

Supporting Tanzanian

STOW

Orphans and Widows

STOW NEWS

January 2020

Issue number 26



Rainy season started earlier than usual in Tanga this October!

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Dear members,

I do hope you all had a wonderful time over Christmas and the New Year. Let us all hope that the new decade brings hope, peace and joy to all.

This year (2020) will be the 16th year that STOW has provided support to vulnerable children in Tanzania – not a bad record!! Just to say again, that this is thanks to you members who have continued to support the work that we do in so many and generous ways – we couldn't do it without you! Thanks again to many members who remembered STOW at Christmas with extra donations.

Jem (self-funded) and I went out to Tanga in October 2019. Although October is the month for the 'Short Rains', they started unusually early during this trip. It poured all the way from Dar es Salaam to Tanga on our first day. We were lucky to make our trip down to Pangani early on in our visit as, two days after we went, a busload of schoolkids on a trip to Tanga from Dar es Salaam went down there and got stuck. This road is notoriously slippery when it rains and I always keep my fingers crossed that we won't get too much rain before a visit.



Pangani road on a rainy day

Pam and I are going out on the 24th January and we hope to find all well with the children we support. This year, although we won't be going all the way down to Pangani, we will have a long ride to a school in a little village called Bushiri where we still have students. You still have to go down the Pangani road but turn off inland about 2/3rds of the way down, along another dirt road, so just as difficult an access. January should be dry but the weather in Tanzania – like everywhere else – no longer conforms to the old patterns.

STOW now supports only 82 children but — guess what? — the budget is slightly higher this year! All but 18 children are in secondary or further education where the costs are much higher. However, we feel that it is so important, not only for the young students to be able to progress and achieve qualifications, but also for the country to have skilled teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, electricians, tailors, plumbers, masons, mechanics, administrators, accountants.... – expertise that our students have gained over all the years that STOW has been supporting vulnerable children.

Some of our Leavers.....

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, STOW is now offering a 'Leaver's Grant' and Schola is due to meet with our current crop of college leavers to discuss their future plans. I am looking forward to hearing how these discussions went.

Haruna was going to be a science teacher but changed his course to Accounting and was doing his practicals at TANESCO (the state electricity supply company) when we saw him last October. It is very likely that they will take him on full time when he qualifies, so I look forward to hearing how he got on.



Haruna

Boniface and Salimu both went to Agricultural College. Boniface is hoping to get a post with a government farm to offer technical support. Salimu's focus is on community development within the agricultural field. I'm really looking forward to hearing about these and several others who will be going on to employment from their further education studies. It always amazes me how these youngsters, coming from such vulnerable home lives, achieve their educational dreams and go on to have successful careers. College/university fees are so high that it is usually only those who come from well-off families that get on these courses.



Boniface and Salimu

....and Joiners

Josephine recently became sponsored by STOW. Schola was contacted by one of the teachers at Tanga Technical College to say that one of the young lads STOW was sponsoring was not attending. He suggested, as we had already paid the fees for the year, that we replace him with a young girl who was studying plumbing but had not yet been able to pay her fees. We did a home visit to check out her situation.



Josephine with laptop

We found Josephine outside her small house, which has two rooms. Josephine and another girl sleep on a bed in the corridor, Mum sleeps in one of the rooms. Josephine was very enthusiastic about her course and she certainly looked the part in her overalls. Her mother was almost in tears when we talked to her about sponsoring Josephine, she couldn't believe her luck! We left a food parcel with them as there was no evidence of any food in the house. We later met Josephine at Tanga Tech and were able to give her a secondhand laptop that we had brought out.

The other new sponsored student is **Venance**, a very polite young man who spoke good English. He told us that he had just completed his first year at Mbeya doing a nursing and midwifery course. My ears pricked up as he talked about Mbeya as I went to primary boarding school there (as did our new Trustee, Donald!). He told us that he had managed to raise the funds for his first year by asking at church and going to local leaders, and Schola told us that she also had given him funds. He said that "somehow I managed to pay for my first year". He talked to us about what he was doing to raise money for his

second year and was about to go and meet with local community leaders again. I said that, if he passed his first year (results had not come in at the time we met), STOW would pay his first instalment and he should continue to look for other funding. We gave him a food parcel too.

We met up with Venance a few days later and were delighted to hear that he had passed his first year exams. He had also managed to secure some support from his village leaders. We agreed that STOW would pay all his tuition and college fees but that he would use the money from his sponsors to buy food. I also had an old phone our grandson had given me, so we gave this to Venance and I bought him a sim card to go with it, with some credit on it. I think the smile on his face in the photo says it all for him!



