



April 2019

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

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Welcome to the Spring edition of FISCH Food!

Christ is risen!! Happy Easter one and all!



We hope you've had a lovely Easter. The Team and Kids at FISCH celebrated Easter Sunday with a service, a communal meal and enjoyed a choir performance from a local Anglican church. We have loads of great news and updates to share with you from Iringa, including an Education Update, an interview with the newest member of our Tanzanian Team, Pastor Peter, and even a poem! We hope you enjoy reading this edition and if you would like more information on the work that FISCH does in Tanzania, please check out the web and email addresses above.

The Eyes Have It

Recently the Team at the Drop-in-Centre had a visitor called Michelle who is an optometrist. She spent some time with the Kids and **donated some games** which the Children loved – including Twister, Connect 4, facepaints and some Wendy houses! She also spent some time **vision-screening the FISCH Kids** along with many other children on her travels through East Africa and teachers at Iringa schools (over 600 children – wow!) Of all these children, 12 needed glasses, including **one FISCH Kid**. Michelle took some of the children to a **local Vision Centre** and purchased the glasses. She also spotted a case of conjunctivitis, so took some children for assessment by a doctor, and purchased the eye drops. She even treated the kids to **breakfast, snacks and lunch!** We'd like to thank Michelle for the care that she took with the kids and for blessing Africa with her expertise.





Education Update

Our **Education Coordinator Evie** reports back from Iringa with the latest on how the Kids' educations are progressing...

“ Lots has been happening at FISCH! It seems that every time an older Child accesses Higher Education or Vocational Skills training, the younger Children become increasingly motivated and hopeful – **realising that they are also able to achieve their dreams!**”

We recently had some brilliant news regarding **Promina** and **Best** who have both been admitted into university to study **Education** in order to become Teachers! They have been members of the FISCH Community for over 8 years and we are so excited that they have been able to take this next step.

Tibilius, another longstanding member of the FISCH Community is now in his second year of studying **Clinical Medicine** at the University of Njombe. He is doing really well and in the holidays he comes back to help tutor the younger Kid at the DiC. He has some important exams coming up this year.

Aloyce and **Happy** are both at the Community Development Training Institute where they are working towards **certificates** that will allow them to work with their own communities fostering long term sustainable growth.

Apollo and **Neema** are both in Form Six (equivalent to UK A Levels) where they are studying **Physics, Biology** and **Chemistry** (Apollo) and **History, Geography** and **Kiswahili** (Neema). After completing Form Six, they will be able to apply to a wide range of well-respected universities in Tanzania. Apollo is determined to become a doctor and so he will be focussing on these applications within the coming months.

Our **Vocational Skills programmes** have also been very successful;

➤ **Robbie**, who previously completed an Art School Programme just outside Dar es Salaam, has now been **commissioned** to do all the paintings renovating a local bar, and he is really enjoying having a regular structured job to do every day. [See below for more on Robbie]

➤ **John**, another long-time FISCH Kid who previously struggled with the traditional education system, has been attending a local vocational centre daily where he has been learning **carpentry skills**. He really enjoys it and returns to the DiC with a big smile on his face!

➤ **Basil** and **Faroozi** are both in **Driving School** now, which will allow them to get jobs as boda boda (motorcycle taxi) drivers. Being a driver in Iringa is a popular job choice because there is so much demand and provides a good income. Another FISCH Kid, **Ezekia**, has gone along the same path before and is now working every day supporting his family and saving up money.

Looking forward, our **main challenges** will be supporting the five or so Children we expect to continue into Form Five after the Form Four exams this summer. We are also planning for Apollo and Neema's graduation from Form Five, and how we will be able to support them at university. However, with **hope** and **prayer**, we are **optimistic that FISCH will be able to support a growing number of Children** as they access **Higher Education** and further **Vocational Skills training!** ”

FISCH currently relies entirely on one-off donations to support these Children in Education and Vocational Training. We are seeking to build a small army of supporters who are willing to give monthly towards an Education Fund. Our target is 25 Supporters who are willing to give £20 a month. If you are interested in supporting this cause, please contact our Education Coordinator Evie, at bootonevie@gmail.com or rich@gofisch.org.





Reflections On A Time In Iringa – Roy



As part of the UK Fisch Team **Sarah** and her husband **Roy** oversee the **Food Parcel Sponsorship Scheme** (which is currently now supporting **30 Children** – amazing!) and both visited Tanzania on the recent Trip to Iringa. Here we interview Roy about his experience there.

How did you and Sarah become involved in FISCH in the first place? What are your roles?

Sarah and I became involved with FISCH about 7 years ago when we met Rich & Lissie (I have named it the 'Rich & Lissie effect') at a spiritual gathering and hadn't realised we lived within a ten minute walk of each other. They told us about it and we were invited to go. It was our 25th wedding anniversary at the time of the Trip and it was fantastic to celebrate it in Tanzania. I see myself as an encourager and supporter of the team in the UK and Tanzania. Sarah is going great guns with the Food Parcel Sponsorship programme and she has warned me that my time is near for me to take on some of those duties as it expands.

