

Supporting Tanzanian
STOW
Orphans and Widows

STOW NEWS

July 2019

Issue number 25



Helping students get to school on time

www.stowcharity.org
Charity registration no: 1112424

Dear Members

Well here we are again – 15 years after STOW first started supporting vulnerable children in Tanga, Tanzania! Not a bad achievement, don't you think? So thanks to you members for your long-term support, both financially and emotionally. I know I keep saying it – but you have made such a fantastic difference to so many vulnerable children, giving them life-chances that they would never have otherwise had. Big **THANK YOU**.

Monitoring trip

As many of you will know, I went out in January/February of this year for the usual monitoring trip and to help with the distribution of school uniforms, books, maths sets etc. Jane, a fellow VSO volunteer who worked in Zanzibar when I was in Tanga, funded herself to come and help me once again (see page 10).

As I mentioned at the Kelsale Village Hall STOW event, I had (as always) prepared an itinerary for the trip and got this checked out with Schola. We agreed we needed to visit 7 primary schools, 10 secondary schools and 1 technical college and do 23 home visits. I had also more or less worked out how many food parcels we would need to buy. Sounds pretty straightforward doesn't it? Well! Each day we had to change the plan – add another visit, change the school, go back to the Tanga Education Office.....

Car trouble

Added to that we had a bit of car trouble!! To start with, the journey up from Dar-es-Salaam to Tanga took 10 hours instead of 6 as we had not one but two flat tyres. After the second one, Jane and I were left to look after the car while Athumani took a *pikipiki* (motorbike) taxi to try and find somewhere to buy a spare



tyre – not easy on a Sunday so it took quite some time! Anyway, off we went eventually and arrived safely in Tanga.

Then, two days later when we were visiting Kiomoni Sec-



ondary School, we had a flat battery! The Head insisted we try to jump start the car from his *pikipiki* – it didn't work. We were eventually rescued by Schola's son with his car.

Deciding on new STOW children

We agreed with Schola which 8 new children, out of the many she and various teachers had put forward, would be supported by STOW. Then it was time to go out and meet them, as well as all the other primary and secondary school children that STOW sponsors. As you will remember, we always do a home visit to any child being recommended for STOW support to ensure that there is no



favouritism and that the family are really in need. We had 6 children put forward by the teachers at one primary school where we have been supporting children since STOW first started. Unfortunately, two of them lived so far out in the



bush that we were not able to do a home visit and so could not take them on. The poor things looked so upset that we gave them a uniform each with books, pens and pencils and a food parcel. Smiles all round!

I asked the Head how these children would get home loaded with their new school materials and lots of food! He said he would organise a reliable *pikipiki* taxi to take them home so I duly handed over the fares.

Some stories about our students

I don't have enough space to tell you about all the new children, or about all of the ones STOW already supports, but here's a few stories about some of them.



Rehema is 11 years old and is at Mleni Primary School. She has difficulty seeing out of one of her eyes. Her aunt – who is her carer – told us that she had taken Rehema to the local hospital but nothing was solved. Schola said she would follow this up herself. Rehema's 14 year-old sister goes to the same school as Rehema so they walk the long road together. We found no beds in the house and no mattresses or mosquito nets, Rehema sleeps on a mat with her sister. (Note to self: get these in October!)

Fatuma is 11 years old and lives in the bush but thankfully not too far – the picture below gives you an idea...

They used to live further in the bush but bandits came last year and Fatuma's father was killed, so they left and are building a house slightly less far out! Mum was away collecting wood but there was a neighbour there when we visited who told us that Mum does casual labour. The children in the house told us that their mother sleeps



on the ground on an old bit of foam. As you can see the house is still under construction. I had better add another mattress to the shopping list for October!



Juma is 11 years old and lives with: his mother, an aunt, who didn't seem much older than Juma, and some cousins. Juma also used to live out in the bush, near Fatuma. He told me that they too had fled the bandits and moved nearer the road to be safer.



