

FREEDOM FOR TEEN GIRLS: "DAYS FOR GIRLS" HYGIENE KITS

by Kjerstin Rye, RN, Songea's Kids Volunteer



Thanks to the [Days For Girls](#) Kirkland WA Team and Songea's Kids sewing volunteers, fifty colorful feminine hygiene kits (below) were delivered to Songea in October 2015 for a "girls only" workshop for students in our care. The kits were distributed just before a special welcoming celebration (lunch, singing, and dancing) with the Mshangano community and orphans. The girls were instructed to come 2 hours early for special instruction on use of the kits. We also extended the invitation to any other female family and/or community members interested. Over forty girls, ages 8-16, and a few caregivers came.

The week before the distribution, I met with four female community members (two teachers, one nurse, one matron) who agreed to be instructors on proper use of the kits. Community members were chosen to teach to ease the language barrier, and because the girls would feel more comfortable and trusting of their knowledge of cultural norms. This proved true, and everyone enjoyed the training. The teachers and I discussed feminine hygiene norms, cultural and financial barriers, and stigma associated with feminine hygiene. The workshop and kit distribution was a great success and will help the girls stay in school, gain confidence and avoid infection. One teacher hopes to begin making kits to meet the growing demand for more kits. Also, the newly formed Women's Tailoring Cooperative, started by students who have been supported by Songea's Kids, may make kits for sale at a reasonable price.



A NEW ROOF... AND DRY, HEALTHY CHILDREN



Said and Gifti now sleep warm and dry as the new year begins. Our NGO partner Jirani Mwema took funds earned from their chicken project, and collected donations from local churches and the Ruvuma Lutheran Diocese to raise \$275 for a new metal roof that replaced the leaking thatch roof on the boy's home. Mshangano Village volunteers donated their labor to remove the old roof and install the new one. Now Jirani Mwema is collecting funds for a metal roof for two more orphan foster homes that are in very bad shape—one for Jackson, one for Bwanardo and Hamisi.

2015 JIRANI MWEMA ACHIEVEMENTS

by Ramadhan Silim, Jirani Mwema Chief Operations Officer

Improved student academic performance in 2015 national examinations is one of the biggest achievements for our organization. Seven pupils passed primary exams so they will enter Form One at the government secondary school. Agusta Nguwila passed Form Four national exams and now she attends high-level education at Ruhuwiko School to become a teacher. Six students have completed tailoring training and will join the new Women's Tailoring Cooperative Centre at Mshangano Village, sharing two heavy-duty treadle sewing machines provided by generous USA donors.



Two students completed masonry training at Msamala Vocational Training Centre and are working with masons in Mshangano to gain practical experience. Two students will complete Masonry training in 2016. Christina Mgaya graduated from Top One Inn Hotel Management Training and is now employed in Lindi.

The chicken project is expanding from 200 chickens in 2013 to 310 chickens now. As a result, the children have improved nutrition by eating four eggs every month. The expansion was paid for by the reserve fund created from selling excess eggs. Egg income also pays all operating expenses for the chicken project.



Monthly reports from Jirani Mwema detail the health of the children. Malaria and typhoid are the prevailing diseases in Tanzania in spite of use of mosquito nets and other precautions. Those who have contracted diseases are quickly treated thanks to the JM matron, and all have recovered.

BOOK DONATIONS



Teachers in Mshangano Village excitedly sorted two small boxes of books donated by caring women in Dar es Salaam after the Dar women learned that the primary and secondary government schools in Mshangano Village have NO libraries. Since the initial donation, the Dar group has collected more boxes of used books. They are sending them by bus to Jirani Mwema to deliver to the schools. How wonderful if each student could actually hold and read a book... or even own one!