So, it's been a while since your first trip to Iringa to visit FISCH. What was it like to be back on African soil and back with the FISCH Team and Kids?

It's been 6 and a half years since we were there last. It was amazing to get off the little plane to be hugged by Mama Atu. I hadn't realised how much a part of my heart has become linked to this town, the Team and the Children and young people. I was overjoyed to see them and to meet particular young people who I had not seen for all that time. It was quite emotional.

What has changed at FISCH in the time in between?

I think the vision has developed and the structure of how the work is undertaken has flourished with Atu and Rich's leadership.

What aspirations and hopes do you have for FISCH in the future?

My obvious prayer is for this work to sustain and grow organically and for all these Children and young people's voices to be heard so that they can develop and fulfil the destiny that is ahead for them.

What impact did this visit to FISCH have on you? What has impressed you?

I think seeing a handful of young people growing up with courage and determination to accomplish what they aspire to was great to see. To share with them in tears of joy and thankfulness was quite precious. Looking forward to the journey ahead!



With Thanks



At Christmas FISCH received a very kind donation from Treasurer Ewen of **Tidenham Parochial Church Council**. Tidenham Church Parish, on the borders of Wales and England, have connections to Mandy and Mike of TSS Aware, and were familiar with the **fundraising** that Mandy was doing towards building the **new Drop-in-Centre**. Consequently they decided to bless FISCH with a one-off donation towards our work in Iringa.

We'd like to take this opportunity to **publically thank Ewen and the Tidenham Parish Churches** for their kind contribution and for their support in our mission to witness the love of Christ to the Street Children of Iringa. **Thank You!**





Getting To Know Pastor Peter

You may recall in the Autumn 2018 edition of the Bites we briefly introduced **Pastor Peter**, the new Tanzanian Team Member who was stepping into Pastor Stephano's shoes and overseeing FISCH Church. Peter is an **experienced retired pastor**, having also trained and worked as a **teacher** and **counsellor**! He had been **volunteering** at FISCH for three months and the Teams had been **praying for provision** of finances to allow FISCH to employ Peter permanently and honour his hard work for FISCH. Our prayers were answered (thank you Father!) and a church in the Forest of Dean, **Forest Community Church**, approached FISCH and pledged financial support each month towards this. A further blessing came when a member of Forest Community Church pledged further financial support towards employing Pastor Peter, and so the large majority of his salary with us is covered each month.

We are thrilled to have Peter join the FISCH Team permanently and to be able to **honour his hard work** with us by being able to employ him and bless him. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Forest Community Church and the Fellowship there for supporting FISCH in this way - **Thank You!**

Here we have a small bio about Peter.



Peter has been working with a church as a priest for almost 33 years in three diocese. Originally hailing from Songea, Tanzania, he grew up in Dodoma with his family and attended secondary school there. He started his ministry in Dodoma and then studied Theoretical and Biblical Teachings in Nairobi for two years, alongside studying Counselling. He then returned to Dodoma and first moved to Iringa in 1983 as the Chief Pastor at what is now known as Christ the King Church.

Being in Iringa regularly, Peter heard about FISCH from other people. He was working with another diocese in Moshi and Arusha for an Anglican church but after his retirement he was able to come and work with FISCH which he loves! His favourite aspect of working with the FISCH Kids is that he is able to help them with spiritual matters and counselling. We asked him if there were any challenges that he found in his work with FISCH and he reported that "there are no problems, I just enjoy and love working there"!

He thinks and hopes that one day FISCH will grow to reach other areas and make an impact in other communities, and he hopes that people will join him in praying for the Tanzania Children, especially those involved at FISCH, so that in the future we can have a big group of Children whom are supported in life. He hopes that then one day, FISCH will make a church community of the Children that are growing up, a church that will be "helpful and hopeful, so that one day, they will also help others".



Above: Pastor Peter
Below: Patron Lazaro

Short-Term Accommodation Update

As part of the process of helping Children **move off the Streets back into family life**, we offer **Short-Term Accommodation** (STA) where the Children can **live safely** at the **Drop-in-Centre** (DiC) overseen by **Lazaro** (*see right*), the STA Patron, and have access to a **bed, shower** and regular **food**, plus all the activities that go on at the DiC. This helps the Child **transition** from the Street Kid culture back to family life, and FISCH then **supports that family**, perhaps by providing a Food Parcel or helping with education fees. We encourage all the Kids to come to the activities at FISCH and to get back into education or vocational training where possible.

We'd like to share the stories of some of the Children who have come through the STA and how they are doing now...

Continued...





Continued...

Ally is 18 years old and comes from Mwanza where his family lives.

After the death of his mother, his father remarried, and due to a tense relationship between Ally and his new step-mother, he ran away from home at 7 years old. He lived on the streets in Mwanza and then Dar es Salaam, and eventually Iringa. He connected with the Team at FISCH and stayed at the DiC for 3 months. After long counselling, Ally, now 18, was ready to go back home, so FISCH contacted his father, who was happy that his son was finally ready to return and join the family. FISCH made arrangements for Ally to return to his family in Mwanza (580 miles away!) in October last year, 11 years after he ran away.

