

Hope for Tanzania Visit 2011

1. Tuishime School

It had been over two years since we were last in Tanzania so I was keen to see what had happened at the school during that time. My overall impression was that the school had become a lot more professional and serious in its provision of high quality education. This is probably due to the excellent exam results that Standard VII pupils had achieved in 2010 as well as the influx of a number of new teachers. The external appearance of the school was good with smart buildings, green grass and flourishing trees which made a favourable impression on me. During our time at the school we all spent time talking with the teachers, particularly the new ones, to learn more about their backgrounds and aspirations. This time I avoided asking them how the school could be improved and instead I asked Naomi about this subject. She emphasised that salary increases, computers and a boarding hostel for the oldest children were the hot topics which are much the same as before.

As previously mentioned the Standard VII exam results in 2010 were excellent and achieved against a backdrop of great change in the school during the years that the oldest children were at school. In addition none of these children were selected according to ability with a high proportion of them coming from a very poor or disadvantaged background. Standard VII pupils had already taken the national exams for 2011 and left the school so we were disappointed not to be able to see them. Standard IV exams were being held during our visit which meant that the school routine was disrupted on at least three of the days we were at school.

There were many new teachers at the school – Teddy Mramba, Monica Mutta, Peter Gitonga, Peter Machugu, Thomas Nyirinkindi, Margare Mukuha and teaching assistants Vic and Monica who helped in the baby and puppy classes. Now there are 14 teachers for 220 pupils which, whilst appearing a high number, is in line with government recommendations for private schools. Three of the teachers specialise in science and one teaches French so the range of subjects is increasing as well as the depth that the core ones can be taught at. One continuing problem is the relatively low level of English spoken by teachers which may improve if Kenyan and Ugandan teachers are employed when the East Africa Community opens up the jobs market. It is due to be established in 2012.

The administration of the school now takes place in the office/library where Anne is in charge. I was very impressed by her computer skills and the quality of her administrative work. This is clearly her talent and she has really benefited from her visit to the UK and the confidence that she has subsequently gained in speaking English and finding her true role in the school. The office now has a photocopier and laptop that Anne uses and for which Dick provided a replacement battery.

We took about 120kg reading books with us and the library is now bursting. The children do not appear to be borrowing reading books which is perhaps due to the lack of space that there is to display them. A new library is required. Resource levels of textbooks, sports equipment, art supplies and stationary seem to be very good. Roger Lennard donated science equipment and sent over a DVD of science experiments filmed by his school students which I was able to demonstrate to the science teachers who really appreciated the resources.

Two new classrooms have been built since our 2009 visit, which are being used for baby and puppy classes. The standard VII classroom which was built during August 2009 is now fully completed and remains in good condition. HFT had made a donation prior to the visit for renovating the classrooms and it was pleasing to see that this work was ongoing. Ceiling boards are being installed which will cut noise levels between classes. The first class room built will be increased in size to the same dimensions as the other ones and a concrete walkway and veranda built in the front. Unfortunately due to the higher than anticipated cost of building materials there will be no remaining money to use to paint classrooms, repair floors and wall cracks. All this work

would dramatically improve the visual appearance of the classrooms, which is important as new children continually need to be attracted to the school.

The current role at the school is 220 and it is hoped that numbers will increase to 250 once January 2012 intake has been completed. However, it is conceivable that numbers will ultimately rise to 300, based on 35 per class, although class sizes could be increased even higher to 40 if there was sufficient demand. Competition between schools in Arusha is increasing each year which will require the standard and facilities at Tuishime to be improved year after year.

We agreed that the classroom currently used for standard VI was the most suitable one for the computer room. I made a plan of the layout required to site 30 computers in the room and following the visit I sent this to Naomi together with details of the work that needs to be completed before the computers are received. This number of computers and their high specification will mean that Tuishime is able to offer better IT facilities than most other private schools which in itself should be a significant attraction to parents of prospective children.

There will need to be a temporary shift in class rooms until a new classroom is built which will result in the baby class going back into the bungalow. Currently the bungalow is only used for the baby class to rest in the afternoon so this change will hopefully only be minimally inconvenient.

The previous attempt at digging a well at the school failed due to not being able to dig deep enough to find water. Another attempt is currently being made to obtain a secure water supply and consists of digging and blasting rock, age old methods used in the mining industry. This was a surprise to me. To finance this Naomi has taken out a one year loan (at a high interest rate). I do have doubts about the wisdom of the whole project as I am not convinced that a reliable source of water will be found so if it does not succeed further money will have been wasted. However to her credit, Naomi has tried to make economies by not proceeding down the borehole drilling route which is considerably more expensive.

