

Report by Graham Pountain : Bethany Trip November 2022

Travel: Flew with Turkish air – 2 hours late leaving from Manchester, missed connection in Turkey provided with hotel accommodation till a similar flight the following day. Due to the one day delay I missed the connection with Air Tanzania so had to book a flight the following day. The Turkish air flight the following day to Dar took off 30mins late and the Air Tanzania had changed the flight time to 15 mins earlier than booked so made the connection very tight but managed with about 5 mins to spare. Landed at Mwanza at 06.45 and met by Mwita and Jesca.

Phone and Internet connections: Talktalk messaged me to say the data cost would be 10p per megabyte in Turkey. Later another message from Talktalk when I reached Tanzania said the data cost would be £3 per megabyte (30 times more expensive than Turkey). The phone charges in Tanzania are now unbelievably high even using a local sim card..

Parents contributions for meals: Emmakulatha intends to charge each parent (who can afford it) 6,000Tsh (£2.20) per term to cover part of the cost of the food. She considers of the 250 Village children perhaps as many as 200 student's parents will make the donation. The money will be collected by the class teachers and finally given to Jesca as the home provides the meals.

Teachers ID's: I printed 9 new school staff ID Labels (3 of which were volunteer teachers)

Teachers Meeting: Met all the school staff to thank them for all their hard work and thanked them for the sacrifices they made to enable the vision to continue.

Donated Laptop: A laptop donated by Mark and Gill Bates was sold to one of the teachers for 300,000 Tsh (approx £100 which will be given to the poor fund). The total will be paid by three instalments of 100,000 Tsh.

Songs: two new English songs were learnt 'Come thou Fount of every blessing' and 'I know not why God's wondrous Grace'. These are now on You tube.

Agriculture: The rainy season has just started and on Friday the 11th (Nov 2022) the second heavy downpour occurred. Therefore tomorrow - Saturday the site workers and children will start planting maize as the ground is now soft enough. For the last couple of weeks our tractor has been working hard ploughing the land ready for planting.

Mains Power: Very intermittent – sometimes off for over 8 hours at any time either day or night.

Mains water: Again very intermittent sometimes off for hours or days at a time.

Building work: Finally the 3 wings of our little girls dorm each have their own toilet and shower facilities. A tower has been erected outside ready to hold two large water tanks to hold water in reserve in case our main water supply fails

Secondary School children: Form 4 are just starting their national exams which start Monday 14th November and last for 2 weeks.

Meeting with home staff including care-workers, site workers, cooks etc. We talked about the present financial situation and likelihood of future development.

Visit by Nkamba, Duttu, Graham , Mariam Christopher, Rwechungura and Elizabeth Robert: It was good to see our ex Bethany children who seem to be doing OK. However they were complaining about the fact that the whole of Tanzania was suffering from both water shortage and power shortages and both would some times go off for days at a time. Also the prices in Tanzania were on the increase across the board. Rwechungura now a young man of 35yrs gave a small donation to help with the work. He was cared for by Bethany from the age of 10yrs to 18yrs. He has a wife and 3 children who are now living in Kenya.

Steam Engine demonstration: Std 7 and form 2 leavers enjoyed the demonstration of steam power and the production of electricity.

Exchange rate: At the time of writing this report the exchange rate had dropped to as low as 2,650 Tsh to the pound from 3,200 earlier in the year. A drop of nearly 20% which means saving have to be made.

Contribution by Ex-Bethany girls educated in the UK. A group of ten girls have formed an association and have promised to contribute towards the cost of the Christmas meal. They are; Emmakulatha, Jesca, Fatuma, Sophia, Nkamba, Stella, Mpelwa, Rehema, Elizabeth and Deborah.

Staff Training: Most of our care- staff have been on a government training course. Jesca helped run the course which she believed had been very useful.

Bethany Pre and Primary School: The numbers now are approx 350 as no new children have been admitted and std 7 have now finished their government exams and waiting to go to secondary school. Hopefully this lower number will help reduce the funding requirement.