

Supporting Tanzanian

STOW

Orphans and Widows

STOW NEWS

March 2024

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*Typical Tanzanian school roadsign telling you that
Mkindi Secondary School is 200 metres to the right*

www.stowcharity.org
Charity registration no: 1112424

Dear Members

I do hope that 2024 has been good so far for all of you and I send, with this newsletter, my very, very best wishes for a happy and peaceful 2024.

This trip I was accompanied by my good friend and long time STOW member, Alison (self-funded), whom I had first met as a fellow VSO volunteer in Tanzania in 1998.

I felt a bit sad that we had no primary school children to visit this year. Issa, our last primary student, is now in secondary school. We used to have such fun when all the school kids, and at least one of their teachers, used to pile in the minibus and we'd go off into the villages and often into the bush!! However, it is very rewarding to know that all these children have gone on to secondary education, many to colleges and universities. Isn't that progress!?

Issa

As I just mentioned, our last primary student, Issa, has gone to secondary. You will have read about Issa several times over the years. I wrote a catch-up in the March 2023 newsletter. Because of his extremely vulnerable home situation we decided that it would be best for him, with his and his grandmother's agreement, to go to a government boarding school – Zingibari – where we have 6 other students.

This trip we picked him up from his grandmother's (bibi's) house having brought with us the usual food parcel. The house was looking much more completed this visit, with mosquito netting on all the windows. The new house is a bit different from the one he



House in 2024



House in 2019



was living in when we visited in 2019, thanks to the generosity of all you STOW members who have continued to support him and other vulnerable young folk over the last 20 years!

We took Issa off to Zingibari, with a new trunk full of things he will need at boarding school: rucksack, cup, plate, knife, fork, bucket, trunk, mattress, mosquito net and sheets as well as new uniform, shoes and socks, exercise books, pens, pencils etc.

You might remember me writing that Richard had started at Zingibari last year. He told me he would be Issa's "buddy". The two older students in Form IV – Abedi and Edward – said they too would keep an eye on him. It was so great that all 7 of our sponsored students met up when we gave them their uniforms, shoes, books etc. They all chatted amongst themselves and I'm sure are, and will be, supportive of each other and the new student joining them.

Zingibari

This school has grown in pupil numbers by 314 new intakes to Form I this month. The Head told us that they have asked the government for more teachers as two had recently left and they now only have 27! It's a big school and has many boarding, as well as day students. We have two students in their last year here. Abedi wants to go on to study Engineering and Edward wants to go on to study Sciences at A-level. So we have paid for them to have 'remedial' studies which will be Mondays to Thursdays before and after every school day for the next 8 months! This now seems to be the norm where every school offers daily extra tuition after school for about 6 months before the Form IV exams (GCSEs).

Yusufu

Whilst visiting Issa at his home, a young lad, Yusufu, about the same age as Issa, came to the house sobbing his heart out. He told us that he had been sent home from the local secondary school, where he was due to start in Form I, because he did not have a school uniform. He very much wanted to be in school. Alison immediately said: "I will sponsor him". Being on the spot, we



First day at Kihongwe

were able to make a quick decision - so here he is on his first day at Kihongwe Secondary School. He was introduced to two teaching students who were on placement at Kihongwe who were very encouraging. He lives quite a long way from the school so Alison subsequently bought him a bike!



New bike

Ummi Mwalimu Secondary

Our two Form IV students at Ummi Mwalimu Secondary were pleased to see us. Their teacher told us that both Ezekiel and Salimu were very well-behaved. Salimu is studying Sciences and Ezekiel is studying Arts. Again, we have funded both of the lads to do remedials. Looking at their end of Form III exam results, they need as much help as they can get! Salimu told us that he wants to be 'a tractor operator'. Schola told him that there is a college in Shinyanga where we have previously sent three STOW-supported students to study all things to do with tractors. Ezekiel told us he wants to be a soldier. We encouraged them to study hard! Here they are getting their new school uniforms and books.



