

FOAT supporting Care Ministry in the Diocese of Shinyanga, Tanzania NEWS – January 2026

FOAT has been supporting Care Ministry work in the Diocese of Shinyanga for more than five years. There have been a lot of developments in this time, many of which have been reported in previous newsletters. Here is an update on some of the on-going activities.

SPONSORED STUDENTS

A number of children and young people with disabilities are supported by FOAT. either directly from general funds or by individual supporters.

Samuel - With little prospect of earning a living to support himself in his remote home village after completing his secondary education at Buhangija Government Special School, Shinyanga Diocese took Samuel 'under its wing'. Since completing an IT Certificate course in the local FE college in 2023, he has resided at the Diocesan Evangelist Training Centre at Ndala while waiting for a suitable placement to undertake a two-year IT and Business Training course.



In November 2025, thanks to a UK sponsor, Samuel started a diploma course at the College of Business Administration in Mwanza. He is progressing well with his studies. His health is good and he has adapted well to the environment. He expects to finish the first semester by the end of February.

While at Ndala, Samuel was confirmed, completed the six-month evangelism training and has been given the opportunity to preach in the local churches. He has also helped children at the local Compassion Centre to learn some basic IT skills and made home visits to families of the disabled living nearby.

Nikolaus first came to the attention of the Care Ministry team in 2021. Living with his mother and younger brother in a simple house with no electricity or water, on the edge of Shinyanga town. His physical challenges made it difficult to walk, and he was in constant pain.

Thanks to support from friends at Earley St Peters Church and others, Nikolaus has benefitted from medical treatment and mobility aids. In 2025, FOAT was able to fund solar panels for his home so he can study in the evenings. His health has improved and he is thriving at secondary school.



Shija and Lucia come from a family of 13 children; four with albinism. Until 2021, they were living in rural poverty, receiving little or no education as the local government school was far from their home. Since then, thanks to the generosity of a UK sponsor and the willingness of the local priest at Mwadui to foster the girls, they have been living at Mwadui and receiving a good education at Mwadui Anglican Primary School, and, for the past two years, Shija has attended the Lutheran Secondary School. With some additional educational support, both girls are now doing well.

During the Christmas holiday, they had a chance to spend time at their family home with their parents and siblings. Here you see them with Rev Emmanuel (Care Ministry Coordinator) outside their family home with two of their siblings and helping their mother to work the family 'Shamba' (veg garden). This is the only source of family food and income!



CARE MINISTRY GROUPS

The purpose of Care Ministry Groups is to bring together families of the disabled in the parishes to provide mutual social support, to teach them about caring for a child with a disability and empower them to use God-given resources to develop skills and projects to support themselves. The Care Ministry team gives training in the establishment and running of Microbanks (VICOBA) to promote financial inclusion. This offers opportunities to these vulnerable groups to contribute to their social and economic development.

There are now 10 established groups, and the number is growing, facilitated by the clergy and evangelists. Here is news of three of the groups.

Salawe Group – This is a new group formed this January when Rev Emmanuel (Care Ministry Coordinator) visited. The group has had preliminary education about children with disabilities. More education about this and about VICOBA will follow soon.



Kitangili Group – The progress of the group is good under the leadership of Rev Canon Joan Ndabakubije. Currently the group continues with bead making, batik and viko sewing. The group hopes to start chicken farming soon.



Upendo group (Kakola) – Started in February 2025, this group is progressing well under the leadership of Rev Ntungilija and the coordinator, Eduard Maganga. The group has initiated a Bible teaching programme for people with disabilities; meeting twice a month for an hour.

The group has already started a VICOBA and hope to start chicken farming soon. There are 40 members from four villages. They hope to start a class for children with disabilities who do not have an opportunity to go to school. The challenge – lack of funds for books and Bibles. Perhaps Care Ministry funds can help?



BUHANGIJA PRIMARY SCHOOL GARDEN - WATER

Buhangija Primary School is principally a school for children with special needs including albinism, visual and hearing impairments. It is unfortunate that following the tragic dormitory fire in 2023, the Government took most of the land designated for the vegetable garden to construct a new dormitory. A new plot for the garden was designated but remote from the rainwater capture tanks. Using a hose from a tap connected to mains water was out of the question, due to the cost of piped water.

In early 2025, a charitable organisation from Kazakhstan built a well to supply water for the school domestic use at the edge of the old garden. The well is some 100 meters from the new garden plot. In October 2025, FOAT was pleased to fund the resources to supply piping, a pump and tap to the garden plot and hoses for watering a small area of the vegetable plot.





Today (30 January) Bishop Johnson and Rev Emmanuel took over 100 papaya seedlings to the school to be planted soon. Papaya a fast growing and will produce fruits in six months. These seedlings were funded by FOAT. Buhangija School is reliant on fruit and vegetables from the garden to enhance the basic diet [ugali and beans] of the pupils and as an educational resource. There is potential to use more of the designated area to grow fruit and vegetables, but this will require funds to dig a well adjacent to the garden plot.

EVANGELIST TRAINING

The Mission and Evangelism Training Centre (METC) at Ndala was refurbished in 2022/23, facilitated by FOAT. Since then, five six-month Mission and Evangelism courses have been held, a total of 80 students have graduated. Most of these are now working in parishes where they are planting new churches and helping to develop care ministry groups of families of the disabled. The work of the evangelists can be greatly enhanced by using bikes – see below.

In 2025, Bishop Johnson initiated a two-year programme on Evangelism. There are 15 students undertaking this programme which builds on the six-month Mission and Evangelism training and is designed to provide basic training for ordination.

BIKES FOR EVANGELISTS

In a rural diocese where village communities are scattered over a wide area, bicycles provide an inexpensive means of transport for the evangelists. Where farming, much at subsistence level, forms the main economic activity, bikes serve to transport sacks of rice, water carriers, wood and even families!

Please see accompanying 'BIKES' article.

A bike costs £80. So far FOAT has funded the purchase of 30. At least 45 more are needed. Please consider donating to this appeal.



Bank Details for donations

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