HOPE VILLAGE BREAKTHROUGH: PARTNERSHIP WITH LUTUKIRA VILLAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

After several years of negotiation and trust-building between our partner NGO Hope Village Organization (HVO), and the Lutukira Village Council and villagers, we have succeeded in hosting focus group meetings with their leaders. In October, the women and men of Songea's Kids Tanzania Travel Team listened and learned the urgent needs of each group to make life better for their children. They explained in great detail the plans for the village as prepared by USA volunteer architects and engineers, and answered questions.



As a result, village leaders signed a letter of support and joined the partnership to bring Hope Village one step closer to reality. The members of this very poor, subsistence farming village, with no electricity or clean water, are transferring to Hope Village Organization (for a very small fee) approximately 30 acres of land for a well and orphan housing. The agreement also allows for the potential of more land to be added as Hope Village expands to include a medical dispensary, vocational school, pre-primary school, and chicken-raising/feed production project. The local area governing body, the Madaba District Council, is sharing costs for the official land survey (land in right photo, next page).



Prospects for abundant water from a deep well on the new site are very good according to Tanzanian and USA based hydrogeologists. The large drill rig (left) should begin drilling in February. The original site for Hope Village, on a hill farther from the village, will be used for agriculture projects including crops to feed the children living in the Hope Village residential complex or test plots for the agricultural vocational school.



Hydrogeologist Russ Prior (left), who for a second time was part of the volunteer Tanzania Travel Team, evaluated well plans and worked with the men's focus group in Lutukira to help them understand the well-drilling process. In 2010 he supervised drilling of a very successful well in Mshangano Village.

Russ also took some time away from his work to connect with Kelvina, the orphan girl he and Patti sponsor. A happy visit!

GIFT OF PAIN RELIEF: MEDICINES AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR LUTUKIRA

While volunteering for Songea's Kids on the ground in Tanzania in October 2015, Kjerstin Rye, RN, delivered 100 pounds of donated "over the counter" medicines and medical supplies to the villagers of Lutukira. Their medical dispensary shelves were mostly empty, leaving the pharmacist and nurse with patients but no medicines.

The villagers were overwhelmed that people half a world away cared enough to do this. One orphan caretaker who is a grandmother received immediate help in the form of electrolyte powder and clean water. Thanks to all who provided these supplies!



SONGEA SOIRÉE: WE RAISED THE ROOF

Good news from the 2015 "Raise the Roof" Songea Soirée! The net income more than doubled over last year's event thanks to very generous auction bidders, donors and attendees. Special thanks to the great volunteers who worked so hard behind the scenes and to very generous donors Mark and Jane, who hosted three groups of high bidders in the live auction for a December Christmas Lights Lake Cruise on their 51 foot yacht "Hornblower". The net income of \$12,600 is very essential in helping Songea's Kids grant the funds to Jirani Mwema to pay the estimated 2016 education bills of \$18,000 for the students... and fund other urgent needs. We really did *Raise the Roof* for the orphan children!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND JOIN THE FESTIVITIES FOR 2016 SONGEA SOIRÉE:

Saturday, November 5, 2016
Redmond Senior Center
Redmond, WA
5:00 - 8:00 pm

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EACH OF YOU IS A PARTNER—YOU MAKE OUR PROGRESS POSSIBLE. THANK YOU!
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PLEASE CONSIDER THE MANY WAYS YOU CAN TELL OTHERS HOW SONGEA'S KIDS IS TRANSFORMING LIVES.

INVITE THEM TO SUPPORT THIS WORK TO GIVE LIFE & HOPE TO MANY MORE ORPHAN CHILDREN

- ❖ Give Gifts of Stocks and Bonds
- ❖ Make a Legacy Bequest
- ❖ Become a Child Sponsor
- ❖ Donate to the Education Fund
- ❖ Join the Volunteer Team

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Designate Songea's Kids as your favorite charity to receive support **at no cost to you**. Every dollar counts for the kids. We receive a donation of **0.5%** of eligible purchases you make on their site. Visit [here](#) to sign up. It's easy!

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