

LUHIMBA UPDATE JAN 2020



I hope you all had a very happy Christmas and I wish you all the very best for the new year. 2019 was a very busy and successful year for The Luhimba Project and it looks as if 2020 will be equally as busy.

To start with I would like to thank you all again for your loyal and generous support which yet again has made it possible for us to achieve so much. I would also like to give a warm welcome to our new sponsors who have joined us over the past couple of months.

Now for a couple of changes to the running of the project:

- Email address – we now have a new email address, which is luhimbaproject@gmail.com. This will be used for all correspondence in the future, although the original address, luhimba@aol.com will continue to be active for the time being. Also, regarding emails, if you change your email address please let me know, and if you have been receiving updates by post and now have an email address, please let me know this as well.
- Charity Trustees – there will be some changes to the structure of our board of trustees in the near future and I will give you details of these when they are finalised. The charity will continue to function as usual but with some different trustees.
- Luhimba Village Council and leadership – there were elections last year to elect a new Village Council and Chairman. We delayed some future plans during my last visit pending the results of these elections and I now very much look forward to meeting with the new leadership during my next visit to make plans and move forward together in a positive way.
- Extending the scope of the project – as you know, since the project started in 1984 we have been helping the villagers of Luhimba and some surrounding areas to improve their quality of life, concentrating on health, education, clean water and agriculture. Based on the successes achieved so far we would like to extend the project to include a wider community. We have met many individuals and groups in areas outside Luhimba who are suffering from acute poverty, health problems and social issues. We would dearly like to support these in some way and with your help I am sure we can give more people a better quality of life. More on this when we have met with the new leadership, and I would welcome your views.

I last visited the village in October 2019. I travelled on my own and had a hectic schedule. The villagers gave me a wonderful welcome and we achieved a lot in a very positive way.

Update on current projects

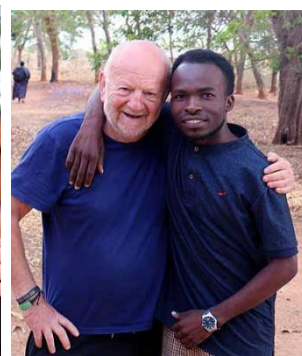
Education: Our three primary schools and the secondary school are all doing well. All three primary schools had good results in the recent 13+ national exams, enabling students to attend secondary school. The new



double classroom which we built at Ngembambili Primary School has finally been completed and looks great. This was funded largely by Ashcombe Primary School in Weston who raised £1195.55 last July and Mynyddgarreg and Trimsaran primary schools in Carmarthenshire, together with generous donations from Footcare in Llanelli and the on-going support of Delia Daniels from Llansaint. We are also grateful to the government in Tanzania for providing the finishing touches to the building. Many thanks also to Hornets Rugby Club in Weston for donating a full set of tops which we presented to Ngembambili School, to the delight of the pupils and staff, and to Weston Athletics Club for its generous donation following their Christmas Cracker race. The club also donated several boxes of WAC t-shirts which we distributed to the schools and to the village football team.

University students – we currently sponsor ten students from Luhimba at universities in various parts of Tanzania. Three of these, Shani, Atwaya and Azizi, graduated with good degrees in June. All three have returned to the village. They have decided to set up a farming project to be able to save up themselves to return to university in due course to take their masters degrees. So good to see them helping themselves.

Pics on right:
Azizi & Atwaya,
Shani, and Jackson
(a second year uni
student)





In my last report I told you about Linah Milanzi. Linah's father, Matias, had been a good friend of mine since my first visits to Luhimba over 30 years ago. He was the village photographer and a respected member of the community. Sadly he passed away in March 2018, leaving a widow and daughter Linah. Linah



went through our schools system and gained excellent A level results last year. Her ambition was always to study medicine. With little family income it would have been difficult for her to progress with her education. Last year I gave a talk to Weston Ladies' Probus Cub and told them about Linah. Their response was overwhelming. The members have donated enough funds for Linah to go to medical college. Linah started a 5-year course at Dodoma University last October to become a doctor. This wonderful gesture is life-changing for Linah. (Pic on right with Linah and Angel Tago, a 3rd year uni student from the village).



Little Star Day Care Centre: I discovered this centre last February. It is a day care centre for 2 - 5 year old children from underprivileged families in Mshangano, near Luhimba run by husband and wife team Kiza and Eda Kibugu. Mark, John and I visited this centre last February and since then the three of us have been paying their rent for their classroom. I was delighted to visit the centre again when I returned in October, and to see it thriving. It's a delightful little nursery run by an inspirational husband and wife team. 10 of the children are moving on to primary school now at the start of the new academic year in January.