Venance

Trailblazer

I first met Jacky as a little girl at the funeral of her mother. I was a VSO volunteer in Tanga at the time (1999). Jem and I initially sponsored her privately and when we started STOW in 2005 we were able to continue that sponsorship. She went on to achieve such high marks in her exams that she eventually received a government scholarship for her further education! We have just received an email from her out of the blue. This is what she says:



Jacky, Schola and Marie in 2011

'STOW was there for me a few years ago when I was still in Secondary school in Tanga. Marie Adams might remember me as she used to support me through Schola...I can never thank you enough for your help back then and for your continuous support to Tanzanians. Excited to hear more about your news and updates and to whom my small donation will end up supporting. Please keep me posted and I hope to subscribe as a member in the near future!'

She is now in full-time employment and has made a generous online donation to STOW. It's heart-warming to get such feedback.

Update on Fatuma

I told you about her in the July 2019 newsletter. Her mother is building their house and there is very little in it. On this visit we gave her a mattress, mosquito net, sheet and a food parcel. Mum was thrilled with the food – “now we can eat” she said! She does casual labour on a farm some distance away and goes every day, often without having had anything to eat. I am really hoping that when I visit her again in a few weeks, the house will have been finished.

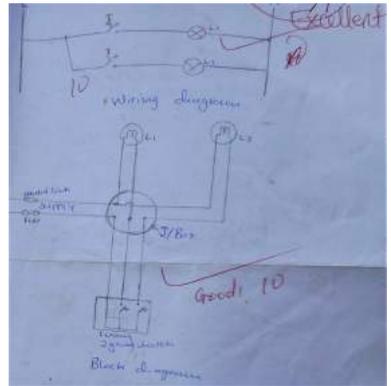


Fatuma at her unfinished house

Tanga Tech Boys

We also did a home visit to the room STOW rents for the four lads studying electrics at Tanga Tech. The three older students were away doing practicals around the town in offices and houses, then they were to go on a study tour at Hale Power Station later on in the month – great experience for them.

Peter, who was at the end of his first year, showed us his latest marked test paper where he got 90% and an ‘excellent’ comment. We are very proud of him – well done! We left two food parcels with him to share with the other students.



Part of Peter's test paper



Peter unloading food parcels

We met up with all of them a day later at the college.



Tanga Tech boys

Novelty Youth Centre

We've been keeping you up-to-date with our Standard VII students who, thanks to a generous donor, we send on a 'Pre-Form 1' course here after finishing their National End of Primary School exams. This gives them a head start at secondary school where the lessons are taught in English rather than Swahili.

In October there were six students getting prepared for this move to secondary school. Here are some of them talking to Schola (whilst I frantically write notes!) outside the Centre's office.

As you can see, it is a very comprehensive course and all taught in English.



At the Novelty Youth Centre

	FURAHA C	SHANGWE C	AMANI C	UPENDO C
	8:00-9:00AM	9:00-10:00AM	10:00-11:00AM	11:00-12:00PM
MONDAY	8:00-9:00AM 9:00-10:00AM 10:00-11:00AM 11:00-12:00PM	9:00-10:00AM 10:00-11:00AM 11:00-12:00PM	BREAK Biology English Chemistry	CHEMISTRY MATHS Biology Physics English Geography
TUESDAY	8:00-9:00AM 9:00-10:00AM 10:00-11:00AM	BREAK Biology English Chemistry	BREAK Biology English Chemistry	BREAK Biology English Geography
WEDNESDAY	8:00-9:00AM 9:00-10:00AM 10:00-11:00AM	BREAK Biology English Chemistry	BREAK English Maths Geography	BREAK Biology English Chemistry
THURSDAY	8:00-9:00AM 9:00-10:00AM 10:00-11:00AM 11:00-12:00PM	BREAK Biology English Maths Geography	BREAK English Maths Geography	BREAK Biology English Chemistry
FRIDAY	8:00-9:00AM 9:00-10:00AM 10:00-11:00AM 11:00-12:00PM	English Biology Maths	BREAK Biology Chemistry	Geography Physics Biology Chemistry

Pre-Form 1 course weekly timetable

We also sponsor two older students here. Zamda, whom Jane told you about in the July newsletter, is studying for her GCSEs and Deborah, who is doing an administrative course. Before starting this course, Deborah had been helping Schola in the TUMAINI office and had shown a flair for organising! I am so pleased to tell you that Zamda is doing well and is now a happy, smiley young lady. What a change from the unhappy teenager we saw in January!