The children at the school are a complete delight and it was a joy to see their happy smiling faces, how much they appreciate being educated at school, their enthusiasm and the competitiveness which existed between teams when we held competitions. Their uniforms look very smart and the whole atmosphere in the school is buoyant, particularly when compared with that in the other schools I visited. But I saw little evidence of Christian teaching and this is an area that needs to be increased so that children have an opportunity to hear about the gospel during their time at primary school.

The team ran a number of activities at the school including an art project with baby and puppy classes, teaching the young children songs which they later performed and two sports afternoons for standards III through VI. Philippa spent most of her week teaching in different classes which was really appreciated by the teachers. Bible stories were also told using illustrated story books in an attempt to kick start this extra curriculum activity. There was a lot of excitement at the sports afternoons and everyone enjoyed them, even team members who don't normally engage in sports. We also ran an hour of sports for teachers at the school during which we taught them games to use with the older children and we all had a lot of fun. It was a good opportunity for us to show appreciation to the teachers for all their hard work and for pupils to have a laugh at the many hilarious things that happened during the session.

Parents of children about to enter standard IV and VII attended a parents meeting one Saturday which was a good opportunity for us to test the temperature of the school and see the dynamics between staff members. Naomi ran the meeting, and gave a polished performance, supported by Andrew Mathias although John Bosco said very little. Great emphasis was placed on payment of fees so it was impossible for parents not to appreciate the importance of this. One significant concern of some parents was how to ensure that children went on to the best government secondary schools so Mr Augustino (Director of AV Resources) sought to reassure parents that

Tuishime pupils would be directed towards the highest performing schools. The parents were delighted when I said that we were donating computers to the school and that they would have an opportunity to learn computing during courses which will be started in the evenings. Despite the meeting being held in Swahili we picked up enough of the content to appreciate how future meetings could be run in a much more professional and impressive way – we just need to be in Tanzania and involved with the planning to be able to do so.

Some of the teachers want to establish links with teachers and other people in the UK and those that do have e mail access and can pick up e mails regularly. Of course letters are still a widely welcomed means of communication. Such contact will help to develop relationships and do much to encourage the school teachers. Maggie is seeking to establish a British Council link with Tuishime and we hope that this application will be approved.

2. Sponsor a Child Scheme

Janet Roulstone and Anne spent a lot of time on the Sponsor a Child Scheme visiting parents in their homes, writing profiles and taking photographs as well as updating the master spreadsheet. This was carried out to increase the number of profiles on file in preparation for getting a significant surge in new sponsors. It would be great to achieve 25 new sponsors in 2012 for children at the school. Two issues arose concerning the scheme. Firstly it became apparent that children of staff members are being offered free places and their names put forwarded for sponsorship. This perk is being offered by Naomi to teachers to partially compensate for their low salaries. I agreed with Naomi that HFT would not accept any children of teachers on to the sponsorship scheme except where there was solid evidence of extreme hardship. Secondly there continues to be a problem with parents not paying fees once photographs and profiles of their children have been obtained as they assume that a sponsor will be found so ending the need for them to pay fees. I agreed with Naomi that this situation could be avoided by writing profiles for all children and she agreed to adopt this practice.

3. Other schools

I visited Arusha Secondary, Uhuru Primary and Kaloleni Primary and Secondary. Philippa visited Njiro Secondary whilst a number of us visited Kijenge Primary. The secondary schools were those that Tuishime pupils have gone on to and are some of the highest performing schools in Arusha. Arusha Secondary was impressive – dynamic headteacher, good science equipment and labs and an impressive computer classroom complete with projector. I asked the headteacher if he thought there was a difference in standard between pupils from government and private primary schools and he said that this is the case for the first two years but thereafter there is no difference. Clearly this highlights a serious error in secondary school educational levels but it also highlights a flaw in the assumption that English medium primary schools lead on to higher educational standards at secondary level. If parents were to fully realise this reality they may reconsider whether it is worth them paying the fees of primary schools. Kaloleni Secondary School was much poorer in its buildings, resources and facilities although its standards are actually not that far below those of Arusha Secondary. However, its computer room was disappointing and clearly not used as it simply contained stacks of computers.

Class sizes, general atmosphere and facilities were much poorer at the government primary schools I visited. So we can have confidence that, at least compared with the government schools, Tuishime is educating children to a higher level and in a more stimulating environment than they would encounter elsewhere. We must maintain the advantage by continuing to invest in quality.

I also visited the Teacher Resource Centre in Kijenge and this was hugely disappointing as it had no resources other than a blackboard and chalk. Apparently all TRCs are like this due to lack of funds. Their biggest need is computers which would be a great asset as the government has committed to making an internet connection through a partnership it has struck with a private

telecommunications company. If I had known about this need a few days earlier then I would have suggested that computers should be sent to the TRC rather than to the fourth school. That's Africa for you!

