

## LUHIMBA UPDATE MAY 2019

Paul Temple [luhimba@aol.com](mailto:luhimba@aol.com) 07786651458



2019 marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Luhimba Project and it is heart-warming to reflect on the project's achievements during this time. Back in 1984 I don't think Michael Carey could have foreseen the positive impact that the project he started would have on a whole generation of this delightful community in a remote and poverty-stricken corner of Africa. It has been an honour to continue the work Michael started and to be accepted as part of this community. It has only been possible because of the generosity and support of our volunteers, donors, sponsors and friends. So thank you so very much for continuing to help the people of



Luhimba to improve their quality of life over such a long period. Everything that has happened in the village has been decided by the villagers themselves and we have helped them achieve their goals by working side-by-side with them. With every visit we make to the village we see that all the projects have become more sustainable and self-supporting which has been the aim from the outset. As our input is reducing it means we can look further afield and help other community schemes which could do with some support.

Earlier this year Mark Gower, John Lewis and I spent a few weeks in the village. The rainy season had just started and the villagers were all out working on their shambas (farms). Virtually every family has a plot of land – one, two or more acres growing predominantly maize to feed their families for the coming year, and to sell at roadside stalls and markets. During the time we were there it was fertilizing and weeding time. Mark spent much of his time as a peripatetic farm labourer (well he's pretty good at this, having been brought up on a farm in Wales!) The torrential rain continued for several days, transforming the two access roads to the village into rivers, making it impossible for any vehicles to reach the village by road.





## Project reports:

### 1. Education

The three primary schools are doing well –



The new double classroom at Ngembambili Primary School is nearing completion and is now in use, thanks to funding from Mynyddygarreg and Trimsaran primary schools in Wales, Ashcombe Primary in Weston Weston Homemakers Club and Footcare in Llanelli. This means that the kindergarten class at Ngembambili has a roof over its head and no longer has to have lessons in the open air (no joke in the rainy season).

Luhimba Primary School – I reported in my last update that this school would benefit from a more dynamic leadership. Well we found that the District Education Authority had recently appointed a new temporary head here, pending the appointment of a new permanent head, which will give the school a new lease of life.

Likarangilo Primary School, which we started in 1994 with ten students and one teacher, now has around 700 students and is thriving.

Nguluma Secondary School – back in 1998 the villagers asked if we could help them build a secondary school to provide secondary education for the first time in Luhimba. We agreed to this request and Nguluma was opened in February 2002. It is a boarding school and now takes students from a very wide area. We visited the newly completed chemistry laboratory during our latest visit.



So, in all we help over 2000 young people receive a good standard of education in Luhimba and surrounding areas.

Many thanks to two primary schools near Llanelli in Wales, Llannon and Bancffosfelen, for supporting Luhimba primary schools. I had the pleasure of visiting both earlier this year. The interest and enthusiasm of the children is just wonderful. I go back to two other Welsh schools in June, Mynyddygarreg and Trimsaran,

to update them on the project following their support for Ngembambili School. I have also been back to Ashcombe Primary in Weston, which has been supporting the project for the past 8 years.

We sponsor a number of Luhimba students at university in various parts of Tanzania. Three of them – Shani, Atwaya and Azizi, have just graduated with good degrees. All three of them went through our school system at Luhimba Primary and Nguluma Secondary schools. We have more graduating next year.

Little Star Day Centre – at the other end of the age spectrum I discovered this delightful little nursery school between Luhimba and Songea town. Mark, John and I visited the school and were so impressed that we instantly decided to start supporting it. More info on this at the end of this report.

## 2. Health



The Angela Carey Dispensary, which we built in 1997, continues to provide excellent care for the villagers and many from other surrounding villages, treating common ailments such as malaria, diabetes, blood pressure etc and monitoring those with HIV. It also runs a family planning scheme and a home care service for the elderly as well as a mother and child health service. The project also continues to support families with sick children by paying for them to receive treatment at clinics in nearby Songea and Peramiho hospitals.

As well as a full-time doctor and nurses there is an excellent midwife. During our latest two visits the Deane family from Weston and John Lewis presented the dispensary with a considerable amount of medical equipment from their own fundraising activities.