Clean Water: This is one of the most important aspects of our project. Clean water is essential to good health for every member of the community. Without it they are so susceptible to water-borne diseases and illnesses. Before the project started the villagers shared water holes with cattle etc. Currently in rural areas of Tanzania 63% of the people do not have access to clean water and 82% lack sanitation. In the mid 1980's we installed 30 hand operated pumps to help tackle this problem and over the years several more pumps have been added. This has gone a long way to provide cleaner water, but the water pumped up from the ground still needs to be boiled for 20 minutes before being safe to drink. The next step is to purify the water so that boiling is not necessary. The simplest and most practical way of doing this is to install water purification units. These units consist of two water tanks positioned above each other. The top tank is filled with pumped up water which passes down through a filter to the lower tank as purified water, safe to drink. The system is gravity fed with no need for electricity and very affordable. I will discuss these ideas further with the new village chairman and council during my next visit to the village. This will be a big step forward in improving public health.



Health: The Angela Carey Dispensary, which we built in 1997, continues to provide essential health care for Luhimba and surrounding villages. The long-serving village doctor, George Pallangyo, retired last year and was replaced by Dr Joseph Magige, who is continuing the good work in the village. He is pictured here with one of his patients. We still help children who need additional specialist treatment which the parents cannot afford. During my latest visit I also met so many more children and adults in Luhimba and outlying areas who desperately hospital treatment, but the cost of such treatment is beyond the means of most families. We want to help as many as possible get the treatment they need. Following is the tragic story of one such case:



I met Mohammed Ngwenya for the first time in October. He is 8 years old. Four years ago Mohammed had an accident and suffered serious burns on both legs. As a result he has not been able to walk or attend school since. He drags himself around on the ground with flip flops on his hands. We sent him



to be assessed at a hospital which has a special burns unit and the doctors there said they could operate on his legs and hopefully enable him to walk again. The operation will cost 1 million Tanzanian shillings (about £300). We are now in the process of arranging this. If only we'd known about Mohammed's plight four years ago!!

This is only one sad case. We have come across several more cases, most of which require simple operations, and we will tackle these one at a time as our funds allow. It is heartwarming to know that your generous support is having such a positive and immediate impact on the lives of this poor community.

Agriculture: Virtually all the villagers are farmers and this is a busy time of year as they are all out on their "shamba" (farms) cultivating their crops including maize, rice and soya.

Poverty: This is a huge problem in Tanzania. Statistics show that almost 70% of the population live below the poverty line. Poverty leads to hunger. Roughly 40% of the children under 5 suffer from malnutrition. Although the situation is improving it is still high especially in rural areas where 80% of the population live. Every day we come across families in Luhimba and in the wider community whose lives are suffering from the effects of poverty eg single parents who have to bring up their children on their own with little or no regular income, grandparents who are left with grandchildren, children and adults who are sick and need hospital treatment including operations, families who live in houses which are in desperate need of repair etc. We offer support to as many of these families as we can, but this is just a drop in the ocean when one considers the magnitude of the problem. Some examples of how we provide help to these people include



helping them to set up their own small businesses such as chicken farms, beds for children in overcrowded houses, care for the elderly living on their own etc.

This lady is struggling to bring up her young twins. We were able to help her in a small way by buying a bed for her and her children.

OTHER NEWS

Football Tournament:

In October 2018 Rob and Eleanor Deane and their son Ed visited the village with me. During their stay they presented the football club with some trophies as prizes for a new village tournament. The tournament was held in Sept/Oct and I was fortunate to be there for the final stages. It was a roaring success and so well organised. The whole village turned out, invading the pitch after each goal was scored. Eight teams took part and the final winning team was Luhimba Stend. They have decided to make it an annual event and add a ladies tournament next year. Thanks to Atwaya, Azizi and their helpers for organizing the tournament.



All Saints Church, Wrington: Back in September we had a very enjoyable evening at Wrington Church when I had the opportunity to bring the parishioners up-to-date with what is happening with the project. This is where it all started in 1984, thanks to Michael and Angela Carey. For me it has been a real honour and pleasure to continue the work that Michael started almost 36 years ago and to see the project still going from strength to strength. Thanks to Fiona Densham, Richard Thorn and their helpers for organising the evening.

All Saints Church, Weston: Many thanks to All Saints Church in Weston for presenting the project with a cheque for £200 raised at their wonderful “Last Night of the Proms” concert last summer.

We are indebted to all our individual sponsors who continue to support the project so generously and to all the organisations in the Weston area and South Wales for making it all possible.

These include:

Weston Homemakers, IWECC Electrical Contractors in Kidwelly, Weston Athletics Club, Weston Ladies Probus Club, Weston Lions, East Brent Methodist Church, All Saints Church (Weston), Llannon and Bancffosfelen Primary Schools, Llansaint Gardening Club, Rainbow Smiles Nursery, St Augustine’s Church (Locking), Daphne Fowler (BBC Eggheads) and her quiz team, Links Ladies (Uphill), Clarence Park Ladies, the Macular Degeneration Group, Pegasus Court and all the clubs and organisations which invite me to give talks and presentations.

If you belong to any club, church, school or organisation that would like a presentation on The Luhimba Project, and would be interested in having a talk, please get in touch with me and I would be pleased to come along in return for a donation to the project. (Tel 01934 620485 Mob 077866 51458).

I would be grateful for any feedback or thoughts you may have about the project, and I will be in touch again soon.

Best wishes.

Paul

Some more pics from Oct 19



