

Patron: Dame Judi Dench CH



# PROJECT'S PROGRESS

## SUPPORTERS' NEWSLETTER – Summer 2011

A year of steady developments amid 'more of the same', but the year was not without tragedy. At the end of May 2010 the District Education Officer for Moshi Rural, Mr Msheri, suffered a severe stroke and has been unable to work since. His post has been filled by Mama Njau who, before studying for her degree, had been the Curriculum Development Officer in the district and who has worked with and cooperated with the charity for many years. The unexpected death of Mr Brighton Mariki, the Principal of Mshiri Vocational Training School, on 22 January 2011, left an enormous void. He was the principal since the school was built and started by the charity in 1999. Mr Mariki not only established the masonry course and inspired many of his students to become respected builders in the vicinity but he also developed the reputation of the school, supporting his staff and students to make it a happy and relaxed environment. His meticulous book-keeping and financial responsibility will be hard to better.

Our programme for young volunteers to teach in primary schools is under reconsideration prompted by a lack of suitable candidates and the changing emphasis of our work. However, three volunteers assisted our work at the beginning of 2011 and a new long-term volunteer started work in the Guerba computer centre.

Within our Whole School Development Programme, work with primary school teachers has extended to the ward of Mabogini, within

Moshi rural district, and is flourishing with the teachers asking for more and more help.

The year has seen three visits by Jane Firth to continue her work on how to teach pupils in the early-years of pre-primary, standard I and standard II. It has also seen training for school committee members, training for head teachers and their deputies, a three-day workshop for District Education Officers and Chief Inspectors of Schools of seven districts, and meetings with the new Minister for Education & Vocational Training, the Hon. Dr Shukuru Kawambwa.



*The Hon. Dr Kawambwa and Katy Allen*

Our Whole School Development Programme is overseen, researched and planned by Dr Anne Samson, and in Tanzania it is managed and administered by George Kasenga and Dilly Mtui, with assistance from the Teachers' Resource Centre coordinator, Mama Sandi.

At the request of the District Education Office, Jane Firth gave seminars in July and October 2010 to teachers and teachers' resource centre coordinators chosen by the district office as those interested in Jane's methods of teaching basic mathematics to young learners and able to disseminate them to other primary school teachers. This practice of ToT (training of trainers) or cascade-teaching has long been used in Tanzania but with limited success, and we were uncertain of its suitability with these seminars. Jane retained all her handmade resources which she usually gives to all participants but said that they would be delivered upon request. No dissemination of the teaching activities could take place without the resources (such as cardboard dominoes, washing-lines and pegs on which to hang cards etc.). More recent meetings with the district officials have highlighted the need for their budget to include follow-up visits and assistance for in-service training such as these dissemination sessions.

In January 2011 the Whole School Development Programme was introduced to the head teachers of 11 primary schools in Mabogini ward (which is west of Moshi town and about 90 minutes from the charity's office in Mshiri) with notice of Jane Firth's visit in March. This was to help pre-primary teachers to teach the basic mathematics of numbers and number-bonds from 0 to 10. One head teacher commented that she would not be able to assist her pre-primary teacher after the seminar if she herself did not know what Jane was teaching. Therefore, Jane, in a one-day seminar to all the head teachers, gave them a summary of the content and the methods to be given to their teachers over the ensuing four days. This, and the days with the teachers, was a great success; the teachers arrived early on each day, curtailed their lunch breaks and stayed late to ensure they gained as much practice as they could and to make as many of their own resources as they could.



*Pre-primary teachers avidly make teaching materials*

Following that, the freelance trainer and consultant, Evans Lushakuzi, who has worked with us many times, conducted a three-day seminar for the headteachers and their deputies from those 11 primary schools. Evans worked with the teachers on the real difficulties facing them in their schools, and covered principles of good administration, the practice of delegation, how to build an effective staff team, and the different styles of leadership. At the end the teachers prepared their own action-plans and identified areas in which they would like more help in their work. During a recent follow-up visit to three of the schools one head teacher showed the job descriptions she had written for all her staff, and another was already delegating tasks and had designed a form to detail the task, its timeframe and results. Jane Firth will return in July 2011 to work again in Mabogini, and we will arrange for Evans Lushakuzi to come and help the head teachers and their deputies again.