Ezekiel and Salimu with Schola

Halima

This is another example of quick decision-making whilst on the spot! We saw Halima in Tanga on the first Friday of our trip. She had already failed Form II twice and she explained to us why: all her lessons and nearly all the exams are in English, which she cannot understand. She was adamant that she didn't want to go back to school. What she would really like to do, she said, would be to go to college to study dressmaking.



Halima at home

After checking that this would be OK with her grandmother, with whom she lives, Schola contacted the college – where we already support two students – and Halima was put on the register there and then! So, on Saturday, we bought her a mattress,



Halima at college

sheets, mosquito net, trunk etc, off she went on the bus the next day and the following week we were pleased to see a much happier girl settled-in in college in Handeni.

Fatuma

We had always planned to stay in Handeni, about 100 miles from Tanga, on our way back to Dar as we support another student there — Fatuma — who is in her second year studying plumbing. So it was fortuitous that we were able to also see how Halima was doing.

We bought Fatuma a new pillow and also, far more importantly, an adjustable wrench and a pipe wrench.

Fatuma and Halima took us to see their dormitory where they share a small room with two other students. I noted one of the other students was ironing her clothes and whilst we were there another student popped in to check us out. All were very friendly and chatted happily to us.

Azizi

On our way from Handeni to Dar es Salaam we met up with Azizi in Chalinze where he was staying with his brother helping out on his small farm while waiting to get his Form IV results. We took him to a café not too far away and treated him to lunch. During lunch we talked about what his plans were once he had his results. Azizi said he would return to Tanga, where he lives with his aunt, ready to get help from Schola to apply for college. As you can see from the photo, Azizi was very relaxed and cheerful. He is hoping to go on to further education and wants to be a science teacher. We encouraged him and said that the reported lack of sufficient teachers in schools made it a good career choice!



Azizi enjoying his lunch

Amiri

Our last port of call was to see Amiri. I first met Amiri in January 2019. Schola had heard of this lad who lived with his very elderly father, quite far out in the bush – no electricity, no water in the house. He told us that he wanted to study sciences. We moved him to Zingibari boarding school, where he did well in his GCSEs.

He went on to gain science A-levels at Morogoro High School and enrolled at Dar es Salaam university last November. We went to check that he had managed to get on the



Amiri at Zingibari in 2019



Amiri at Dar university in 2024

course that he wanted – Civil Engineering. Thankfully he had, and he seemed very settled. We have every confidence that Amiri will do well at university and go on to have a successful career. Just another example of how long-term support enables vulnerable young people to work towards their goals.

Recycling

STOW is lucky to have generous members who think of STOW when they update their laptops and phones. We took a used laptop and a phone out with us. There is a wonderful ‘fundi’ in Tanga who checks out and updates any laptops we take and also ensures any phones we have are OK to use in Tanzania. (NB apparently iPhones can’t be used with a Tanzanian sim!)

We sent the laptop by bus to Alli who is at Moshi University studying Accountancy. We got a text from him when it arrived safely and he said “thank you SO much”!! The phone went to Ramadhani who is studying plumbing at Tanga Tech.



Alison handing Ramadhani his phone

Kind regards and heartfelt thanks,

Marie Adams, Founder and Chair of STOW

Revisiting Tanzania—Alison's story



Fresh-faced volunteers! Marie and I met in Tanzania in 1998, as fresh-

Marie and I met in Tanzania in 1998, as fresh-faced VSO volunteers, in Dar es Salaam for a month of in-country orientation. Marie then headed off to her placement in Tanga, and I stayed in Dar as part of a primary school improvement project. I visited Marie a couple of times, so Tanga had a degree of familiarity (unlike Dar which now has so many high rise office blocks that I didn't recognise anywhere!).

I had not been back to Tanzania since, so the thought of returning after almost 23 years was quite daunting. I had been relatively proficient in Swahili when I was a volunteer, but spent time before going out practicing on an app improving my fluency. It felt good to be able to introduce myself in the schools we visited, plus my basic understanding helped me to follow what was said – to a degree!

I am a primary teacher in Scotland, so was very interested to see more of the Tanzanian education system. I had worked with primary teachers before, but had no experience of secondary or tertiary education. Decisions about which school children go to are generally made by the government, depending on how well the pupils do in their exams. Family circumstances mean that sometimes it can be better for a child to board, although it is obviously more expensive for STOW.

