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Alice MacFarlane and Louise Johnstone have just returned from a two week trip to Tanzania to check on the progress at the school, compile a list of children needing sponsored and assess what needs to be put in place before the school can open. They also spoke to officials connected to the obtaining of prospecting licences for coal to try and secure a coal supply, which is vital for both the making of bricks for the school and for the firing of tiles at the Magima Roof Tile Project. While in the Ruvuma region they spent time taking photographs and video footage which they hope to make into a short film to use at fundraising events. Before they left Scotland a blog was opened on the Ruda website and they made a few entries when possible. The web site is still under construction but the posted stories of the trip can still be viewed.

Magima

Meetings were held with the workers at the Magima Project and some changes in the way the project would be run in the future were discussed. In order to maximise the output at the workshop, and ensure the continuing development and future longterm success of the project, it was decided to change the structure and put a temporary manager, Ntimba Millinga in place. He will spend the next year developing the efficient running of the project and handling the marketing and sale of the tiles. The workers will be paid a weekly wage based on the number of days worked. This will ensure that the members of the group get a regular income and with Millinga to deal with the management, they can concentrate on increasing their output. We know from Ntimba that since we returned to Scotland, the workers have been working very hard to complete the order for the existing school building; the second calssroom block, the administration block and the toilet block. Alice spent some time working at Magima and demonstrated how to use the plaster casts for the formers made at Glasgow School of Art. Some work was also carried out to modify and strengthen the wooden moulds used to form the ridge tiles. Alice carried out a survey of the project and while there is some work to be done to rebuild the bag wall inside the kiln, the equipment in general is in good condition. She recommended that they should increase the height of the kiln chimney by a metre.

While in Dar es Salaam, Alice and Louise were introduced to a doctor who is building a new hospital, he has samples of the tiles and wants to use them. There are other projects close to Magima itself, including a medical centre being built at Morogoro and a new project planned by the Children of Songea Charity both of which may be interested in using the tiles. At the moment they are using wood to fire the bricks for their project and could benefit from the better coal fired technology we use, which doesn't cut down trees so is better for the environment, and makes larger amounts of stronger bricks. There is evidence that many people would be interested in using the roof tiles, these can be sold at a price, which is still cheaper than the corrugated iron sheeting, the only alternative solution available locally.

Update on the Namanditi School

Due to lack of funds there has not been a great deal of progress to the school buliding since the last report. All the buildings have been fitted with windows with bars which will have mosquito netting attached. The first classroom block has had concrete floors laid and wooden doors hung. Some repair work will be necessary on the unroofed administration block due to damage caused by strong winds and heavy rains. The maize mill house and hen house have been built and roofed with thatch for the moment and the brickwork is almost completed on the toilet block.





Some more funds were sent over in July and these should help to progress the project, by paying wages for the repairs to the administration block and go some way towards the cost of roof tiles, cement for flooring and plaster and paint for interior walls. The tree nursery is healthy and there is an order in for some trees but they are not required until March, so we are still looking for other ways of turning the trees into cash for the project. The vegetable gardens are also looking well and as the photo above shows the young trees planted last year are already bearing fruit.

One of the tasks that Alice and Louise began was the creation of a register of poorer children who would benefit from attending the school with the support of Sponsors in the UK. During their stay in Peramiho they met with a dozen children from different villages in the area. These children are all deserving cases and some have minor ailments like ringworm or jiggers which could very easily be treated. Each child was asked a few questions, had their photographs taken and were asked to draw a picture. Altogether the details of six girls and six boys were collected all four or five years old. They all have hard lives, some are orphans and many are living with their grandparents, who are very old and concerned that their grandchildren should have a better start in life than they can afford to give them. Louise has a list of ten sponsors who would like to be paired with children and the aim is that the headmaster, Baraka collects details for another eight children over the next few weeks so that there are 20 sponsored children in the first intake. So, half of the target of twenty sponsors has been found already and this is very encouraging.



In order to open the school we need to complete the buildings we have started and raise the remaining funds required to send the container of donated school equipment. Bringing goods in through Dar es Salaam is never easy but we have people in Dar ready to help us. In addition we have been informed that according to regulations we have to build a fence around the school buildings. We are currently waiting for a price for fencing and hope to know soon exactly how much we need to raise.

The sponsored children are ready to start school and we have two teachers ready to teach them. Let's hope they don't have to wait too long before this venture can begin. Once the school is up and running there are many families locally and in Songea who will be able to pay fees to send their child to the school. Over the next six months we will continue to explore various fund raising options and speak to individuals and businesses which might be willing to help.

Meanwhile we will continue to develop the website – so watch this space:
www.rudatanzania.org.uk