Zamda

New Primary School Joiners

We started supporting two new primary students in October – **Bakari and Halima**. They go to Mleni Primary school. The Headteacher brought them to us and asked if we could help them at all. We know from past experience that this is a very poor area. Whenever we do home visits to the children here, we always make sure that we not only have food parcels for each family but that we also go to a little local shop that we found a few years ago and buy soft drinks and ‘bites’ as the children call them (snacks as we



Halima and her bibi

call them). Bakari lives with an aunt who is supporting three children that are not hers, so we gave the family two food parcels. Halima lives with her grandmother who makes mats and sells them locally.



Bakari, teacher, and Halima

These are just a few of all the many stories that result from STOW and TUMAINI's work thanks to your continuing support.

Best wishes to you all,
Marie, Founder and Chair of STOW

Beetle Drive!

16th April 2020 at 6.30 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

Treasurer's thoughts for a new decade



A big hello and welcome to a new STOW decade! Looking back over the past ten years of STOW, quite a few things have changed from a financial perspective, some quietly creeping

up on us over the years.

STOW has supported over 350 vulnerable children over the years and our members and supporters have so generously helped us raise the funds year after year to pay for this.

Over the last 10 years or so we have seen our annual income pretty much double to some £40,000 a year. The number of children supported at any one time has reduced a little over the past decade as our individually supported children have become older, more expensive to support and often staying in education for longer. This is NOT a problem — this is a planned success!

We have seen the increasing cost of supporting children to progress successfully through primary, secondary and further education, despite improving state support for some. Both Tanzanian and UK inflation, exchange rates and poor interest paid on our reserves have rarely been to the benefit of the STOW funds available to provide this support.

So, what has remained the same? We have continued to support individual, named and monitored children throughout their education and sometimes into sustainable employment.

We continue to listen to, and be trusted by, the local communities where STOW children live, and by our local partners and the education authorities.

As we are all too well aware, the weather around the world makes near constant news headlines. As I write, just after a very mild Christmas, I am reminded that Marie and Pam will be off to Tanzania in a couple of weeks where the weather is also becoming less predictable. We have seen serious weather events in nearby parts of East Africa make the news during 2019. The Tanzanian authorities are well aware that it is the less educated rural poor who are likely to suffer disproportionately.

I read an international report recently which estimated that 70% of natural disasters in Tanzania, mostly repeated floods and droughts, were now climate change related. This, I believe, makes it even more crucial that our STOW students receive an education which brings with it the increased resilience needed to meet these coming challenges for both them and their communities.

Finally, signing off in usual fashion, heartfelt thanks again to all our supporters for your generosity over, in many cases, more than a decade of continued support. This really does make a positive difference, through education, to the life chances of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children living in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Martin Stevens,

Hon Treasurer, January 2020

My latest monitoring trip—October 2019

The October trips are always more of a follow-up than the serious work of the Jan/Feb trips, which is why they are also shorter. This time we visited five schools and three colleges.

The visit to Elizabeth at Kigamboni City College of Health & Allied Sciences (known as KiCCoHaS) also illustrated perfectly why these trips are so useful.



Students arriving at KiCCoHaS

to find shops on the other side of the peninsula and bought the necessary items and set off in the car. After over an hour's drive we eventually found the right turn-off and went up an incredibly slippery, muddy track to the college. We found out when we arrived that the college had called all the students' parents/sponsors to a meeting in two days' time. We were able to quickly arrange funding for Schola (plus our driver) to stay on in Dar for the extra days so she could attend the meeting.



We took a few hours to get to the college via ferry and road (time which could not really be spared on a Jan/Feb trip). While on the ferry, we found out through a phone call that Elizabeth needed sheets, a mosquito net and some clothes as some of her clothes had been stolen off the college washing line.

Once we got off the ferry, we managed



We were also able to give Elizabeth a much-needed new reconditioned laptop for her studies.

Buying this laptop, and sorting out the other two we brought out, was also something we had time to do. Schola found a very good place: JK Computers. We initially only wanted to get virus protection on the laptops we took out. But the shop owner not only did this but also put on Windows 10 and some applications plus sold us the reconditioned laptop—all for a very good deal.

During the week, we had a meeting with the District Commissioner, Mr Thobias K Mwilapwa who congratulated us on the way we were helping the Tanzanian authorities support vulnerable children.

Changes

I was fascinated to see that Tanga now has traffic lights—solar-powered!



On the Dar—Tanga road, they are building a new bridge over the Wami river—which can only be a good thing. A bit disconcerting this time to see that some of the railings right in the middle of the bridge were missing—as if something had gone over the side?!



Railings: Now you see them—now you don't!

Marie and Schola had their usual detailed October budget discussion. This time in a spare conference room in a hotel in Bagamoyo.

Another good, useful trip, with many things sorted out that otherwise wouldn't have been.

Jeremy Adams

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.

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moneygiving

Donate >

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 Simon

Supporting Tanzanian Orphans and Widows (STOW)

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