

**Comment**

Move around Mtwara’s main streets – the market, the main road past the Regional Commissioner’s residence, the new coast road past the Makonde Beach Club and towards the Holy Redeemer Sisters, or drive towards Mikindani on the main road north towards Dar – you won’t wait long before a large Landcruiser with red number plates speeds past you. The red number plates mean that the car is registered to a government department or an NGO. It also almost certainly means that it was bought and paid for with international aid money. It’s true that experts from the developed world helping Tanzania in its development can’t move around the more remote areas without 4 x 4s. And those donors would rightly be criticised if they never left Dar or Dodoma. It’s just that a cynic will point out that for all the aid money going in, all the experts offering advice and all the 4 x 4s tearing up dust, life for eighty per cent of the Tanzanian population is as precarious as ever. It’s true that girls’ access to education is improving, deaths from malaria are falling and international investment (principally from China) is increasing. But, infant mortality remains high; access to good healthcare, clean water and quality education scarce. Tanzania is still one of the twenty poorest countries in the world, with nearly eighty per cent of its population existing on less than \$2 a day. When we started Mtwaralinks, we wanted to stick to a very simple principle: we give the money directly to those who need it. In recent years we’ve compromised a little, in that we now give it principally to Sisters who in turn give it to or spend it on those who need it. But we know where every penny is spent and none of it to date has gone on Landcruisers.



*Mtwara, Southern Tanzania.*



*Sister Tadea teaches the novices how to thin the rice plants to improve the yield.*

Sister Tadea smiles ruefully when I ask her how long before the road is finished and a weekly clinic can be held. “It would be good, Adrian. But it is difficult.” We had just left the kindergarten classroom from where as many as twelve children were absent, according to teacher, Gertrude, suffering from bilharzia. This painful and very serious disease affects the intestine and is contracted by dirty stagnant water. The village elder had quite proudly showed me his ‘new well’ - in fact a dirty pond, dug with some NGO money he’d won. “Isn’t this the reason the children are ill?” I’d asked. He shrugged. Much progress has been made in the three years since I last visited. Innocent, an agriculturalist from Arusha, clearly takes pleasure from the rice, korosho, teak, maize and cassava which he is cultivating.

Novices and postulants come every few weeks to do a week’s back-breaking work in the rice fields. The 20 hectare farm is now productive, but without a good access road can never be profitable. For six months of the year the farm is inaccessible by car because of the marshy ground, but for the other six months the farm and the village has no water. “I will speak to Kilyan for some prices,” says Sister Tadea. Of course the future without a sustainable water supply is grim. And on this I have good news. The Leeds businessman who had provided the funding for the school, the house and the solar power, has agreed to fund a bore hole provided we can find a reliable water engineer. The survey and work will be carried out in July. I’m hopeful that next year, we might be talking about a clinic.

**Mtwara’s twin town**

Mtwara has been twinned with Redditch in Worcestershire for over three decades. Jackie Morgan manages the town’s One World Linking project. There have been reciprocal visits promoting mutual understanding and friendship. It’s much easier for the UK group to visit Mtwara than the other way but this year a group including Sister Monica

from the Montessori teachers’ college will be visiting the UK.



*Jackie Morgan with Mtwara Girls School.*

**Money via your mobile phone**

The cost of transferring money from the UK to Tanzania has always been expensive. We have until now transferred our GBP to the Sisters € account in Mtwara or the Benedictine \$ account in Ndanda. In each case HSBC levies a fee of only £4.00, but then offers a poor exchange rate. Mobile phone networks have agents through whom you pay cash and receive an instant confirmation that your money has been sent and received to a recipient in another part of the country. It’s simple, safe and very cheap. Vodacom’s introduction of their international money transfer service – Global Remit – just made it that much simpler and cheaper for us to send our money to where it’s needed. For Mtwaralinks, it means that we can transfer money directly to wherever we want with the lowest possible charges. A woman in desperate need of a little emergency help was sent £20 (TSH62,000) recently, enough to keep her family for a month. The transfer took 12 hours to complete and cost 49p to effect. It was a month’s lifeline for food and fuel, conducted quickly, simply, cheaply and directly by the donor. If you’d like to know more about this system and perhaps become of those donors who occasionally make such personal and direct gifts, please get in touch.

**Where the Money goes**

Our income and expenditure remains reasonably stable, albeit the number of monthly donations has decreased slightly. Income in 2016/17 was higher (£7480) as a result of a sponsored walk undertaken by one supporter and the sale of some carvings. Each year however, our annual income is boosted by almost 20% through Gift Aid and any new supporters are urged to permit us to claim the Gift Aid from your donation. Our aim this year is to try and raise £10,000. With your help – by encouraging friends and family members to support us – we

believe we can do it.

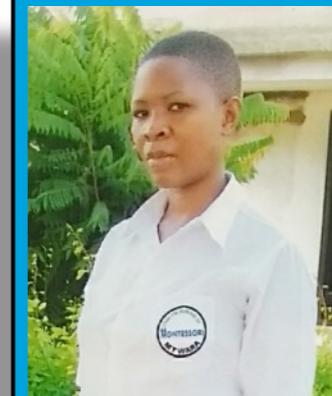
Income  
(2017-2018) = £6010.60

Expenditure  
(2017-2018) = £10,493.71

Expenditure is higher because of a sizeable carry forward from 2016. The money was spent approximately in the following ways:

- Medical Equipment - £3100.00
- Student Sponsorship - £1200.00
- Kindergarten Eqpmt - £3100.00
- Majengo Food Programme - £3000.00

For the coming year, Sister Tadea and I have agreed priorities for the



**Rose and Biatus**

Rose is a young woman of nineteen. She was raised by her mum alone, after her dad left. Today her mum struggles to feed Rose’s younger siblings and, having completed secondary school, Rose has now been offered a place on the Diploma in Education course at the Montessori Teachers’ Training College in Mtwara. It is an excellent college with small class sizes and well qualified teaching staff. Were Rose to be able to take up this place she would live in dormitory accommodation and take all her meals at the college. College arranges for her to undertake teaching practice and helps her find work on completion of the course. The cost of the course including food and accommodation, uniform, stationery and all necessary materials and equipment is approximately £645 per year.

If you think you can help support Rose through this three year course please get in touch.

With Gift Aid, a donation of £50 a month will allow Rose to have a high-quality education, secure a good job and help her community. Not all education sponsorships are as expensive as the Montessori College. For £15 a month you can pay for a student to attend secondary school – covering fees, uniform and stationery. For £30 a month you can pay for a student to complete Forms V & VI (equivalent to A levels). If you’d like to sponsor a student through their education, complete the Standing Order form and use the reference ‘Rose’.



*Biatus hopes to find a sponsor so he can complete his studies and qualify as a teacher.*

support she receives from us. For 2018/19 we will be improving facilities for the kindergarten in Kilidu: We will continue our support for the food programme at Majengo and aim to assist more students with fees.