It was interesting to see head teachers' offices with the same kind of documents you would see in UK schools – development plans and action plans for the coming school year. Marie and Schola had a long discussion with a member of staff at Tanga Tech where five STOW students are enrolled. Apparently there is a new Education and Training Policy which will introduce changes this year, including to technical and vocational training. Form 1 students can start in a vocational school (rather than a technical college) this year. It will be very interesting to see if this makes a difference.

I'd read about Schola and Esther (and Freddie) many times in the STOW newsletters and it was wonderful to meet them. Their love, hard work and compassion for the young people and their caregivers impressed me so much.



Finally meeting Schola

Without a doubt, STOW and TUMAINI function in tandem, one could not work without the other. At present, Secondary school pupils take exams at

the end of Form 2 (they have to pass these in order to carry on) and Form 4 (a good pass could mean carrying on to Form 5/6 to study A-levels). Some of the students find the transition to being taught completely in English very difficult to cope with. On page 4 Marie tells you about Halima, one of the Form 2 students that we met, and how decisions were made quickly in her case. I think this was the best example during my trip of how well STOW and TUMAINI can respond to the needs of a student and get things done very quickly.

During our visit I attended the yearly meeting of the Income Generating Group in Tanga. The women took it in turns to say how they'd got on since the last meeting. Most paid off a little of the loans they'd already had, and all asked for another grant in order to carry on funding their small businesses. It was really interesting to hear how they had overcome lots of challenges. One of the phrases I'd learned was 'Wanawake Wanaweza!' It means 'Women Can!' and seemed very appropriate to the situation, so I told them. They thought it was very funny!



Income Generating Group

The weather wasn't as hot as it could have been, as it was cloudy most of the days we were there, and there had been lots of rain. Marie said that, in twenty years of visiting Tanga, she had never before had rain in January.



Muddy road to Kilindi School

Apart from STOW and TUMAINI, there are many other locals who are part of the story. Shemkai, whose company makes up the food parcels, is one. He taught me how to say 'teacher' in Kisambaa (his tribal language) and thoroughly enjoyed my attempts to pronounce it correctly. The couple who run one of the 'dukas' (shops) in Tanga that STOW buys mattresses from donated some rucksacks for the pupils. Thanks also to the teacher at Kilindi High, an A-level school out in the bush,

who lent his motorbike to one of the older pupils to go to find Freddie, waiting by the car we'd had to abandon because the road had turned into mud. He arrived back carrying the STOW resources for the two students at school there.

It was a really enjoyable, informative trip which I look forward to repeating.
Alison

Tanzanian Snippets

Development of the capital, Dodoma

The government is developing plans for the necessary infrastructure such as transport systems, water supply and housing to accommodate the growing number of civil servants and other residents in the capital.

They are collaborating on a project with South Korea for the development and beautification of Dodoma. The partnership will enable Tanzania to access modern technology in the design and construction of buildings and other structures.

Standard Gauge Railway (SGR)

The Tanzania Railways Corporation is steadily equipping itself for the smooth rollout of a modern rail service. They now have four electric locomotives and 56 passenger cars (supplied from South Korea) being tested ready for the operation of the first section of the new network starting in July 2024. The SGR network is planned to eventually cover 2000km, linking Tanzania, from the port of Dar es Salaam on the Indian Ocean to the port of Mwanza on the shore of Lake Victoria in northern Tanzania, and from there to the neighbouring countries of Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is being built by Turkish and Chinese firms at an estimated cost of about £8 billion.

Helium

New drilling in the Rukwa region has the potential of making Tanzania the world's leading source of helium and securing the future of this vital gas used in MRI scanners among other critical applications in scientific research and space exploration.

Universal Health Insurance Bill

This bill was enacted on November 1st, 2023. It aims to ensure access to healthcare for all citizens through a comprehensive health insurance system. It has specific provisions for financing healthcare for the poorest households (27% of the population) using special funds sourced from taxation and excise duty on selected products and services.