Nicholas is 10 years old and from Ipogolo. He had been living on the streets for 2 months when FISCH came into contact with him, as he had made a mistake at home and had run away to avoid punishment. FISCH counselled both son and mother and Nicholas agreed to return home. He has now settled back into family life and is in Standard Four at Ipogolo Primary School.

Steven is 12 years old and lived with his father and mother in a mud house covered with old rusty corrugated iron sheets. Their living environment is not good and life at home was difficult – they do not have enough food and many times Steven and his parents would sleep without having eaten that day. His father works as a porter carrying items at the market and his mother was jobless. These difficult circumstances led to Steven leaving home in search of a better situation and he lived on the Streets for 3 months. With the support and efforts of FISCH and the counselling sessions provided, Steven was willing to be returned home and to stay with his family.



From left; his father, his sister, Ally, his aunt, his step mother, his grandmother



Nicholas with his two siblings



Steven and his mother



Catching Up With Robbie

You have probably read about **Robbie** in previous editions of the FISCH Food. As you read above, he's having great success as an **artist and painter**, so we thought we'd interview him and find out more!

How did you come to be at FISCH?

I was sleeping on the streets and working by washing cars, but often I wouldn't get paid. I heard about the Breakfast Club from a friend in town and decided to start coming to eat Breakfast at FISCH. The staff there then offered me to stay on at FISCH which I did immediately!

How has FISCH assisted you?

FISCH has helped me with the practical things like food, a safe place to sleep and emotional support. However they have also helped me develop my talents as an artist, provided me with art materials and sending me to art school in Bagamoyo, as well as providing a platform for me to sell my art.

Why did you decide to start training to be an artist?

I love art, I drew often and my grandmother told me I was talented at it. When I moved to Iringa I still drew but rarely had the pens or paper to ...

...continued

...continued ...to create anything I could sell. When the opportunity arose for me to train to be a painter, I was really happy because it's something I am good at and something I enjoy.

How has life changed for you since you started painting?

I have money and a steady income. I am my own boss and I don't have to worry about other people not paying me. I am happy that I can pursue my passion!

What are your hopes for the future?

I want to continue painting and to have my own shop and office. I want to visit my grandmother with money and to have a family and a house, and to maybe one day sell my paintings internationally!

Reflections On Iringa – Carolyn

When we asked Carolyn, a member of the UK FISCH Team and member of the recent Trip to Tanzania about her thoughts on visiting FISCH for the very first time, she replied with a poem. Here are her reflections on her time in Iringa...

Life in all its Humanity

*Men and Women working to survive.
I saw woman with babies strapped to their backs
Carrying bowls full of fruit on their heads -
They were walking, walking, mile after mile
To take their goods to 'market'.
Life in Tanzania is hard.....*

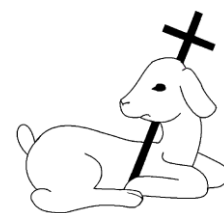
*I saw men with bicycles with huge loads of wood,
piled up high -
Pushing them up, up, up the hill to market.
Heavy, heavy loads!
When I say 'market', I mean a tiny stall
Just like a small table with a rack on top.
Each trying to sell to another.
Others just place their wares on the ground
Waiting for 'someone' to buy 'something'.*

*Life is hard here in Tanzania.....
Houses are tiny -
Really like sheds or shacks made of dried mud or
corrugated iron.
One room, two if you're lucky
Plastered walls and a floor to match.
Cold and stark and dark, no
Electric lights to be seen*

*One large pot on an open fire, in the middle of the room
Cooking whatever is available to eat.
A bed in the corner, one that would sleep 8 or more -
Even though it was only made for two.
Mud on the ground, mud all around
Washing to be done, to be hung between shacks
Toys for the kids - What are toys?
How can you afford toys when you can't afford food?
Kids left to play in the open and around,
With sticks and stones, and each other for their fun.*

*Food from those pots, cooking for hours,
meals that they eat of rice, beans and a slice of melon if
you're lucky
But food and a friendly face is a great way to start
Each of the FISCH team gives from their heart.
There's Pastor Peter who gives his warm love and
Peaches of Jesus, God's Son from above
He speaks of God's love and how Jesus His Son -
Was a refugee too, from Herod did run*

*God loves the poor, but even more...
He loves the Children.
'Bring the children to me' He said
For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,
Children of all ages big and small
Large and thin, HE LOVES THEM ALL.*



As Christians, we celebrate in the resurrection of Christ Jesus. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son – that through His redemptive sacrifice we might live. FISCH always has been and always will be God's project. He sustains FISCH and us, and we seek to honour Him in serving His Street Kids. We have given many thanks to many people and organisations who have supported FISCH in this edition, and we'd like to close by thanking our Heavenly Father, for all His provisions and blessings. We couldn't (and wouldn't want to!) do the work of FISCH without Him!

"I have come that they may have life, and life to the full!"

- John 10:10

