

Tanzania Update
March 2019



Dear Tanzanian Link Partner,

Educational Team Visit Feb 2019 - We have had the immense privilege to see the partnerships working first hand over the last two weeks. We have travelled far geographically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. It has been a roller coaster ride and we have been overwhelmed by what we have seen and heard. It truly has been a life-changing opportunity. If you have not done so already, please do catch up on our blog at: <http://www.leeds.anglican.org/tanzania-blog>

Our first school visit was to Nyanza (Linked with Gomersal St Mary's) – Pupils here didn't used to come to school. It is one of the remotest schools in the Diocese. Since the church (and Gomersal St Mary's) have been supporting the school via the link, the local community supports them more and children are made to come to school, especially as they have been able to improve the buildings, buy books, other resources and desks. As a result, more children attend school.

The impact of money raised was clear in terms of new floors, new desks, water harvesting technology installed and new cooks employed to provide the children with food during the day. They used to go all day without. Better nutrition means the children can learn.



When the teachers of Nyanza School were asked, 'What are your dreams for the school?' they responded that they want to be more of a community and



to get all children into school. They want to change the future of even just one child. During our time with the children, three boys made up an impromptu song for us and for the rest of the school about the importance of coming to school. They would like to buy more desks like this one, bought with money from Gomersal St Mary's.

Visit 2 took us to Kirumi (Link schools Headlands and Roberttown)

Here again, we were treated to the welcome of royalty by the children and staff. The children danced and sang for us a traditional dance performed by girls in appreciation of boys when they become men. Our welcome was followed by the opportunity to speak to the teaching staff who asked us challenging questions about life & teaching in the UK. A question asked of our Tanzanian



colleagues was, 'What does this link mean to you?' to which the answer was, 'the need is great'. We saw this in that again children sitting on the floor in one classroom, where there was no real floor, only dusty earth. Though the teachers are resourceful – see the clock teaching aid made from a plastic container lid – they most need teaching resources and text-books. Because of the challenge of having over 100 children in a class with only



one adult, the pedagogy is largely chalk and talk, but we were able to see teachers at work and our very own Kate Morrison (from Lindley Infants) was given the opportunity to teach some English. Rising to the challenge, she did a fine job, but owned up to being glad this wasn't an everyday occurrence. The rest of us were glad we hadn't been in her shoes!

Our School visit #3 was Mshikmano (Partnered with St Botolph's and Ackworth Howard School)

The familiar welcome was magnified several times over at Mshikmano School. Split into A & B, this is two schools in one where one school attends in the morning and the second in the afternoon. In honour of our visit, both schools with a total of 3500 pupils and 32 teachers were present to



welcome us. We were overwhelmed and moved by the 'wave' of children that ran to meet us as we arrived. In this school, the community works with the Mshikmano and we could sense how much



the adults care for the children there. The government can see what a difference the Linking Project has made to the school. The hope is that one day both schools will be able to be brought together and that children can have a full day of education. Mshikmano means 'solidarity' in Swahili and that value pervades the school(s). Challenges for this school include building further classrooms in order to house all the children in this densely populated area. A bag of cement costs £8. A classroom around £8000. They also need teaching resources. Michael Walker, Headteacher at Ackworth Howard was moved by the welcome, hospitality and especially by the vision of the teachers there.



Visit #4 – Mugango – Partnered with Windmill and Battyeford

This visit saw Miss Wilson joining in with the African dancing and the other team members participating in sports' day including a sack race, a lemon and spoon race (eggs are too expensive to waste) and running carrying a bottle on the head. There was controversy during the sack race when Mr Walker went down after coming into contact with Mr Wildey. Foul play was suspected but not proven.

Close to Lake Victoria, this community needs Mosquito nets in order to reduce student and staff absenteeism and sickness from malaria.

Arthur was reduced to tears as the children welcomed us with their very moving song celebrating that we had travelled a long way from England just to visit them. The song prayed for our safe journey and God's blessing on us. Kate was overwhelmed by the gifts that the children had made for her school and for Battyeford.