4. Send a Computer Scheme

I visited Mr Augustino and Mr Mkombole, who are the education officials that will take responsibility for the receipt, distribution, setting-up, use and maintenance of the computers that HFT will donate. I obtained their agreement to all the conditions that were detailed in the HFT business plan and have subsequently received a signed letter from Mr Mkombole (DEO) confirming this.

Mr Augustino and I visited a number of schools in connection with the scheme which were both the primary schools that will receive the computers and other schools that already have computer rooms. Uhuru school has a suitable room for 20 computers having already carried out the modifications required to site and use the computers. Work needs to be carried out at the three other schools and the details of this has now been sent to Mr Augustino who assured me that the work will be completed in January. He agreed to pay for the work at Tuishime and for the port and transport charges so as a gesture of goodwill I said that HFT would be willing to donate additional computers to allow a fourth school to be set-up.

5. Arusha New Clinic

We paid a visit to the clinic and saw the developments that had been carried out in the last year since Peter and Rosalind Harris had visited. Whilst some minor procedures have started, full operations have not yet commenced. Apparently this is due to a lack of electricity, which has prevented the medicine cabinet being fabricated, although during our visit the supply was almost continuous. I, however, feel that the real reason is due to a lack of strong project management and drive to complete the task.

The remaining work required to complete the operating theatre is relatively minor so there should be no valid reason why it cannot be completed within two months. I will put pressure on Felix to drive this project to completion and ask for frequent progress reports from him.

The numbers of outpatients at Faraja Clinic remains at about 35 per day which is not at all busy. Arusha New Clinic is independent of Faraja Clinic, even though it is situated within it, and it may be that there are some challenging times ahead to attract sufficient numbers of patients who require surgery to make the clinic viable. However, we are optimistic that, with appropriate advertising and referrals as well as a fully functioning theatre, the clinic will prosper and achieve its intended purpose of making healthcare accessible to poor people within Arusha.

6. Other projects

The team made two visits to the Huruma orphanage set up by Godliva, a Pentecostal pastor. The first visit was a short introductory one but the second visit was for a number of hours during which the ladies played games with the children and did some art projects. Godliva is an amazing lady filled with the love of Jesus for disadvantaged children. A lady of faith who has seen dormitories, a church and other buildings constructed for the orphanage and continues to see God making daily provisions of food and clothing for children under her care. This is a project which does get financial support already, although there is an ongoing need for this. It is without doubt a very worthwhile work which would be quite suitable for any HFT volunteers who want to spend time there during future visits.

Some of the team visited KCMC hospital and talked with nurses, physiotherapists to get a taste of how a district hospital operates in a developing country.

I visited two banks in Arusha with a view to finding out which offered the lowest charges and would be the best option for HFT to set up a bank account in Tanzania. It appears that Tanzania Investment Bank is the best one which is currently managed by the wife of Baraka, one of the leaders in Arusha cathedral.

We also visited a Pentecostal church in one of the poorest parts of Arusha. It was run by a relatively uneducated pastor and his wife who oozed love and sacrifice. They remembered the donation that HFT gave them in November 2010 and were deeply appreciative towards us. Each day the pastor's wife, with help from others, runs a nursery for young children coming from desperately poor backgrounds and gives them food and clothes as funds allow. We went to a Sunday service and then paid a return visit a few days later with a donation for the building of a new church as the owner of the current plot is evicting them. We have recently heard that the new church building (a simple wooden hut) has been built nearby and is twice the size in anticipation of new Christians. This growing friendship made a deep impression on me and I look forward to developing it further during the next visit.

7. Tanzanian individuals

We met Joshua Kweka, the son of Steve and Joy Kweka, and find him to be a maturing student who is getting good grades in his diploma course. He particularly enjoys accounts and wants to continue with that as a career. He works hard and is taking advantage of the student experience, getting involved in the Christian Union and playing music.

Felicia Masenge starts her final year at University in January 2012 and was working very hard during our visit. She has matured considerably during the last few years and is now very confident both as a trained teacher & counsellor and mother of Marianne. It is likely that she will live in Mwanza as Emmanuel, her husband, works there and seems unlikely to be able to get a transfer to a bank in the Arusha region. So she is unlikely to play any part in the development of Tuishime School although, after her degree, her educational level would be too high for the primary sector. She is another source of encouragement to us and an example of the value of investing in people.

Marie Masenge, another of our sponsored students, was recently married and is now living in Dar where she has secured a permanent job with a NGO.

We also met Moses Paulo and his family on a number of occasions and were struck with his maturity and his new desire to take the gospel to his Maasai people although he will carry on as an education officer for many years. He is a fine example of how investment in the education of individual people can produce rich dividends.