Dr George Pallangyo, the village doctor for the past 11 years, retired last year, and he has been replaced by a new young medical officer, Dr Joseph Magige. He now lives in my house which is next door to the dispensary.

During our latest visit we met two village ladies who had been diagnosed with ovarian cysts but they could not afford the operation to have them removed. We were pleased to be able to help them. They have both had their operations in Peramiho hospital and are fully recovered.

In my last newsletter I told you about Abdullah, an elderly disabled man who lived in a broken down shack. We have now had his new house completed and we got the village carpenter to make him a new bed. I look forward to visiting him in his new home during my next visit.

## 3. Clean water

The new well at Nguluma Secondary School provided by IWE Electrical Services and business associates of Kidwelly is an excellent asset to the staff and students of the school as the students no longer have to carry water from one of the village wells.



We also hope to install a new well near the dispensary, thanks to a donation from the Lions Club of Weston-super-Mare.



A very kind donor has made a substantial donation to help install a water filtration system which will provide clean water without the need for boiling it. We are looking into the best way of proceeding with this.

#### 4. Agriculture



As I said earlier the villagers were all working hard on the land during our recent visit and I would just like to mention one special person. Rose is a disabled single parent who lives with her young son on the outskirts of the village. She has deformed feet and finds it difficult to walk. In the past we have had special boots made for her by a shoemaker in Songea. In spite of this disability she managed to cultivate two acres of maize on her own, with no help from anyone. She has very little money and couldn't afford to buy the fertilizer needed for the two acres. We bought the fertilizer for her, and just to see the happiness on her face made it all worthwhile.

#### Other news:

Weston Athletics Club has been supporting the project for a number of years with donations from the annual Christmas Cracker race. This year, in addition to a donation, the club has given us dozens of WAC tee shirts for us to take to Luhimba. The villagers will love these. Many thanks to WAC.



The Deane Family Football Tournament – Rob, Eleanor and Ed Deane from Kewstoke came to Luhimba last October and, as well as raising funds for the village dispensary, donated two trophies to Luhimba Football Club as prizes for a new knockout tournament. The Luhimba Deane



tournament will be held later this year and will involve several local teams, with senior and junior sections. Brilliant!

All Saints Church in Weston runs regular lunchtime concerts throughout the year, donating all the proceeds to different charities. They have already supported us on two occasions and it is our turn again on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Do please try to come along. These are very enjoyable occasions, with a lovely lunch included. Music will be provided by the James family. More details later.

#### Some pictures taken around the village



# LITTLE STAR DAY CARE

Little Star Day Care is a wonderful little pre-school day nursery for underprivileged children at Mshangano, between Luhimba Village and Songea town. The children are aged 2 to 5 years and the centre is run by Kiza Kibugu and his wife Eda, both qualified teachers. Children attend daily from 8am to 4pm. The centre is registered as a Tanzanian NGO (non-governmental organisation) and is completely self-supporting. It is held in a rented classroom with land attached for outside activities and for growing maize to feed the children at lunch time. Kiza and Eda work full time and there is a part-time volunteer who cooks lunch and acts as general assistant. They are fortunate to receive the advice of their mentor, Mrs Nchimbi, who is a local schools inspector. Kiza and Eda benefit from her knowledge and experience.

The younger children have a rest period on mattresses on the floor after lunch. The classroom is attractively decorated providing a happy environment for learning and the lively well-organised atmosphere greets you as you enter. Kiza does all the maintenance and gardening himself. Little Star was started by Kiza and Eda in February 2017 with 2 pupils. Now there are 32 with numbers still increasing. Fees are the equivalent of £5 per month, and even though this is much cheaper than other private nurseries, some of the parents in this poor area still cannot afford to pay.

I first heard of Little Star Day Care nursery at the end of last year and visited it with Mark and John in February, We were so impressed we instantly decided to support it by agreeing to pay their rent for the classroom for the next year (£20 per month between us). We would very much like to provide more support for Little Star with help towards running costs, a new well, mattresses, learning and playing equipment etc.

Thank you once again for your support, and best wishes to all of you. Paul



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