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TO WITNESS THE LOVE OF
 JESUS CHRIST TO THE
 STREET CHILDREN
 OF IRINGA BY STRIVING TO
 MEET THEIR NEEDS
 THAT THEY MAY EXPERIENCE
 LIFE IN ALL ITS
GOODNESS

Welcome to the Winter edition of FISCH Food!

Greetings, Friends of FISCH, we hope this newsletter finds you well and getting ready for the Christmas festivities. As usual we have lots to share about the work that goes on daily in Iringa, including some important Team updates and some great fundraisers we have benefitted from recently. The Project has been running for over 16 years now, so thank you for being part of the family and support that has helped to make this happen. We hope you have a lovely Christmas, and we'll see you in the New Year!



An Update from Rich Gercke, Co-Founder

As most of our supporters are aware by now, since our last newsletter, we have been navigating through a difficult period, which ultimately resulted in a **change of leadership at FISCH in Tanzania**. Difficult decisions such as these are never easy, but this was a necessary step to ensure that the values of **integrity** and **honesty** that are fundamental to the UK charity, are also fully reflected in the Tanzanian Trust.

After sixteen years of close partnership between the leadership of FISCH in the UK and Tanzania, such a process was always going to be painful. However, what became abundantly clear throughout this period, was the **affection that many of our supporters have for FISCH**, both from within the UK and within the Tanzanian community.

It has been truly remarkable to see a number of people from within Tanzania, including former staff and local government, go to great lengths to secure the future of the Tanzanian Trust, and we are grateful to the efforts of the **Iringa District Commissioner and her team** for their support and actions.

I am pleased to share that as a result of this process, we now have much **stronger relations** with local Government in Iringa, and I believe, are well placed to become **even more effective at making a difference to the lives of those in great need**. On behalf of all those Children, and from all of us, **thank you to all of you for standing by us!**

I am delighted to introduce **Alex, our new Director in Tanzania**. As a **former volunteer and staff member** when we started FISCH, Alex has a huge heart for these Children and great affinity for the work. Alex himself was sponsored by FISCH supporters to study at university, and it is wonderful now to hear his vision for the future of the Trust in Tanzania, as well as his desire to make an impact in the present. We have also appointed new Trustees to the Tanzanian Trust to strengthen the oversight of the Project in Tanzania.



Alex, our new Director

We look forward to seeing what God has planned for FISCH in the future, and thank you for being with us on this journey.



Arts and Crafts with Georgie



One of our UK Team members, **Georgie**, was in Iringa for a month over the summer, and she had a lovely time at the DiC hanging out with the Team and Kids. Georgie also volunteers for Neema Crafts which is a **vocational art centre** providing **training and employment** for around **120 deaf and disabled artisans**, alongside running a café, guesthouse and shop for the crafted produce. Georgie took 11 of the Short-Term Accommodation Kids to Neema Crafts and **ran an art class** with them. After the class she took the Kids on a tour of Neema Crafts where they visited all the departments, including weaving, sewing, carpentry and screenprinting. They also practiced some Swahili Sign Language, and then were able to screenprint their own Sign Language Alphabet poster, which they really loved! It was really useful for them to see how a **design could be turned into a final product**.

Georgie also ran an art class at the DiC, drawing from the **textures and patterns** in the garden and adding them to the negative space of the words. As you can see from the photos, this was a popular activity, with the Children showing some artistic flair!



An Interview with Mike

Mike Boddington, one of the Trustees of FISCH UK, recently visited Iringa and the Team there. Here we interview him about his thoughts and experiences of this adventure.



So Mike – tell us about yourself.

I live in Guildford with my wife, Jemma, and son, Charlie, with twins who are currently at University at opposite ends of the country (bad planning). I have been a secondary school teacher for my career, recently been headteacher of a comprehensive in south-west London for 8 years and now lead a trust of four schools.

How did you get involved with FISCH?

Rich Gercke goes to my church (St Saviour's in Guildford) and spoke a year or so ago about the charity and the ambition to provide more learning and training for the children. With my education background I asked whether he needed a trustee with my experience and he agreed. A few meetings later I came on board.

What is your role in FISCH currently?

I am a Trustee with a particular focus on how we can build the education and vocational training for the children.

Why did you decide to visit Tanzania?

I have never visited and thought I'd be better able to contribute and make informed decisions if I had seen the place, met the Staff and experienced some of the amazing support FISCH provides for the Children.



What sort of things did you get up to in Iringa?

I arrived the first morning of the new Director, Alex, taking over the reins so it was quite a momentous time. I enjoyed meeting the Staff and working with them on some team activities to help with the transition to new leadership as well as spending time with the Children in and around the drop-in centre. I also wrote some policies and protocols – a bit like being at work for a week! I met lots of local officials which was a real joy: the District Commissioner who was delightful and incredibly supportive, the Iringa Municipal Social Welfare Officer who was keen to collaborate more as well as the Police Chief for the area over breakfast one morning – a bit surreal. Of course I also did the expected sermon at FISCH Church on the Sunday, followed by the boys using the drums, keyboard and mic for an impromptu rapping session.

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Interview with Mike continued...

Alex was a brilliant host and accepted my challenge of a different African meal for every evening! Together we enjoyed the normal pork, goat, chicken, ugali, beans, greens but also one meal of different types of cow's intestine (not recommended) usually with a backdrop of football on TV from all over Africa and Europe.

I met Daudi, one of the new [Tanzanian] Trustees based in Iringa, several times and visited him at the college he leads. He does an amazing job there and this brings some valuable opportunities to collaborate to develop FISCH Rehabilitation Centre and other training for the Children.