Julius Nyerere Hydropower plant begins operations

The plant initiated operations in February by injecting 235 MW into Tanzania's national grid.

Dates for your Diary

Beetle Drive!

**Tuesday 19th March 2024
at 6.30 pm**



Bacon butties, wine, beer, soft drinks, and ice cream

Beetle Drive

followed by a raffle, coffee and a delicious selection of cakes!

St Johns Church Hall, Saxmundham

(Parking available up the church drive or Waitrose)

**Adults: £5, under 16s free! Raffle: £1 a ticket
(minimum age 6 years)**



To book tickets phone 01728 663583 or pay on the door,
cash or card!

NOTICE of STOW Annual General Meeting

This will be held at 3 pm on

Sunday 6th October 2024

**at Cavendish House, The Spinney,
Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1AR**

(Please park on Brook Farm Road)

Treasurer's Musings March 2024



You will have already read from Marie and Alison how many of our now Secondary and Further/ Higher education students continue to progress well.

Also, issues coming to light during their visit were often successfully resolved 'on the spot' by agreeing additional financial support from STOW reserves using your continued generous donations.

I also note that two significant STOW landmarks have been reached: STOW is in its 20th year, and STOW no longer supports students in primary school. All those able to progress successfully to Secondary education have done so. Wearing my Treasurer's Hat, this means we continue to plan for fewer students requiring (much) more expensive individual educational and living support during the next few years.

Our 20-year milestone also prompted me to look back at literacy rates across Tanzania. Nationally, literacy rates for those aged 15 have risen from around 65% to 80% over 20 years. It is likely that the rural Tanga region, where STOW children live and where STOW chose to seek out the most disadvantaged children to

support, would otherwise have fared worse than this. Looking back over the years, I think STOW students have gone from below the national literacy rates and now far exceed them. Many STOW-supported children probably would not otherwise have completed primary school without support from STOW and TUMAINI partners. Without STOW's members' support this would **not** have happened.

STOW support continues to be truly life changing, not just for our many 'high flyers' but also for those leaving education at 16 or so with good literacy, numeracy and life skills so enabling them to undertake more secure regular employment and become productive citizens supporting their families and local society.

Should you be able to consider making a further one-off donation or perhaps sponsoring one of our older students I think this newsletter confirms that your money will be well spent on supporting STOW students' education.

As always thank you for your ongoing support, your donations continue to go a long way and do really make a big difference.

*Martin Stevens,
Hon Treasurer,
March 2024*

Receipts and payments 1st June 2023 to 18th February 2024

RECEIPTS

Members' subscriptions **£1,361**

Donations (including **£25,818**
£16,380 from Australian
Rotary, £53 from
Benhall PCC and £50 from
Gt Glemham Ladies Club)

Bryan's Barn 2023 **£1,366**

Child Sponsorship **£14,455**

Gift Aid **£5,846**

Total receipts **£48,846**

Deficit of receipts
over payments **-£7,782**

Balance brought forward
from 1 June 2023 **£54,046**

**Funds in hand at 18th Feb
2024** **£46,264**

Account balance:
HSBC Charitable account **£46,264**

PAYMENTS

**Grants to TUMAINI
for 2024** **£49,400**

**Grant money spent on Oct
2023 monitoring trip** **£1,500**

**Grant money spent on Jan
2024 monitoring trip** **£2,000**

Total Tz payments (93%) **£52,900**

**2 Visas for Oct 23 and Jan
24 monitoring trips** **£85**

**2 flights for Oct 23 and Jan
24 monitoring trips** **£2,817**

Public liability insurance **£378**

Printing Nov 23 newsletter **£248**

Stamps and envelopes **£44**

HSBC bank charges **£156**

Total UK payments (7%) **£4,106**

Total payments **£56,628**

Martin Stevens, Hon Treasurer, Feb 2024

During the 20 years since STOW's founding in June 2005 we have funded over 2,750 annual school and further education places, helping well over 350 children to get education and training with many going on to paid employment.

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

1. Ideally, because this does not incur bank charges, 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 (www.stowcharity.org)
4. Contactless card payments are now available at events



Testing of the first phase of the new Standard Gauge Railway started this February

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