

Report of Trustee Visit by Bridget & Leslie Green

24 August to 5 September 2019

Leslie and Bridget have made annual visits to Amani, with the exception of one year, since FOAT was registered in 2006. The purpose of these visits has been, and still is, to review the work of the Amani Centre, to check that funding sent by FOAT is used for the purposes for which it is designated, to hold discussions with staff and management to consider opportunities for developing the work of Amani, and to report back to FOAT.

In the past, their visits have normally been of a week's duration. Following their visit in 2018, Fr Beatus requested that they make a longer visit in 2019 to allow some time for interaction with the children.

In addition to reviewing the now quite extensive, project portfolio at Amani, Leslie and Bridget's two week visit in August and September included

- delivering four interactive 'fun with Geography' seminars to the children at Mvomero Special School
- a series of formal and informal meetings with senior members of the RC and Anglican churches following changes in personnel in key positions, and
- initiating meetings with three external organisations - Tanzanian Women's Chamber of Commerce (TWCC), Rotary Club of Morogoro and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) - to consider opportunities offered by these organisations to support Amani and its beneficiaries and/or work in partnership.

Some key highlights of their visit are outlined and illustrated below.

Meeting with Rotary Club of Morogoro

Leslie is a member of Reading Rotary Club. It is customary for Rotarians to visit clubs when visiting towns overseas. Bridget and Leslie were invited to a meeting by the incoming chair of the Rotary Club of Morogoro, Dr Edie. Dr Edie explained that the main focus of fundraising recently has been projects in Morogoro Secondary School, where the Deputy Director of Amani, Emmanuel is a teacher. Dr Edie said she would like to get to know more about Amani and to visit herself. She also encouraged Emmanuel to spend time with the young Rotarians at the School to develop their interests in supporting children with disabilities.



Leslie presenting Dr Edie with Reading Rotary Club banner

Tailoring Project

This project, sponsored by a grant of £2,500 from the Park Trust and topped up to £3,750 by FOAT, began in January 2019 with a total of 17 students, most with disabilities. In the seven months the project has been running, three of the students have passed to a level for 'graduation' and are able to make their own clothes. Six students are able to tailor but because of their disabilities need a further six or seven months to reach graduation. Four of the more intellectually challenged will need considerably longer to succeed.

FOAT and Amani are actively seeking funds for the continuation of this project for a further year.



Students with their tutor, Teddy demonstrating their tailoring techniques



Graduation Party for the three students who have reached Level 1

Helena Memorial Project

This project, which began in February 2018 funded by donations made at the time of our daughter, Helena's death [August 2017], focused on developing economical empowerment projects in groups of families with children with disabilities in the wards around Chamwino. Following the formation of the six groups, assisted by the Amani social work team, initial training of all members of the groups took place and the groups chose their projects for which start-up funding was given. Leslie and Bridget visited each of the groups in August 2018 and Trustee, Ed Holden also visited in May 2019.



Making beaded bags



Food preparation in Street café

All the groups were progressing well with their projects. Most of the groups had gone on to establish VICOPA (Village Community Banks) which enabled members to take loans and start their own individual business enterprises to support their families. FOAT Trustees had previously agreed that the groups would benefit from some refresher training and assistance in developing business skills and getting greater exposure to market their products.

Refresher training took place during Bridget and Leslie's visit with members of all of the Helena groups coming to Amani to attend a series of seminars including one delivered by Gaudencia

from the Tanzanian Women's Chamber of Commerce (TWCC) who Bridget and Leslie had introduced to Amani. Gaudencia gave practical examples of how to market produce more effectively, contact details of people who could assist with marketing craft goods overseas, she offered opportunities for short training sessions at Sokoine University of Agriculture and practical assistance for registering the groups as one larger, 'Amani Helena Group' which would then enable them to access support for funding bids etc.



Helena group participants listen attentively to Gaudencia

Ecumenical work

Ecumenical Economic Social Empowerment Project.

This project, begun in February 2018 funded by the Anglican Communion Fund, focussed on training and supporting small groups of families with children with disabilities to develop small enterprises to generate income for themselves. The two villages, Chalinze and Tunguli, chosen for this project were geographically remote from Amani but families with disabilities had already been identified in both locations through earlier ecumenical outreach work. In August 2018, after the project had been running for just six months, Bridget and Leslie visited Tunguli and were impressed by early developments, including one group which had already established a 'Vicoba' (Village Community Bank). This year they made a brief visit to Chalinze, accompanied by Emmanuel from Amani and Enock (Anglican priest replacing Stanley), for whom this was his first experience of ecumenical work in the community.

