

The Latest from Heshima: December 2024

I returned a couple of weeks ago from my annual visit to Tanzania, and, of course, Heshima. I can report that all is going well. The access road—impassable following heavy rain—is being improved, with hard-core being laid down, and a bridge over the river is almost complete. This will hopefully enable Heshima to attract some of the hundreds of tourists who pass by on the main road *en route* for the Ngorogoro Crater and other National Parks.

The textile project is thriving, with 6 new trainees attending every morning, and 3 fully trained ladies in the afternoon, making items to order. We are very grateful to the nearby Braeburn International School for placing orders for curtains, duvet covers and chair covers, giving the ladies an income. The whole project continues to be supervised by Mwamvita and Adelfina.



The carpentry training centre building is, at last, almost complete. We are very fortunate that Matt Dillingham and his family have moved to the area. Matt's wife is a pilot with MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) and Matt is a househusband, who wants to get fully involved at Heshima. He also has a keen interest in carpentry. He is at present sourcing tools and other equipment for the project, and has submitted an application for tools with Tools with a Mission. In addition, Tools for Self Reliance Cymru, for whom I've been collecting unwanted tools

from local people here in Wales, also has a project in Tanzania, and they are also willing to sell re-furbished tools. Once a local carpentry teacher is found, it is hoped to start training the first cohort of men (and women?) in the next couple of months. We are very grateful to various charitable organisations in the UK for their financial support: the latest being a donation of £3000.

The project also offers free Saturday afternoon support for older primary school children, attracting up to 60 children. You may remember that in Government schools, teaching is through the medium of Swahili, but in Secondary schools teaching is in English. For many children, the transition from primary to secondary is therefore very difficult. The photos (over page) show an outdoor English lesson for



primary children, led by Mwamvita and the Heshima caretaker Kasioki. Following an hour or so of interactive teaching, the children are then let loose in the grounds to play a variety of games: something that is as important as the English lesson, since many children do not have the opportunity to play—in their “spare time” many boys will be expected to herd the

family's goats and sheep, and the girls expected to help at home, including collecting water.



Mwamvita and Kasioki also continue to run the daily nursery class, with around 15 children on the books.



Finally, just in case you think I only go to Tanzania for the sun and warmth (certainly true this year!), I did spend a couple of days helping Kasioki re-paint 2 of the buildings!

A big thank you to all who have supported Heshima in any way. All money raised goes to the project, and I always pay my own way. The only paid staff are the 3 Tanzanians: Mwamvita, Kasioki and Adelfina.

If you have any questions, or would like more information, or would like to buy the popular colourful aprons (£10) or the shopping bag-in-a bag (£5)—excellent Christmas presents!!-- please let me know.

(action photo shows granddaughter Leila with apron!)

Happy Christmas/Nadolig Llawen/Krismasi Njema!

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