The rented house looked as though it would collapse in the rainy season and Juma said they wanted to move. We talked about where their drinking water came from. Juma said that his mother brought it back from the local river – which, to my knowledge, is several miles away. When I asked Juma whether he had eaten today he told me *bado* (not yet). Luckily, we had brought him a food parcel so suggested to his aunt, Hadija, that she cook up some food. We felt this was especially important as, when we asked when Mum would be back home, both Juma and Hadija seemed vague. First, they thought maybe tomorrow and then later said, maybe today.....

All the family sleep and eat in one room. We all noticed that Juma never smiled and we wondered if he was traumatised by his experience of the bandits.

Both Juma and Fatuma leave home at 7 am in order to get to school on time – a “good old walk”!!

Amiri

Of course we visited the homes of many other children but I now want to tell you a little bit about another newly sponsored lad called Amiri. He is in Form III at a government secondary boarding school where STOW sponsors 10 other children. The decision to sponsor children at boarding school is individually assessed, according to a child's extreme vulnerability – so different reasons for each child.



We weren't able to do a home visit to Amiri's house as he was about to go back into class and we don't like to disrupt lessons of our secondary pupils. However, we were able to get quite a lot of history through talking to Amiri, who had very good English.

Amiri is the youngest of 6 children, all his siblings have long left home. He was living at home with his very elderly father in a house where there is no running water. There is electricity but they can't afford to use it. His teacher told me that Amiri got Division I last year in his national end of year II exams in all 7 subjects! He was certainly very articulate and talked to us about his aspirations to study sciences when he gets to Form V. Schola and I thought he was a good candidate for STOW support. We may yet have another graduate in the future!

Adamu was moved to the same boarding school as Amiri during our visit. (Jane talks about his sister in her article (p10)). He had just started at a day government secondary school and had a long, long walk to get there. Normally we would buy him a bicycle to help him get there but he told us that, on hearing that his sister was not able to attend secondary school any more, his grandfather – who was his carer – had a heart attack and died.

So Schola's first thought was – boarding school!!!. Here is a happy and proud Adamu in his new secondary school uniform.

This is a family we have followed through their



many ups and downs over the years. The two children lived with their grandparents, miles away from anywhere. The youngsters used to grow *mchicha* (spinach) and sell handfuls to raise a bit of cash, but with no rains and no money to pay for water the plot dried up. STOW paid the water bill last year but we could not afford to carry on watering the plot. In January, Adamu told us that there was no food in the house any more and could we help him so that's why we decided: boarding school!



Drought-stricken mchicha crop



Iddi signing to change schools

Iddi is another vulnerable lad Schola and I discussed. He too had just passed his national exams and was sent by the government to a secondary school quite far from where he lives. He got good marks in his primary “finals” and was sent to a school where we have had several students over the years, most of whom have done well.

However, his home life is very difficult and he is another child we both felt was particularly vulnerable. He lives with his grandmother and grandfather, who had a stroke 10 months ago and is now paralyzed. Although he is 13 years old, he is small for his age and we think that this is partly because he doesn't get enough to eat, the family live from hand to mouth.

In February we gave Iddi's grandmother, Mwanamisi (standing on the right), a loan so that she could grow a small business. She had been selling a few chapatis that she makes but thought that she could sell wood as well. I hope to hear how she has been getting on when I go out in October.

Meanwhile we are helping the family by moving Iddi to the same boarding school as Amiri and Adamu where he will have three meals a day and a proper bed to sleep on!!

This meant we had to go off to the shops to buy mattresses, mosquito nets, sheets, school trunks and locks, cutlery, bowls, cups etc...



Iddi with his grandparents

Unscheduled shopping spree!



Bikes

In fact, we did an awful lot of unplanned shopping this trip: four bikes for secondary school students, five mattresses for children going to boarding school, two for our new students at Technical college studying electronics and 30 food parcels.



Food parcels



Trunks

Almost every item has to be bought from a different shop!! Apart from the food parcels, none of these purchases were on the carefully planned itinerary!



Mattresses

New Trustee



At a recent trustee meeting, we agreed to co-opt Donald McGregor, a STOW member, onto the committee.

Donald spent the first twelve years of his life in Tanzania so also speaks Kiswahili. He actually went to the same primary school as me!

Over a long career, he has been involved with development projects in many parts of the world including Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Kenya, as well as Tanzania.

