

HESHIMA NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2013

TEXTILE PROJECT

This term has been busy in the textile centre with a real focus on the Christmas decoration packs, which we have been selling in the UK for £10 pack. We have now sent out 160 packs, plus some sets of stockings, which hopefully will go a long way to helping the textile project move out of the store room and into a new room.



Maja has also managed to sell some to a hotel in Pangani, as well as range of items to people as Christmas presents. Maja is working on some new designs for quilts (watch this space).



The Heshima ladies have also been making costumes for the primary production as well as for the CD launch.

Maja organised a Christmas party for the women with sodas and pilau, which the women cooked. It was a nice way to end the year.



SATURDAY SCHOOL

This term Saturday School, having started slowly, suddenly became busy finishing with 120-140 students in the last 2 weeks. We have help from some of the new teachers: Adam Waller and Glynn Richards, and we are hoping to get a workable rota set up for January.

A couple of boarders have started coming and we will open it



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up to more of the International Award Students as part of their community service.

BUILDING

With funding from one of the Rotary members in Arusha and money fundraised by Claire and Rob, we have managed to complete a classroom for the preschool. This was mainly due to the hard work of Claire and Rob, who worked for 3 weeks non stop to get most of it done. The plastering is due to be finished over Christmas in time for teaching in January.



The textile Centre has gained part of a second floor and we have the money to finish one third of it, so hopefully it will get done very soon. We have fundraised £1500 from the Christmas packs to help pay for the next bit, but as they say here "pole pole" (slowly slowly).



PRE-SCHOOL

We have found local funding for a preschool teacher from our Rotary contacts. A Meditation group, who collect money for charity every meeting is going to donate to Heshima and has also said they will make sure we are well equipped with chairs, table cupboards etc.



We have hired a local teacher, Moses, that we have had contact with for a time. Alan has seen him teach on his visits and he comes and supports at Saturday School occasionally. Hopefully



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this will be the start of an expansion of our education programme. Moses has met with the Heshima women to find out their children's' needs and discussed whether he will teach in English or Kiswahili.



We will start enrolment in January and hope to have a class of 20 children, prioritising the Heshima textile trainee's children.

VOLUNTEERS



Rob and Claire came in September for 3 weeks and worked amazingly hard on the building, shifting sand in an elderly wheelbarrow. Without them there would definitely be no classroom. They also made some tyre rockers that the kids loved.



Alan came out again in October for 2 weeks and was a real support. He spent some time with Moses, discussing possibilities of working with Heshima, which paved the way for us employing him as a full time preschool teacher. Here is his report:

Whenever I go out to Tanzania, I'm never quite sure what to expect when arriving at Heshima. Will the main building be built, and ready and waiting for me to paint? Will the paint I so carefully deposited on the wall of the store-room/textile centre during my last visit have peeled off? And so on. Well, the answer to both questions was no, or rather not exactly. The main



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building *had* progressed somewhat, and some of the paint *was* peeling off! However, what I did find was that a brand new building— the children’s centre —had sprouted from the ground. So together with Clare and Rob (two more volunteers who did such wonderful work on their previous visit) we dug out and transported what seemed like several hundreds of wheelbarrow loads of sand from the nearby dry river bed to make the floor of the new building. With the help of the *fundis* (local workmen), this was levelled. The concrete was then mixed by hand, transported up the ramp, laid and, again, levelled. Job done! Windows and doors were ordered, and hopefully to be installed by Christmas. This room would enable, in the short-term, the children who meet at Heshima on Wednesdays to have some shelter during the rains, but would also serve as a classroom for future projects.

And now, the see-saws.....It’s amazing what can be done with half a car tyre, a couple of pieces of wood, two handles and a lick of paint! Clare had found a simple design for see-saws, and so it came about. Within hours, half a dozen of them had been made: I was impressed by Clare and Rob’s initiative and handiwork, and the children certainly were! Here in the UK, while millions of children sit playing alone on their latest electronic gadgets, these simple “toys” enabled children who have nothing to play together and have fun.



With Clare and Rob’s departure, I repainted the storeroom, ably assisted by local man Zach. I also made a daily visit to Moses and his “Highland School”. Moses, you may remember, is a Tanzanian who wants to give local pre-school and primary children, and those waiting to go on to secondary education, a head start. Moses lives with his wife Magoudi and daughter Goodluck in a single room hut. He rents a couple of small rooms which he has turned into classrooms. Two years ago, around half a dozen young children attended daily. This time, the “school” had grown to 50 or so, and Moses now employs two teachers! Parents are voting with their feet, and taking their children out of the local schools and sending them to Moses! The children are taught basic skills, in Swahili and English, and just as importantly, at break times, the teachers go outside with the children and play with them. Also, thankfully, children are not beaten with a stick if they do anything wrong. Moses has now arranged transport for the children, and hopes to provide a hot meal for them. Moses’ school is self-financing, the parents paying a small monthly fee. Close links are being built between Moses and Heshima, and it



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seems likely that Moses will be teaching children at Heshima in the near future. Watch this space!

As always, my two week visit was made all the more memorable because of the friendliness of the Tanzanian people, who despite having very little, are always welcoming of this rich *Mzwngu*. My thanks to Clare and Rob for their friendship, company and hard work; and my special thanks to Steve and Alison for their vision, and continued belief in Heshima, sometimes against all the odds; to Maja for overseeing the textile centre; and all the others behind the scenes in Tanzania and the UK who work hard to make Heshima what it is and what it will be.

Here's to my next visit: *kwaheri!*

Alan Cram

DONATIONS

We have been very lucky this term in getting a range of donations for the building. Peter Gordon donated £1000, the Anglican Church of Costa Almeria & Costa Calida in Spain donated 1000 Euros and Alan Cram donated £600, which means we will be able to complete the shop and room below it in the new building.

We have also had a whole range of people selling Christmas decorations for us: Jill Gordon, Katy and Emily Rowe, Wilma Rix, Megan Wilson, Martin Flett, Jane Watts, Icknield School, Trish Borg and Joan Nichols. A big thanks to all of them.



Thanks once again for your continued interest in the work of Heshima and for your support and encouragement.

Best Wishes,
All of us at Heshima



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