

Report from Makang'wa - May 2013



Greetings from 'the hillside'. The view from the hill is changing as we move into the dry season. From sleeping on top of the sheets I am now reaching for a blanket at about 3.00am. The cooler nights are most welcome.

On April 30th we received an official visit from the newly appointed District Director of Chamwino District, together with two other officials from his office. The visitors were greatly impressed by all they experienced. It was an encouraging day for all at the Center and for the teachers at Prince of Peace and Children of Peace Schools. We do now have enthusiastic support in high places. The Amani philosophy of operation is particularly attractive to them. The Director is third from the left. (Children of Peace School)

The Prince of Peace school has received its final inspection, leading up to official national registration. It seems that we are close to completing this long and involved journey. This is timely as next year, the boy pictured here, will be in Standard (grade) Four. All Standard Four students have to sit for a national examination, possible only for school with national registration. It was lunch time at the school. The children enjoy a mug of hot porridge and chapati.



During the past few weeks the first two of the water wells to be drilled in the Five Well Program have been successfully completed. The water is sweet. The next step is to equip the wells with pumps and elevated concrete tanks. The first well is at Prince of Peace Preschool, which is central to the northern section of the large village. The second is in the Chalula or southern section of the village. This area has suffered from severe water shortage for many years. The Chalula Primary School has over one thousand pupils! Now they will have a plentiful supply of clean water.

At the same time, through a generous donation from a supporter in Montana, we have been able to partner with the first stage of the construction of a new Health Care Center at Mvumi Makulu, now far from the site of the first well. Presently, in terms of finance, it is about 60% village and 40% Amani, with local people providing most of the labor input.

Meanwhile at the Amani Center work is well under way on the fitting out of the South gate House as a Student Vocational Training Center. It will receive students, fulfilling work experience assignments. They will come from a number of different Institutions, including the



Sokoine University of Agriculture. Staff from the institutions will supervise the students. Key supervision will come from the Central Zone Agricultural Officer. I see this as a key development in the life of the Amani Center, and in our interaction with the surrounding communities. However, it does put us on our toes as we are expected to provide the basics for a positive learning and 'hands-on' work experience for the students. The photograph shows the initial group of students. They are holding the first bale of

hay made with the hand operated hay baler they constructed. We now have about 150 bales.

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We have just completed the maize harvest. The output was not all we desired but, considering the difficult season, we are not disappointed. We were able to commence the new drip irrigation system in late January and therefore did increase the harvest in one section. We are now harvesting the maize stalks. If we were in Australia or the USA we would have a silage machine. Here we have hand sickles! We have a lot of maize stalks to harvest! We are thankful for the donation of a chaff cutter. The maize material will become chaff and, mixed with other inputs, will be a valuable feedstock for the animals. We shall make it available to farmers in the area so that they can process fodder for their cattle in a beneficial manner. I expect that only our men will be permitted to operate it! FINGERS!

We are in the planning stage at the center of preparing areas for the planting of two varieties of trees which provide a desirable fodder input for cattle and pigs. These trees are pruned to a height of about eighteen inches. The new growth each season is harvested, dried and put through a hammer mill in preparation for feeding to the animals. This is something we want to model so that local farmers can also plant trees and improve the condition of their animals. We are currently looking at ways to turn an old flour mill into a hand operated hammer mill.

This year the grapes are simply wonderful! There will be a large harvest and, we hope, a good market. As we pruned early we shall be almost the first grower with grapes ready for harvest. Both table grapes and wine grapes have done well.

Meanwhile, here at the main housing, work is underway to transform three rooms into new office space. Our present one room office is hopelessly overcrowded. This work displaces the housekeeper's room and one guest room. A new housekeeper's room is under construction and, near by the new guest room. It will accommodate two persons. We now receive more visitors as the 'word' spreads. The Amani 'tree' is growing. We also receive invitations to visit more distant communities to share the work and the experiences of Amani. The USA and Australian Foundations are sharing the cost of the building work. We are blessed through the generosity of many friends.

Well, all is not roses. The clutch on the tractor failed, a door handle has broken on the Toyota, and someone tried to rip off one of the rear view mirrors as we drove through the city! They cost 500,000/= each! I guess we all have days like that. However, we must replace it or every traffic policemen on the highway to Dar es salaam will impose a fine.

Thank you for your support, expressed in many ways. The people here are truly thankful for your kindness.



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