8. Mwanza visit

Martin and Felix took a visit to Mwanza and Rwanda for a week during which we stayed with Emmanuel (Felicia's husband) in Mwanza, met some amazing people and experienced many forms of travel some of which were quite testing.

Isaya is a youth pastor at Kirumbo Community Church and works as a commercial manager in a bank. He beams the love of Jesus. Mama Masala & John Mangu are the sister and brother of a friend of Martin's in Derby City Church and were full of enthusiasm and energy for the work of God. Mama Masala helped to set up a high quality nursery school which rents space from a Pentecostal church in Mwanza. Parents want the owners to set up a primary school but the cost of this would be very high so it is uncertain whether it will actually happen.

Pastor Deo is a remarkable man who is pastor of the Maranatha Pentecostal church in Mwanza with a passion for evangelism particularly amongst those having a different faith. He wants to go into schools to teach the Bible but needs a limited amount of funding in order to be granted

permission to do so. He also has a desire to go into some of the dark rural areas with the gospel using water and agriculture projects as the means to gain entrance and acceptance. We can definitely see him as a person to work with and possibly someone to take a group of young people to for schools work.

It felt confirmatory when on three different occasions people mentioned the need for Christian books in Tanzania and this built on an idea that I had before this visit. Pastors and students at Bible training colleges have access to such books during their training but afterwards it would be a rare thing. In addition Christians who have never been formally trained would not normally have the opportunity to borrow such books. There do not appear to be Christian bookshops and it is rare for a church to have a library; those that we saw were very small and carried a very limited range of titles. I feel that this is an area of great need which if met would allow Christians to reach a higher maturity level and avoid errors which can occur in the absence of in depth, theologically correct teaching.

We visited Abel and Merci (Naomi's sister) in Madhui which is a town at a diamond mine. Merci is a primary school teacher whilst Abel is an agricultural engineer who is marvellously inventive and resourceful. He had worked with the mine to turn an area of wasteland into fertile agricultural fields by carrying out an additional water purification stage for the sewerage produced by Madhui. It provides income to Abel and employment for a number of people during planting and harvesting seasons. Abel also has many other ideas to improve farming yields of crops and cattle and a passion to start a Buy Tanzanian campaign rather than people relying on imports. He is a Tanzanian although he doesn't think like one as he sees possibilities and opportunities rather than problems. He is another person who HFT can work with in the future.

We visited a vocational college which, amongst others, offers engineering and carpentry courses. It was sad to talk with the lecturers who have little resources and textbooks and no computers. How can you teach engineering at a college where there are no machines? What could be achieved by the staff and students if the college had a lathe, cutting and milling equipment? However, to help one college would barely make a dent in this issue and it seems as though it is one for the government, or more likely one that will never happen.

9. Team members

The team members came from different backgrounds but had broadly similar expectations and interests. They gelled together exceptionally well as a team. Each person supported the others with encouragement, humility and a willingness to serve. That team members culturally adjusted in such a short period of time to such a significant extent was a tremendous answer to prayer and also helped by the pre-visit briefings that we carried out. In many cases team members warmly embraced the culture to the extent that inconveniences were gladly pushed into the background. We had great times of personal sharing and reflecting about our situations back in the UK.

Team members stayed with three different families all in Kijenge, an arrangement which worked out very well although it did require some inventive sleeping and washing arrangements. Our hosts were hugely appreciative of our visit which they found to be greatly encouraging. Much was accomplished during the visit but more importantly deep friendships were started which will be developed over the next few years. It is my hope that team members will spread the word to friends and families, that they will continue to be involved in God's work in Tanzania and that they will pray for people they have met and situations they have seen first hand.

10. Final thoughts and future plans

The visit was a huge success and was used by God to open people's eyes to a new part of his world. Everyone experienced such love and warmth from everyone we met that we have many

memories that will remain with us for ever. We had many answers to prayer both before and during the visit and we enjoyed the whole African experience.

New buildings will be required at the school during the next 18 months – a new classroom, library and renovations to the bungalow for the Masenge's. It is likely to be too ambitious to consider building a hostel during this period although in the longer term it would seem to be the right thing to do.

I feel that the emphasis of HFT is heading towards supporting Christian workers to spread the gospel, in its widest sense, in northern Tanzania. I sense that Mwanza will become a second centre for us from which we will move out into the surrounding needy rural areas with agricultural, water and educational projects that will be used by God to unlock people's hearts through preaching. I am also very enthusiastic about setting up libraries of Christian books in the large towns and cities of Northern Tanzania which will increase the spiritual depth of pastors and lay people. Of course we will not turn our backs on Arusha and Tuishime School but there will come a time when our work can be scaled back.

Martin Grosvenor
Dec 2011