In 1995 he founded Public Administration International Ltd, a development consultancy based in London. At the same time he was appointed Chief Executive of the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC), an educational charity in Cambridge. He left CRAC in 2000 and retired from PAI in 2015.

He and his wife Geraldine moved to Suffolk from London in 1993. They subsequently moved to within a few miles of Saxmundham in 2011 where, through the good offices of one of their neighbours, a STOW member, I was able to renew my acquaintance with him a few years ago. We're very happy to have him on board with his wealth of experience.

Enjoy the rest of the summer. Best wishes to you all,

Marie, Founder and Chair of STOW

Summer musings from the Treasurer



Well a big hello to STOW members and friends! It's newsletter time once again and thinking what new to say without repeating too closely what has been said before can be a bit of a challenge. If you're still reading, then

it's so far so good. In part this is perhaps because STOW continues to remain in good financial health, with no large unexpected financial hiccups evident on either side of the balance sheet.

Looking at our provisional end-of-year figures, our income continues to grow gradually to meet our ever creeping upward expenditure which is due to our students getting on average older and progressing to further and higher education. This costs a huge amount more than supporting them in primary and secondary state education.

We now spend over £42,000 directly on their education and support, while increasing our income to nearly £48,000 (there are monitoring and other expenses as well) during the same period.

This has allowed us to increase our reserves over the year by about £3,000 or by about a further 1 month's expenditure. This reserve fund level is agreed with the Charity Commission. This I believe to be a reasonable but not excessive reserve for a charity such as STOW with long-term aims and commitments. It allows STOW to be able to better weather any future inflationary or exchange rate 'surprises' such as we have experienced in the past.

My other thoughts at this time of year are prompted by the STOW fundraising events held during recent weeks attended by many members and friends of STOW. These include the annual entertaining midsummer 'night out' in Kelsale, the 'Boat with Jazz' trip on the Orwell, and the ongoing 'by invitation' film nights at Bryan's Barn.

While I find all to be good fun, with good company and standing on their own as successful events, they also provide a great opportunity for Trustees, members and others to share informal updates and ideas about the work of STOW. A number of our newer supporters we know have subsequently joined as members following these events and continue to help support our students as they progress in their education.

So, to sign off and as I have repeated before, the money STOW receives continues to be well spent. Your money is being actively managed on your behalf by your Trustees to enable our students to continue in education for as long as they can benefit and as promised by STOW locally in Tanzania.

It provides some of the most deprived young people in what is still part of the poorest parts of North Tanzania a hand up, through ongoing secured education, rather than a hand out. From our direct experience over the now 15 years of STOW's existence, education and the increased employment opportunities this brings, is the most reliable ticket to a better and more sustainable life for them and their families throughout their lives.

Martin Stevens, Hon Treasurer, July 2019

Receipts and payments 1st June 2018 to 31st May 2019 (Draft full year accounts)

RECEIPTS

Members' subscriptions	£1,619
Donations and fundraising	£32,402
<i>(including:</i>	
<i>Summer Event at Kelsale Village Hall 2018</i>	<i>£1,860</i>
<i>Bryan's Barn 2018</i>	<i>£949</i>
<i>St James's Place</i>	<i>£2,500</i>
<i>Beetle Drive</i>	<i>£200</i>
<i>Benhall Church</i>	<i>£169</i>
<i>Saxmundham Church</i>	<i>£1,097</i>
<i>Australian Rotary</i>	<i>£14,651</i>

Child Sponsorship	£9,897
Gift Aid	£4,022

Total receipts **£47,940**

Excess of receipts over payments £2,961

Balance brought forward from 1 June 2018 **£34,640**

Funds in hand at 31st May 2019 **£37,601**

Account balances:

HSBC Community account	£16,861
Virgin Money savings account	£20,740
Total	£37,601

PAYMENTS

Grants to TUMAINI for 2019	£39,500
Cash taken out for grants on 2 monitoring trips	£3,100
Total Tz payments (94.7%)	£42,600

2 x flights to Tanzania for Jan/Feb 19 and Oct 19 monitoring trips	£1,068
--	---------------

2 Business Visas (Oct 2018 and Jan/Feb 2019)	£373
--	-------------

Fundraising expenses	£61
----------------------	------------

Public liability insurance	£285
----------------------------	-------------

Printing Aug 18 and Jan 19 newsletters	£500
--	-------------

Stamps and envelopes	£92
----------------------	------------

Total UK payments (5.3%)	£2,379
---------------------------------	---------------

Total payments **£44,979**

Martin Stevens, Hon Treasurer, June 2019

Monitoring trip Jan/Feb 2019



It felt good to be back in Tanzania after 4 years, and I could see what progress had been made in Dar-es-Salaam, so much building work and infrastructure improvement.