I enjoyed a day trip to Ruaha National Park in Alex's beaten-up Land Cruiser over some pretty shocking roads and saw lots of the wonderful animals you hope for: kudus, impalas, lions, baboons, hippos, crocs, zebras, giraffes and the happy looking water buffalos. Being the dry season most were near the remnants of the rivers so were quite visible – great fun.

When I travel I always try to find some live music or things going on in the evening to give a flavour of the country which we found in Savannah Bar (near Neema Crafts) which was a crazy night. Great afro-beats from a young band but not a venue for the faint-hearted...

What was your most enjoyable experience on the trip?

The highlight of the trip was taking the FISCH Team to the Sunset Hotel overlooking Iringa on the final evening. There were 14 of us in the end (including a few hangers on) and quite a few from the Team had never been there and felt very special to be invited. Charles & I negotiated with the hotel to lay on a huge buffet meal for everyone and we had a fantastic evening together – a lovely way to say 'thank you' for all their work over such a tricky transition period.

What was the most surprising thing you discovered or realised?

I found the fact that most people pretty much ignored me quite refreshing. I have been to some places where a tall white guy can be a novelty, an opportunity to try and sell to, treated sceptically or can feel quite awkward. I was surprised and pleased with how welcome I was around the town and how people just accepted me with no real bother.

What are your dreams for FISCH?

My dreams are to keep reaching out to the Children who have so little, work alongside the government agencies to support them, realise the potential of FISCH Rehabilitation Centre on the outskirts of the town and provide some valuable training (as well as care) for the Children who have so little hope. We need to show God's love for them through these practical activities.

Any final words, comments or thoughts?

What a great charity making a tangible difference to that community.





Promina's Wedding

September this year the FISCH Team were very excited to attend a **wedding of one of our very own past FISCH Graduates!**

Regular readers of the FISCH Food will be familiar with **Promina** as she has been a long-time beneficiary of FISCH, registered back in 2011. She joined the Youth Club and the Homework Help Club, and FISCH supported her through her education. She worked hard and **became one of our first FISCH Students who went to university!** Since graduating she has helped out at the After-School Club and has been a **great example** to the other FISCH Kids.

Well, now she is getting married! Several of the FISCH Team were there at this fabulous event. **What a beautiful wedding dress!** We wish Promina all the best in her married life.

Gasper on the Radio



Gasper is one of our **Social Workers** in the Team in Iringa. He was invited by **Furaha FM** ("Happiness FM", a Christian broadcasting station around Iringa) to come on air and **explain the work and services that FISCH provides** to the **Children, citizens and community** of Iringa. The listeners were very interested in the work of FISCH, and many people rang in to **express their gratitude and ask further questions of Gasper**, which he answered for them. What a great opportunity to share the good news of FISCH and the Good News of the love of Christ!



Happy Birthday FISCH!

This September FISCH celebrated its **16th birthday!** How wonderful to think that when FISCH was founded with the first Saturday Feeding Project on Sept 1st, 2007, here we would be 16 years later having **helped over a thousand Street Children** in that time. The Team and Children celebrated at the Drop-in-Centre with a **big party**, including **singing** from the FISCH Choir, **dancing** by the FISCH Kids, a **comedy act**, and generally lots of fun. *Furaha ya kuzaliwa!* Happy birthday!





Christmas Plans

Ho ho ho! It's nearly Christmas!



As usual, the Children and Team in Iringa will host a **Christmas service and celebration** at FISCH Church on Christmas Day. The festivities usually include a **Church service** at the Drop-in-Centre, a **shared celebratory meal, dancing, games and socialising**. Not only do the FISCH Kids and their families come and join in, but members of the FISCH Church and the local community also come along. What a lovely wholesome way to **celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour**, who brings life and hope to all people!

Drop-in-Centre Renovations

With so many needs amongst the Children, it is always difficult to justify spending money on buildings; however after many years of use, and hundreds of Kids passing through the Centre each week, the Drop-in-Centre does require much-needed renovation.

In recent week, work has begun, with our own FISCH Kids getting involved wherever possible. We look forward to sharing more photos when the work is finished!



Orbis Investment Programme Donation

We are thrilled to be chosen to be the recipient of a generous donation from **The Buchanan Programme & Richard Boyd**, of Orbis Investment. The Buchanan Programme offers employees the opportunity to award a personal allocation towards a charity of their choosing. The programme has twin goals; to have an **impact on worthwhile causes**, and to enable their employees to find meaning and joy in **philanthropy**. One of employees of Orbis, **Richard Boyd**, chose FISCH to be the recipient – of an amazing **£2000!** It is an honour to be chosen, and a huge financial blessing to receive. **Thank you!**





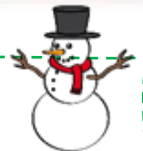
A Wedding Favour Kindness



The Team in the UK have also been blessed with a wedding in our midst. The eldest daughter of Elizabeth and Bob Murphy (Trustees and Higher Education Co-ordinators), Ellie, was married to her fiancé James in July of this year. It was a wonderful day of celebrating the union of this lovely couple, with both Ellie and James looking so happy! The couple decided to start their married life with a real act of kindness. Instead of spending money on favours to their wedding guests, they decided to donate that money to FISCH instead. We'd love to take this opportunity to say both *Congratulations!* and a huge *Thank You!* to the new Mr and Mrs for their generosity. Don't they look lovely in their wedding photo!



Website Update



Our website has recently been updated with the current Teams both in Tanzania and the UK, with the activities and ministries we currently run, and with our Christmas fundraiser event – check out gofisch.org to find out more.



"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10

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