



THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF TANZANIA

DIOCESE OF SHINYANGA

P. O. Box 144 Mobile: +255 787 844 462/+255 752 844 462

SHINYANGA, TANZANIA Email: chinyongole@gmail.com

SUMMARY REPORT FOLLOWING BUHANGIJA SCHOOL FIRE APPEAL OF NOVEMBER 2022

INTRODUCTION AND THANKS

I would like to thank all friends in the UK on behalf of the children who survived the fire in Tanzania at Buhangija Primary School where children with special needs study. It is hard to say with words for such great love shown by all who have been touched by the tragic scene of fire that caused the death of three children and 29 survivors. You have played a great godly role that will never be forgotten by the children, school staff and their parents.

THE FIRE

Buhangija Primary School is found in Shinyanga Region, Tanzania. It is owned by the government and is one of the schools where children with special needs study. At the moment the school has 250 children with different impairments. There happened a tragedy scene of fire on 23rd November 2022 in the dormitory, where 32 girls were sleeping, was burned out.

Around 11:00pm the matron sensed a smell of burning fire from the ceiling board. Unfortunately the whole roof was on fire. She tried her best to rescue children out of fire while screaming for help. Five minutes later the guards came to help but it was too late to rescue every child because the fire was so extensive. As a result, three girls died in the fire.

This was a horrible event causing deaths, loss of property, building damage and psychological trauma to the children, school staff and the community in general.

The building had a capacity to accommodate 32 girls with various impairments. The following are the number of children who were in the hostel at the time of the fire:

- Children with visual impairments - 11,
- Children with albinism -18,
- Children with hearing impairments - 3.

Three of the girls with visual impairments passed away: Catherine (11) class two, Careen (9) class one, and Miriam (11) class three. May their souls rest in peace.

THE APPEAL

It is against this background that the Headmistress launched an appeal for funds to replace the children's destroyed belongings, purchase games to occupy them and assist in their recovery.

Measures taken after the appeal of the school Headmistress

- Bishop Johnson, Rev Stanley and others visited the school, met with the school staff and prayed for them.
- The Anglican Church in Shinyanga Diocese, together with Friends from UK, has been helping children at the school since the start of Corona Virus in 2020. The church took the initiative of sharing the appeal raised by the Headmistress to friends in the UK.

- On behalf of the church, Rev Stanley with staff at Buhangija, made analysis of the needs of the children and school to redress the situation after the fire. The total amount needed was £3,500.
- Friends from UK through Friends of Amani Tanzania (FOAT) donated a total of £3,350 (to date) and other gifts – games and activities – to assist play therapy for the children who survived.
- The donations were used for buying clothing, shoes, bedding, storage cases and educational resources to replace those destroyed in the fire.

Adjustment to identified needs

After some initial purchases of uniforms, shoes and bedding, it became evident that the girls also needed underwear and nightwear which had not been included in the initial budget.

The initial budget did not include reparations and purchase of equipment and seeds etc for the re-establishment of the vegetable garden (initiated in 2020, supported by donations from FOAT). Following discussions with FOAT and the Headmistress, it was agreed that some of the funds raised could be put towards this as therapy and education for all the children and to supplement the school's meager food budget.

UPDATE

- The fundraising target of £3,500 has been reached.
- All children are back in school; they are staying in a temporary hostel which was intended for another use.
- They are psychologically fine now.
- The government has identified funds to build a new hostel for the children as will be seen on picture Annex E
- Unfortunately, the investigation on the causes of fire is still on-going; according to the Headmistress it is expected to take six months or more since the fire happened.
- I have visited the hostel they are staying now; it is adequate.

The garden

- The garden is progressing well, though the challenge was rain, as it hit the land and destroyed some vegetables.
- The children have eaten the first produce for three weeks.
- The school replant vegetables for this March for more production of vegetables
- Tanks for storing water for irrigation are full after harvesting rain water
- It has been advised to stop using irrigation drops at this time because the pipe's holes for drip irrigation get damaged as the heavy rain forces sand inside.

Prepared by

Rev Stanley Sewando

Coordinator of Care Ministry work in Shinyanga Diocese

13 March 2023

CONCLUSION AND THANK-YOU

Thank you once again to all those who donated to the Buhangija Fire Appeal. Your humanitarian action has not only enabled the purchase of tangible items to meet the basic needs of the girls who lost everything in the fire, it has also contributed to restoring a sense of love and care to all the children at Buhangija School. These children are among some of the most disadvantaged in Tanzania; disadvantaged by disability and poverty. Some are orphans, some abandoned by their parents because of their disability.

The Tanzanian Government provides the school buildings, basic educational resources, funds the teachers and a limited budget to feed the children. Parents are expected to provide uniforms, clothing, bedding and school books and bags.

There is very little provision of specialist resources for children with visual impairment, which includes those with albinism. Any further funds donated through this appeal will be used

- to purchase some additional exercise books required by the children,
- to purchase some specialist educational materials for the visually impaired children, and
- to assist with the running of the vegetable garden, particularly the purchase of organic manure, seeds and for any unforeseen eventuality relating to the garden.

Bridget Green

Trustee, Friends of Amani Tanzania <https://amanitzuk.org/>, and

Commissary to the Bishop of Shinyanga <https://amanitzuk.org/shinyanga>

16 March 2023

Annex A New hostel under construction for girls who survived the fire



Annex B. Children who survived the fire now back at school.



Annex C. Children with their teacher and new matron (right)



Annex D Children enjoying some games donated by FOAT



Annex E. The temporary hostel where children are staying at the moment

