSBC branch for many years, not least in transferring significant funds safely to our partners in Tanzania. On reflection, although we could have moved our account to another bank in another town some miles away, the time and travel expenses incurred in doing this frankly make it unfeasible.

We have held our 'reserves' in what had been a higher interest-paying account with Virgin Money based in Norwich. This has now become less convenient and time-consuming to administer with very little financial advantage. We are looking to transfer these funds to an account more locally based or entirely online.

Budget The latest budget estimate for 2022 (our 18th year!) comes in at £50,000 which will support 4 students in primary school, 37 in secondary school, 8 in vocational training, and 23 in college or university—plus some small business loans.

Finally Please keep sending your donations to STOW -- they make a big difference to securing the long-term education of some of the most deprived children in sub-Saharan Africa. They are: "A hand up not a hand out?"

Martin Stevens, Hon Treasurer, Feb 2022

In the 18 years since STOW's founding in June 2005 we have funded over 2,700 annual school and further education places, helping well over 350 children to get education and training with many going on to paid employment.



Dar-es-salaam's newest landmark—the 'Tanzanite Bridge'



Donating via credit or debit card or online

Sadly, like BTMyDonate, Virgin Money Giving has also ceased operations, so we have now set up an account with Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) to enable people to use a debit or credit card to donate to us. Just go to <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/19885> or use the 'Donate' button on our website at www.stowcharity.org

However, ideally we would prefer people to use online banking for one-off donations. STOW's details are:

Account name: STOW. Sort code: 40-40-20. Account number: 61264370.

This issue of the newsletter is supported by Simon Ratcliffe

Supporting Tanzanian Orphans and Widows (STOW)

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