

# Education!

June 2007

We are steadily progressing towards the commencement of activity on the site of the school land at Mvumi Makulu. Well, some activity has taken place but it is the very preliminary work to gain access to two work sites. A key work will be the official surveying of the property. The village believes that they have given about fifty five acres for the school. However Makang'wa village believed that they had given 250! It has surveyed at 530 acres! Fifty five will be most adequate for the new school. The site is adjacent to the new Secondary School site. The village has 'almost' completed one building of the new school. The photograph was taken on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Some people were working at the site as we drove by. This building is very near to the boundary with our site. Our land then extends from the Secondary School to the river bed – wide and sandy – and then across the cultivated land to the north east. As you can see the river bed is very wide, very full of sand and shallow! It will be like having a school at the 'beach'. There will be no shortage of



sand for building. That is a great advantage as transport costs are relatively high here. However we shall have to transport rock from our Center. We do have plenty of that commodity. The people here are expert at building with concrete. Timber is scarce and unless treated will soon be devoured by termites! A hard red wood is used for doors and windows. It has a natural resistance to those pests.



Recently the people of the village have cleared away the growth from around the old well site and the original well keeper's house. In the 1970's they surely believed in building a solid platform for the pump engine. The three men are standing on the old foundation. The bore hole is at their feet. We have recently had a hive of bees removed from the bore! We anticipate being able to provide water for both the new Primary School and also the Secondary School – and for the farm we shall develop to support the operation of the primary School.

The old well keeper's house 'looks' to be a ruin but it is basically in good condition. After the original pumping equipment was stolen people began to remove the roof, doors and windows! Opportunity knocks! The walls are strong therefore our 'fundies' (builders) will do a complete renovation of the small house and add a covered cooking area and proper toilet. The house will then be very suitable for a security person. We shall have the well cleaned and tested. All being 'well' the next steps will be to (a) build a secure storage shed (4 meters sq.) and (b) to install a submersible pump/motor and install a diesel generator. We shall probably use this until we can afford to bring in electricity from the TANESCO line which runs to Mvumi Mission. A group from the village is next going to clear a road way through the bush to the nearby road so that service trucks can easily access the site. We shall need



to have as much as possible of this done before the next wet season arrives. All of this will consume quite a sum of money but it is all absolutely necessary prior to commencement of the construction of school buildings.

I am setting up a small committee whose chief responsibility will be to steer us through the necessary steps with the Regional Education Office. We have had all of the 'informal' discussions and they are VERY supportive but now we do need to get to formalities. As you will understand there will be an extraordinary amount of work to be done. Assembling the key teaching personnel will be a major task.

I am most thankful to a group of people in Brisbane, Australia who have dedicated themselves to supporting the school project. They have recently opened an Op-Shop in a Brisbane suburb and staff it with volunteers. It is now gaining new Volunteers as people become aware of the purpose of the shop and citizens have been most generous in donating items for sale. All in all it is a great success! However we know that the operation of the enterprise involves REGULAR donation of time and energy. When I am in Brisbane in about five weeks time one of the key activities will be the official opening of the shop.

As we live in an area of village communities it is most important that the local people are closely involved in the building of the new school. The Education Department does have published plans for school buildings. They are very adequate and set a good standard. It is up to the individual community to 'improve' these plans as they are able. The key things is: local 'fundies' can build these classrooms. I have seen some. They are very fine. There may be people from Australia or the USA who would want to be involved in the building of structures. My understanding is that 'volunteers' work beside the local builders and then add particular expertise where local knowledge may be lacking. You would find that the local people are most gracious and thankful for all assistance and advice offered in this manner. While we may save money by having most building done by 'volunteers' we lose out badly in terms of community relations.

In the past week I have had a couple from New York staying at the center. They were in the area last year in connection with Habitat for Humanity. While here they came into contact with the Chalula Primary School. They were most impressed with the quality of the teaching staff and also the severe lack of facilities and supplies. After arriving back home they began to share about the needs. The result is that Chalula School is now getting a WONDERFUL Library, fully equipped with shelving, tables, chairs etc- and solar power for the lighting and librarians. It will also serve as a Community Library. It really is a 'first' for a local Primary School in Tanzania! I expect that we shall be 'hosting' them again in several months time when the Library will be officially opened. Well, there will be two in the district within a year or so!

I ask you to pray for guidance as we proceed with the school project.

**Pray** for wisdom – and patience. It seems to be taking a long time but then we have been 'on site' only a little over one year.

**Pray** for God's provision for the needs of the school project – the physical needs: structures, etc and also the need to find suitable staff. I am determined that all will be Tanzanian. I have been told that we will need to 'import' teachers from Kenya and Uganda. That we must NOT do. However 'volunteers' from Australia or the USA will be very welcome. We may very well need a 'tutor' to teach the teachers and to encourage them in their work.

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