Developments at Chalinze were impressive. Two of the groups had combined, had a strong Vicoba which had already enabled a number of the individuals within the group to take loans to start/enhance their own businesses including small shops, cafes and a hairdressing salon. They had also obtained Government registration and were making an application to borrow further funds.



Administration for the Vicoba

There was no doubt in Bridget and Leslie's minds that this project was proving a tremendous success and given an injection of further funds, could be emulated elsewhere to empower families with children with disabilities to work cooperatively and help to lift them out of poverty.



Registration Certificate

Ecumenical Steering Group

The reconstituted Ecumenical Steering Group met during Bridget and Leslie's visit to Amani. Following changes in personnel in both churches, the membership now comprised:

Bishop Godfrey Sehaba - Anglican Bishop of Morogoro,

Fr Lazarus Msimbe - Apostolic Administrator (Head of RC Diocese)

Fr Respicius (Resi) Nyamwihula - RC Diocesan priest with responsibilities for ecumenism in the Diocese [absent from meeting due to ill-health]

Fr Beatus Sewando - Director of Amani Centre

Emmanuel Mlegu - Assistant Director, Amani Centre

Rev Enoch Chibada - Anglican Priest

Leslie Green - Trustee, Friends of Amani Tanzania

Bridget Green - Trustee, Friends of Amani Tanzania [Secretary to the Ecumenical Group]



The most encouraging outcomes of the meeting include:

- a desire to continue to work together in support of people with disabilities,
- for the Anglican Church to promote and encourage financial/gift in kind support for Amani,
- to undertake joint outreach work and,
- subject to further funding, to undertake another Ecumenical Economic Social Empowerment Project in one of the villages where joint outreach work was undertaken in 2017.

Amani Mvomero

Cooking - kitchen burner, firewood collection and charcoal.

The main cooker at Mvomero is a wood-burner. Children from Mvomero Special School have been going further and further from the site to collect firewood, putting themselves in danger. This had been noted by FOAT Associate, Barbara Bristow, on her visit earlier this year. She has put in place measures for the longer term by paying for the planting of trees near the main hostel which should be ready to cut for firewood in two to three years. Leslie and Bridget wanted to ensure firewood was available without the involvement of the children with immediate effect; their concern for safety was paramount. They agreed to pay for this as a personal gesture immediately and that Amani would budget for this from 2020.

Cooking is also done at ground level using locally purchased charcoal. This is inefficient and inherently dangerous. Bridget and Leslie purchased a cast iron (BBQ style) burner and charcoal supply for the remainder of the year. Amani will budget for this thereafter.



Horticulture at Mvomero

Bridget and Leslie were encouraged to see the extensive area now under cultivation of vegetables. There were small seed beds carefully protected from the sun by maize waste. These and the smaller plants are watered daily by the children, fetching and carrying buckets of water drawn from the new water hole. Once the seedlings have been planted out, they are watered by hose with a pump attached to the borehole water supply.



Fun with Geography workshops

During their Amani visit in 2018, Fr Beatus had requested that on their next visit, Bridget and Leslie should make time to interact with the children and assist them with their studies. Bridget chose to use her knowledge and interest in geography to introduce the primary students at Mvomero Special School to the 'the World', continents and landforms.

The children seemed to enjoy the activities and created some lovely pictures. Prizes were awarded to the children with the best picture from each standard.



Mpapa Dispensary

The remote village of Mpapa includes many children with disabilities. Amani has long supported the villagers through outreach from its Mvomero Centre. Four years ago, working with FOAT, children from Dame Alice Owen School in London raised funds to build a four room dispensary for the villagers. Once complete the Government had agreed to provide a nurse/dispenser to live on site and to stock the drugs for the dispensary. FOAT provided the last of the funds in 2018 to complete the building ready for registration. In February 2019 Government officials had visited and advised it did *not* meet the revised Government standard for registration as a village dispensary. It would need to have a total of 10 rooms.

FOAT made an unsuccessful bid to a Trust Fund in the UK to complete this work. After a local appeal in July, Bridget secured an anonymous donation for the full amount to complete the building of the 10 roomed structure. Bridget and Leslie reviewed the work during their visit.



