

Heshima Newsletter

December 2023



UK Charity Registered No: 1114419; Tanzania NGO reg no. 00008090

Hello again: just a brief update on the Heshima project after spending another 2 weeks in Tanzania in early November. There had been a long period of drought, resulting in dry river-beds and desert-like conditions throughout much of the inland region of Tanzania. More serious still was the fact that crops which had been planted earlier in the year had withered and died, and there was no vegetation growing for the numerous herds of sheep, goats and cows. All of this, together with the continuing impact of the war in the Ukraine resulting in higher energy costs, meant that life for many was even more of a struggle than usual.



Thankfully for Tanzanians, the day after I arrived the longed-for rains also arrived! One local suggested that this white man had brought the rains from the UK---except that whilst I was there, the rains also continued in the UK, or at least in South Wales! Unfortunately, as many were predicting (due to a combination of the El Nino effect and climate change), the rains were heavier than usual and longer-lasting. This has caused serious problems for people, whether travelling on 2 feet or on 2 or 4 wheels. The rains have also delayed the planting of crops. In addition, about 40km away there was a serious landslide which washed away a village, killing round 60 people. However, I understand that the weather has quietened down somewhat now.



Photos show Heshima before and 2 days after the rain started

As for Heshima, the textile project continues to provide training for young Tanzanian women, although sadly some have been unable to complete the training for various reasons: perhaps because they are expected to look after the family home and children or other relatives. Interestingly, a young boy (14 or so) has also voluntarily joined the project, and is making good progress with basic sewing skills. It is hoped that Heshima may be able to sponsor him to go to a good school during the week, and then come to Heshima at weekends.

Mwamvita, together with Adelfina (one of the first ladies to be trained at Heshima), continues to over-see the project, and ensure that customer orders are fulfilled. These include cushion and chair covers, curtains, aprons, shopping bags, and so on.

Mwamvita also continues to look after the nursery children, although for various reasons numbers are down at present.

The exciting news is that the carpentry workshop/training centre is now under construction, although building has been delayed by the rains: one of the lorries delivering bricks and cement got stuck in the mud just outside the entrance to Heshima!



The building, when finished will consist of lock-ups and a large, open sided workshop. Tools will mainly be supplied by a similar project near Lake Mwanza, a few 100km distant, which itself is supported by Welsh project “Tools for Self Reliance”. TfSR collects and renovates unwanted tools from around the Wales and then sends them out to the Mwanza project.

Being realistic, it is unlikely that the carpentry centre will be up and running before May/June: in addition to the completion of the building and the equipping of it, a suitable trainer has to be identified. But, at long last, the carpentry project is more than just a dream!



At the meeting in Tanzania with some of the Trustees it was agreed to find ways of increasing the involvement of local people in Heshima in order to encourage “ownership” of the project, and therefore increasing their participation in the project. This was something that perhaps has not been

taken seriously enough until now, so contact with the local Village Elder will be made to see how we can achieve this.

As for the site itself, our caretaker Kasioki continues to play a major part in developing a pleasant environment for all, including planting and nurturing a variety of fruit trees.



Photo showing rain-deprived environment of Heshima, but with many fruit trees surviving

Kasioki and teacher-friend also run a Saturday afternoon session offering free extra tuition in English to primary school children who are about to transfer to secondary school. On average around 40 children take advantage of this, and enjoy the games at the end of the session.



A big thank you ...*asante sana*... again to all who have donated or continue to do so. During the year we have received one large donation, and accessed some funding from 2 charitable organisations in the UK, in addition to donations from individuals: all donations of whatever size are equally valued and appreciated! There are no administrative costs: all money donated and raised is used for the project itself, and I pay my own way when I visit Tanzania.

Happy New Year/Blwyddyn Newydd Da from Wales, and “Heri ya mwaka mpya” from Tanzania!

Alan Cram

Heshima Treasurer and Secretary.