*Headteachers and their deputies discuss how best to delegate duties to their staff*

In June last year Evans had run a similar workshop for us with head teachers and deputies from eight primary schools in the wards of Marangu East and West. Mama Sandi and George Kasenga continue to visit those schools regularly to guide them in their management and administrative tasks.

During all of Jane's visits from July 2010 to March 2011, she visited teachers who had attended her training courses, and observed their teaching, particularly of basic mathematics. In two schools very large classes had been divided by ability and two teachers were team-teaching very effectively. In most of the classrooms the teachers had adopted the layout of putting the desks in a U-shape, thus creating a demonstration space in the middle, and the teachers had enough materials for all the children. Some of the teachers are still not spending sufficient time with

‘concrete’ practice where pupils count and use real, tangible objects before moving on to picture representations or the abstract symbol of the written numbers.

In all the in-service training workshops and seminars Swahili is the language used – either by the facilitators themselves or by an interpreter, so that the participants can understand and contribute fully.



*Pupils now understand place-value with the help of straws*

In March 2011 Drs Ndoloi and Swabiri from the Business School of the University of Dar es Salaam facilitated a workshop for District Education Officers and Chief Inspectors of Schools from the seven districts of Kilimanjaro region. This followed from a similar workshop they gave in May 2010 but since then all but two officers had moved from their posts.



*District officials enjoyed working together*

The workshop broadly covered management and communication, and led to constructive discussions particularly covering the different budgets of district offices and inspectorate offices, and how each office can work more closely together to solve some operational problems. The participants enthusiastically requested more workshops as they value not only the gaining of new skills and knowledge but also

the opportunity to be together and discuss shared problems.

In September 2010, working with trainers from Singa Chini Teacher Training College, we held some training for the school committee members (akin to school governors) of Mengeni and Sembeti primary schools. Once the members understand their roles and responsibilities they can be of greater support to the head teachers and school staff. Singa Chini Teacher Training College are already committed to helping us with similar training to school committee members of schools in Mabogini ward.

Our work with materials and publications has moved rather slowly. Many of the materials to assist the teachers in the teaching of mathematics have been translated into Swahili. We have a publisher in Dar es Salaam who is now working on graphics and layout.

The project for the reintroduction of the old English course, which was so successfully used in primary school years ago, faced a bit of a setback with the change of Minister for Education following the Tanzanian general election in October 2010. The former Minister for Education, Professor Maghembe, asked to see Katy Allen, the Director of the charity, in January 2011 and told her of his continued commitment to getting the books back in to use in the primary schools. Katy then met the new Minister, Dr Kawambwa, and he seemed positive.

However, a meeting with Dr Kawambwa in April 2011 was a little disappointing in that he was expecting a formal submission about the books, whereas it was assumed that this point had been passed many months before. However, to ensure the project is put incontrovertibly within the government system, a formal submission has been made. Samples of the books are being printed in India, and very soon a sample package of books will be submitted for approval. Encouragingly, a question was asked in the Tanzanian parliament on 6 April by the MP for Singida West about the progress of the reintroduction of the books, ‘because this project would really help to improve the teaching of English in our primary schools.’ This is being followed up.



## VOLUNTEERS FOR THE PROJECTS

The 'gap year' programme that ran for 13 years for Tanzanian primary school children to have native English speakers to help them to learn English seems to have run its course. With applications so few and far between, the decision was made not to run the programme in 2011, and so the training course at the end of 2010 was not held. We did, however, have three volunteers at the beginning of 2011. One of them, Kath Williams, had been on two previous teaching assignments with us, and so was already well-versed in how to teach English.