Proposed Amani Village at Magubike

In November 2018 Amani ran a one day outreach session at Magubike village, some two hours drive from Morogoro town. This was attended by 120 families with a total of 170 children with disabilities given an initial assessment. Forty five mothers and their children with disabilities have subsequently come to the Amani centre in Chamwino for periods of one or two weeks to receive education and physiotherapy so they are better able to care for their children. Three of these children are now resident at Amani to receive on-going physiotherapy and special education.

Operating from a parish room close to the church, Amani has had a presence at Magubike for many years. Since the outreach in November last year, a young woman has received training in physiotherapy at Amani. She currently operates twice a week in a parish room at the church. A further worker from the village is now being trained at Amani.



Reviewing the facilities for physiotherapy currently in operation at Magubike

Following the outreach at Magubike, the villagers appealed to Amani and to the local government for an Amani Centre in their area so that they did not have to travel such great distances for help. As a result of the appeal the local government donated a 12 acre site in the village and have agreed to run mains water and electricity to the site. This work is happening now.

It is Amani Director, Fr Beatus' dream to grow an Amani Village at Magubike. This would include a physio room and store, hostel (to house a small group of Masista and other staff/visitors as required) toilets and then dormitory buildings. The total area for the village would be up to five acres; the remaining seven acres would be cultivated.



Reviewing the site for the new Amani Village at Magubike

FOAT is currently seeking funding of £10,000 to initiate the first phase of building work - the physiotherapy room, toilets and hostel.

Mikese farm

Bridget and Leslie made two visits to Mikese. The day after their arrival at Amani, a day of rain was forecast. Fr Beatus decided that as many of the workers as could be spared from Chamwino should be bussed early to Mikese to join colleagues there to ensure the maize harvesting was completed before the rain arrived. Bridget and Leslie joined the workers for about an hour.



Cutting the maize by hand



The Amani workers break for breakfast

At the end of the day, harvesting was complete - 30 bags were put into store at Mikese. This was less than in some previous years due to lack of rain earlier in the year.



Prior to their more substantive visit to Mikese, Bridget and Leslie had discussed the main challenge(s) there with Fr Beatus. He indicated that ensuring sufficient water available until the November rains as the most pressing need. He explained that an entrepreneur local to Mikese was willing to give Amani water from his supply; what was needed was a large hose and funds for the fuel for the water pump. Bridget and Leslie funded the purchase of the hose and expected fuel costs to November when rains are anticipated.



Young adults with disabilities at Mikese proudly wearing the T-shirts donated by friends in the UK



Bridget and Leslie noted work was in hand to complete the new goat house on stilts before the November rains. This was necessary to prevent the goats from getting foot rot in their current cement floor housing in the old classroom.

Conclusions

Reflecting on their visits over the past thirteen years, Bridget and Leslie realised the extent to which Amani has grown, is reaching out to support more children and families with disabilities facilitated by support from FOAT. Each year there are more projects to be reviewed. What is particularly encouraging is to see the impact of economical empowerment projects - Ecumenical, Helena Memorial and Tailoring - helping to lift some of the most disadvantaged families out of poverty.

The spirit of communities working together to achieve objectives has shone through also in Mpapa, where the villagers are providing labour and making the bricks to complete the dispensary building. It is this community action that is also driving the initiative to grow the 'Amani Village' at Magubike.

Despite changes in personnel in the Ecumenical Partnership between the RC and Anglican churches, the commitment to joint working remains strong. The challenge now is to find funding both for economical empowerment projects and to support Amani's core costs as the

demand for its services continues to grow.

Developing opportunities for working in partnership with external organisations was a key part of Bridget and Leslie's visit. They are optimistic that some of these new links will be beneficial almost immediately, the link with TWCC in particular. Others will need nurturing and conversations with a range of organisations to determine pathways for joint working and ventures to support Amani in the longer term.

These are the very positive and encouraging signs at Amani. The challenges of core funding remain; there is no buffer for when things go wrong. There is no easy answer to this. This hand to mouth existence is not sustainable. It is Bridget and Leslie's belief that by

- expanding partnerships,
- including an element of core costs in project bids, and
- expansion and diversification of agriculture and other income generation projects

Amani will gradually work towards a position of self-sustainability. Growing a community of Masista (nuns) committed to caring and educating the children in Amani's care and leading on income generation projects will also assist Amani in meeting its mission.