I have been involved in an American organisation called 'Days for Girls'.



Hygiene kit demo



Plastic ziplock bag

Small groups sew re-usable sanitary towels and put them into kits with 2 pairs of knickers, soap and a polythene bag to put used towels in for washing. I brought just 25 of these hygiene kits out with me – there was no more room in my already bulging suitcase!

Schola was instructed about the kits and she and I were able to show the girls how to use them. There is written and pictorial information in the kits as well. They were given to secondary school students. More are available next time Marie goes out but there is a problem as the re-usable ziplock bags have been banned in Tanzania along with all other single use plastic bags. 'Days for Girls' are hoping to negotiate with the Tanzanian government to allow these bags to continue to be supplied as, at the moment, very expensive waterproof material is having to be used.



Three school desks and chairs

School, we talked to the head about three of our students starting at the school, only one of whom was actually attending. He helpfully explained that the government was building them a new classroom as they were oversubscribed with new students. He also explained that, even when the classroom was built, they weren't able to provide students with enough desks or chairs – even if three students shared a desk. So we offered to buy him three extra desks and chairs!

After a surprisingly quick trip to Immigration in Tanga and to the Town Council, we set off on the usual school and home visits, with distribution of uniforms, shoes, school bags, books and all the other things students need.

At Pongwe Secondary

He told us where to go to get them so off we went to the *fundi* and bought metal ones which will hopefully last longer than wooden ones. I was able to fund this unexpected expense.

This quick action brought home to me how valuable these monitoring trips are – enabling STOW to sort out unexpected issues on the spot.

Another example of this is where I was able to help one of the STOW-supported girls who was not allowed to go back to school after a pregnancy. Fortunately, one headteacher to whom Marie was relating this sad story, said the girl could maybe carry on her education at a private school. Marie approached the Novelty Youth Centre (the private institution which STOW uses for the Pre-Form 1 tuition) and found that they were willing to take her on. We reported back to the young girl and her grandmother and they said “Yes please!” Forms were immediately filled in, fees paid, passport photo taken and she started the next day! I was happy to provide the additional fees for tuition and exams and we have fingers crossed that all will go well for this unhappy teenager.

Jane Mallinson

Date for your diaries!

NOTICE of STOW Annual General Meeting

This will be held at 3 pm on

Sunday 29th September 2019

at

**Bryans Barn, Church Farm,
Sweffling, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 2BN**

NOTE change from usual venue!

Please follow signs to carpark in field

**The AGM will be followed by a bring-and-share afternoon tea
(please let us know what you are bringing on 01728 603348)**

Since STOW's founding in June 2005 we have funded over 2,600 annual school and further education places, helping well over 350 children to get education and training with many going on to paid employment.

NOTICE of STOW Annual General Meeting

This will be held at 3 pm on
Sunday 29th September 2019
in Bryan's Barn at
Church Farm,
Sweffling, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 2BN
NOTE change from usual venue!
Please follow signs to carpark in field

The AGM will be followed by a bring-and-share afternoon tea
(please let us know what you are bringing on 01728 603348)



Sadly [BT MyDonate](#) is no more! So we have moved to Virgin Money Giving (<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving>) to help our fundraisers and to enable people to use a debit or credit card to donate to us. Just enter STOW in their search box and scroll down a few lines to find us.

We like to thank our donors so, if you use this service and want us to know who you are, please email us separately at info@stowcharity.org with your name and the amount you've donated.

(NOTE Printing and distribution costs for all our newsletters are now being covered by specific donations from generous members!)

This issue of the newsletter is sponsored by 'Christian House and Church Swap'
www.chacs.co.uk

Supporting Tanzanian Orphans and Widows (STOW)
Registered charity no 1112424