Kath Williams demonstrates 'strong' in her English lesson

Another, Tessa Catton, helped in a pre-primary classroom for three months and, additionally, assisted the teachers to make teaching posters, and also developed products with the craft workgroup at the vocational training school. Our third volunteer, Huw Jenkins, came to help at the vocational training school and this proved to be invaluable with the sad death of the principal.



*Tessa Catton found time to help the craft workgroup at the Vocational Training School*

With Jane Firth, we are planning a new volunteer programme for trained primary school teachers to come for a three-month period to help in the pre-primary classrooms with a focus on basic mathematics.

We have a new volunteer in the UK, John Douglas, who organised a climb of Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds. The Kilimanjaro Climb took place in March 2011 with 19 climbers ranging in age from 26 to 74. It was most exciting that all 19 reached the top, with 18 reaching Uhuru Peak and one reaching Gilman's Point.

They were raising money for a new project at Mshiri vocational training school. John is organising more Kilimanjaro climbs for this year and next.

## MSHIRI VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL

Since the tragic death of the principal, Mr Brighton Mariki, in January 2011, the carpentry teacher and deputy principal, Mr Peter Mbowe, has been running and managing the school. An advertisement was placed in two English-medium national newspapers for a new principal from which 13 applications were received. Interviews will take place in May and we hope a new principal will be in post in July.

Huw Jenkins volunteered at the school for three months at the beginning of 2011 to assist with some of the accounting and management systems. Huw's first task was to update and computerise the list of equipment and materials at the school. He also completed a stock-take at Village Crafts shop which is one of the income-generating projects of the school, and improved the way in which the shop manager orders and checks items from the craft workgroup at the school.



*Peter Mbowe and Huw Jenkins worked together at the Vocational Training School*

The school is not yet financially independent of the charity, and it is important that it becomes self-sustaining without relying on subsidies from the charity. With this in mind, a new course is being established for motor mechanics which will include computerised mechanics. We were lucky to obtain four adjacent plots of land in a prime position on the busy Moshi-Himo main road at Njia Panda. We are building a motor repair garage and workshop, and this is being sponsored by our new fundraising climbs of Mount Kilimanjaro. The first climb in March 2011 raised over £50,000 for this new venture. A motor mechanics course, being popular with many young men, and on an accessible site, will attract more students to the vocational training school and be able to generate school fees at a fully commercial rate.

## ADMINISTRATION AND PLANS

Our Guerba Computer Centre in Mshiri has a new manager, Craig Collier. Craig contacted us in the UK and since January we have been benefiting from his exceptional computer skills. Craig has improved the internet café with a faster connection and download speed for a network of 8 computers. The charity's office is on the floor above the computer centre, and Craig has improved the office wireless connection. He is also teaching villagers how to use computers and various programmes, and one young man is being assisted by Craig in his music compositions on the computer. Craig has also organised film nights with DVDs played through the centre's digital projector on to a plain white wall in the seminar room. The centre is attracting more and more customers – most of whom are at or have recently completed secondary school.

We have been approached by other organisations involved in education projects in Tanzania and

Kenya. In September 2010 Dr Anne Samson and Dilly Mtui visited a project in Mtwara and offered advice for their implementation of work in primary schools. Anne is now preparing a plan for them. In June 2011 we are hosting a 'network day' for the UK-based education organisations with which we have formed ties so that ideas and experiences can be shared about work in Africa.

We look forward also to working with the teacher-trainers at Singa Chini Teacher Training College. Jane Firth and Anne Samson will have a training day with them in July to demonstrate ways of introducing and practising pupil-centred teaching methods. After meetings in April 2011, Anne will be working with the district inspectorate on ways in which the primary school teachers can adapt how they assess their pupils so that the time-consuming practice of marking every exercise in red pen can be reduced and other methods of assessment can be adopted.



*The four-times table makes sense with bottle-tops laid out, and it can be great fun*

We are committed to long-term projects in our work to improve the quality of primary education in government primary schools and to provide skills training to young people. We are most grateful to all of our donors who understand that lasting change and real progress takes time.

**Our overall aim is to enhance the quality of education, especially for village children, in order for future generations to become confident and responsible citizens.**

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