

Highlights from Bridget and Leslie's eight-day visit to The Amani Centre for Children with Disabilities, Morogoro, Tanzania

August 2025



Since registering the charity, *Friends of Amani Tanzania (FOAT)* in 2006, we have visited the Amani Centre every year, except the two COVID years, 2020 and 2021, so I think our latest was our 17th visit! Every year, we are astounded by what Amani does to support children and families of children with disabilities at its four centres in the Morogoro Region, and through its outreach work in the community at large. Amani is a voluntary organisation; it receives no Government or Church funding; it is entirely reliant on funds from local and overseas donors. I think this is what makes Amani's achievements so remarkable.

What follows is a snapshot of some of the activities we witnessed, and in some cases participated in, during our eight-day visit in August.

Physiotherapy

This is one of the core services offered by Amani. Until recently, this was available only at Amani's main site in Chamwino, but it is now available at Amani's newest site at Magubike, some two hours from Chamwino. At both sites, parents are taught how to perform physiotherapy exercises with their children at home, where appropriate.

Mother learning how to perform physiotherapy exercises on her child at Magubike



Resting outside after physiotherapy

Education

Amani Mvomero Special School

Amani Mvomero Special School focuses on education of children with hearing impairments but now includes children with physical impairments and mild learning disabilities.

We were delighted to catch up with Simon (10) and Samira (12) who have now begun their formal education at Amani Mvomero. We have known them since they were babies and brought to the Amani Centre, Chamwino.

All the children learn sign language. For primary children, lessons are conducted in Swahili and sign language. At secondary level, the lessons are officially conducted in English and sign language.



Samira, who cannot walk, is carried to her supporting frame by her pupil carer.



Amani Magubike Open School

We were pleased to visit Amani's Magubike site on a weekday. We witnessed children at the 'Open School' receiving some basic education.

Children at the school range in age from 6 to 12. They come from very poor families and were not previously attending school. The plan is to educate each child to Standard 4 and then integrate them into the 'open school class' at Amani Mvomero School.



Home Visits

Our focus for home visits this year was to follow up on children who had received surgery, funded by a grant secured by FOAT.

Don (5) born with rickets, could barely walk before his surgery in December 2024. His growth was stunted and he was in constant pain. Now he is walking well and his growth development has improved. It was delightful to watch him playing with his friends with the bouncy ball we gave him.

Like Don, Sikusami (6) was born with rickets. She had surgery in April, and is already walking well and catching up in height with her 4 year old sister.

Samil (5) lives with his grandparents. He was abandoned by his parents at birth. He had surgery, including the fitting of metal plates in his legs last December. He is now walking, and even running without pain.

The challenge for all these families is poverty. The only source of income for Sikusami's single mother, is from collecting plastic bottles for recycling. The families do not live near others to form an economic social empowerment group. FOAT is in discussion with Amani about how to empower the mothers/grandmothers to help themselves.



Economic, Social Empowerment The Helena Projects

Eight Economic and Social Empowerment groups were established in wards around Chamwino in 2018 with funds donated following our daughter, Helena's death. These eight groups were first trained in setting up and operating small projects and subsequently in running a microbank.

In 2024, we identified the need for a further Helena group. We secured a grant for the establishment and training of a ninth group, shown here actively engaged in beading, making jewellery, baskets and mats. It was good to observe the enthusiasm of the group leader (in yellow) and note the general improvement in mood of her daughter, mother of Flora, a child with a disability.



Masista (Nuns) at Amani

Some years ago the Roman Catholic Church took the decision to grow a community of Masista (nuns) who would be dedicated to the care of children with disabilities.

It is interesting to note how the presence of Masista has enhanced the standing of Amani in the local communities and brought about an increase in local financial and 'gift in kind' support.

The latest group of three Masista were 'installed' at Amani Mikese farm earlier this year. They are; seen here in the vegetable garden, receiving the new football and teaching some of the young people with disabilities who live at Mikese (a FOAT funded project).



Outreach and Community Education Ecumenical Work at Magubike

The Rev Canon Stanley Sewando returned from Shinyanga Diocese to the Anglican Diocese of Morogoro earlier this year. He was appointed as Parish Priest to Magubike Anglican Church and as the coordinator for the Amani Ecumenical work.

We were pleased to be accompanied by Canon Stanley, along with Amani Deputy Director and Amani Social Worker, on our visits to Amani Magubike, Berega Anglican Hospital, School and Orphanage.

In my capacity as a Lay Canon of the Anglican Church of Tanzania, I was delighted to be invited to address one (of three) congregations on a Sunday at Magubike Church. My message, delivered through interactive play with an inflatable globe and the donation of two small balls to each family, was about sharing love.

I delivered a similar message to over 200 Sunday School children about caring and sharing. Of course, the children were delighted each to receive a packet of biscuits (10 in a pack) to eat and share!



Supporting Children with Disabilities Ecumenical work in the Morogoro Diocese

Ecumenical Work in Morogoro in support of families of the disabled has been going on since 2014 but it has been heavily dependent on FOAT obtaining grants to fund it.

With the return of Canon Stanley as coordinator for ecumenical work in Morogoro, it was agreed at a Steering Group meeting attended by us that for the ecumenical ministry to be successful, the three churches (RC, Anglican and Lutheran) should be the leading organisation on funding and fundraising for the work of disability rehabilitation and outreach for disability education.

We are very encouraged that the ecumenical fundraising priorities focus on supporting Amani and its provision of services for the disabled, furthering outreach and education work.



Summary

Despite the many challenges that Amani still faces in meeting the day-to-day demands on its resources, Leslie and I came away with a renewed sense of optimism for Amani's future brought about by:

- The obvious commitment that Fr Beatus still has for Amani and the support of Bishop Lazarus to ensuring Amani remains central to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in Morogoro
- The ecumenical partnership, which is both driving awareness in the community at large to the needs of the disabled, and spearheading fundraising to support Amani's services
- The presence of the Masista, providing consistent and unwavering support to the children in their care, and a sense of order, most notable at Mikese.



Continuing to support Amani

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Friends for your continued support for Amani. Without your help, many of the projects to assist families of the disabled in Morogoro, would not have been possible.

If you would like to make a regular or ad-hoc donation, FOAT bank details can be found below, or you might like to get in touch with me:

Bridget Green, FOAT Trustee, bridgetg@talktalk.net Tel: 07711 384672

<https://amanitzuk.org/>

Bank Details

Name of Account: Friends of Amani Tanzania

Account Number: 00036740

Sort Code: 40-52-40