School #5 – Kinyariri – Partnered with Ossett Southdale and Hemsworth St Helens



When we stepped down from the coach at this school, we were surrounded by little faces and hands desperate to say, 'Jambo.' The children had made flags to welcome us which said, 'Welcome friends!' The children sang as we walked and when we reached the school we returned the greeting singing a song created by Stephen, 'Asante kwa kutukaribisha (thank you for your greeting),' which delighted the children and staff alike. In the classroom, we had the opportunity to introduce ourselves in Swahili to the children and teachers. Ruth then exchanged gifts with the headteacher of the school both leaving and taking a little of our school's love with us. A spontaneous dance began which engulfed Ruth and Michael who danced with the children until they were all completely

covered in red dust. The rest of the team had been visiting the school buildings which are in desperate need of renovation and completion. An example of this is a classroom which has no floor, no roof and houses a class of 160 nursery children in the baking African heat. The visit was both a privilege and a huge reminder of the importance of strengthening the link between Tanzania and schools from the Diocese of Leeds.

Visit #6 – Buhemba – Linked with Darrington and Normanton

With 696 pupils and 10 teachers, we were challenged again to the reality of trying to teach in Tanzanian schools. The link has really supported the school to develop its classrooms. The room on



the right has been renovated, whilst the one on the left is awaiting work being done. The children still use it though. The sooner it can be completed the better.

Kate was overwhelmed when one little girl with a beautiful smile on her face ran up to her and without giving it a second thought threw her arms around her, showing the overwhelming happiness we can bring to these children through our visits. A special moment which will last a lifetime. Once we had made our way through the crowds of children who have so much love to give we visited the Headteacher's office and took some time to look at the work displayed from their link schools Darrington and Normanton All Saints. They had clearly hung the banners and bunting up with pride to show their strong link.

Next we got the opportunity to explore the classrooms - again the gifts from the link schools in England were instantly visible on the walls and the numberline and alphabet were used as a resource to support the children's learning.

It had been a particularly hot day, so Arthur suggested the children's performances took place in the classroom. Arthur's concern for the children standing in the heat shows his big heart and the care he has for the children in his diocese.



singing, dancing and drama we had the opportunity to hear from the Head Boy and Head Girl.

The 18 year old Head Boy gave a very moving speech about his life and the struggles he has faced but the adversity and courage he continues to show to reach his goals. He told us how he only

started Primary school when he was 14 because before this he was living on the streets and didn't enjoy education. It was only when the Tanzanian government introduced the law of all children going to school that he realised the importance of education and the way this could change his life and support him on his journey to become a soldier and protect his country.

This visit again proves how vital these links are, not only in supporting the education of children in Tanzania but also in educating our children and communities back in England. To be able to see the needs for ourselves is harrowing and challenging, but it does galvanise us into ensuring that more is done to help.

In total we visited 11 schools and the Safe House at Mugumu. Next term's update will contain news from the following schools Nyamisisi, Bunda Girls, Act Mara, Regata School, The Safe House and Issenye Secondary School.

Some final challenging thoughts

Getting to the schools was a challenge at times. The 'roads' are poor, there is no internet and often reception is poor in the remote villages. If it rains, the roads become just mud and sometimes when Arthur goes to visit a school, he gets stuck or the road has been washed away. We saw places where this was the case and even the Land Cruiser struggled to get through. Arthur's dedication to the links is total. We witnessed this in every visit where he spoke eloquently in the presence of government representatives, community leaders and school staff about working "Bega kwa bega" – shoulder to shoulder. He loves the children and is totally committed to helping the schools improve for the sake of the children they serve. The schools do not just want handouts from us, this was made clear when we were repeatedly asked what the Tanzanian link schools can do for us too. Commitments were made by the community leaders to ensure that all money raised would be matched in whatever way possible by the efforts of the village community to work with the school. Our link partners want to bless our schools here in the UK in whatever ways they can. We shared a few ideas.

The welcome was warm, the smiles bright, the hospitality sacrificial and the challenges great. I hope that this goes some way to a reinvigoration of vision with regard to your link. More to follow.

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