



Newsletter: December 2007 Douglas McFalls

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November 14 through 24 were spent in Rombo, Kenya continuing my work with the Boma School project headed by Tipape Loomu. The work actually began in Moshi, Tanzania at the Malaika School that generously donated 24 chairs and various desks for our school. We loaded up a rented truck and wound our way around Mt. Kilimajaro, moving slowly enough so as not to lose our precious cargo.

LEMONG'O BOMA SCHOOL

The school continues to grow and to be refined. The longer I am there the more I am aware of the crisis in this community and the urgency of our work. We now have three teachers and 81 students in preschool, with our first class moving up to the First Grade in the New Year.

The progress is encouraging but not without huge challenges. The Kenyan December elections have put an unexpected twist on our development: The local Irish lead project that originally granted us use of the building they constructed, suddenly decided to launch a government school boasting uniforms contributed by a boys school in Ireland, and so it seems we will not be able to use the three classrooms they had offered us originally (though we pray to maintain the two classrooms given by AMREF that we are currently using). Despite this setback, we have decided not to be on the defensive, but rejoice that this community will have choices. Our greatest concern is that the promises of this new school, which are enticing many, are an election year promise that will never really materialize. But if the government school does open its doors, please pray we can work peacefully with our new neighbors, and encourage each other. *This event renews our need for more classrooms.*



After long discussion we have realized that it is vital that we include the government curriculum in our teaching. Kenyans are allowed to sit for the government exams, even if not studying in a government school. In a country where certificates are often desired over qualifications, it is

important that we prepare these children to succeed both in the country where they live and also in a global context. Studying this curriculum will also allow children who may need to move away from the area to be able to enter into other schools easily. This will be an exciting challenge to study the government subjects and figure out how we can teach them in the affective and flexible manner of the A.C.E. (Accelerated Christian Education) curriculum we are using. To do this we hope to hire a fourth teacher who can focus on this and serve as a substitute.

We have decided that 2008 will be a year of solidifying what we have and exploring how we might expand as there are many unschooled children deeper in the bush. The most important step has been taken: the Lemong'o Boma School is on its feet and children are learning. 2008 will focus on incorporating the government subjects and fitting each child with a uniform and each classroom with all the desk and chairs needed. We also need to acquire a motorbike for the director (something that is crucial as Lemong'o and future school sites are isolated and the countryside is inhabited by dangerous animals.) Also fundraising strategies have to be made to keep this school going into the future. Though we had planned stop admissions until 2009, parents continue to approach our director, Tipape.

Here are some pictures of these school kids taken by my friend Lee Long.



CHALLENGES OF THE DRY SEASON FOR THE MAASAI OF ROMBO

This is the end of the dry season. Having been cut off from the spring in the Tsavo West Game Reserve, (a place once a part of Maasai lands) some Maasai, in desperation, are sneaking their cows into the parks to graze their starving cows. Those caught are beaten, and families are forced to pay high bail to release sons or husbands. During this season, the cows go dry and there is no milk for the children. Even Tipape's family lost one of their few remaining cows. The rains have just now begun. Three weeks ago there was an early heavy rain. Many took the opportunity to plant corn and beans – only to have their crops wither and die because no rains came again. Many are too poor to buy new seeds. Weather patterns are no longer as regular as in the past they say. These are tough times in Rombo. That's why we are working so hard there.

PILLARS OF MAASAI DEVELOPMENT

Tipape has just registered the group Pillars for Maasai Development. This group will serve as an umbrella organization that will support Maasai addressing various issues facing their communities: tree planting, HIV/AIDS, governance, education (our Boma Schools) and whatever they determine they need. ADEA currently covers the cost for an office for these groups to meet and will serve as a resource center.

Tipape Loomu, for those of you who don't know him, is a brilliant, gracious, wise, generous, and kind young man. He is the eldest of 10 children. His parents could only afford to educate him and his sister. He is working to be sure that all his siblings and his community have access to education. His passion to help his community, his love of knowledge, his profound faith in God, and hard work ethic is and will continue to make a huge difference in his community. ADEA USA has put so much energy into coaching and working with Tipape because he was trying to address them before we even met. Tipape hopes to marry soon. If you'd like to contribute a cow to make his hopes a reality (I am quite serious), they cost about \$235 – he needs 6 to marry, now he has none – *wife nor cows*).

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

Due to greater access to mass-produced household items and clothes and the end of their nomadic lifestyle, many traditional Maasai items are disappearing. For the purposes of education and cultural preservation we are attempting to acquire as many of these items as possible before they are lost and forgotten; our long-term vision in a small museum. To remind these children of their rich heritage, Maasai elders visit the school to share the history of these items as well as other traditional stories.



Oltuala: Beaded leather garter with bell worn while dancing during lion killing and pre-circumcision celebrations



Leather woven panels. (2) These panels strapped to the donkeys for the transporting of household items or sick people.



*PRESERVATION OF THE CULTURE:
Here Tipape and I document the details of each piece*



*Newly Painted school.
In Lemong'o the school has incorporated Maasai patterns & colors into its design*

Happy note: A recent visitor committed to contributing enough to cover curriculum cost for 2008!

2008 Boma School Budget Needs

Motor Bike - Ksh 110,000 - \$1700
Teachers 4 - Ksh 192,000 - \$2900
Directors - Ksh 210,000 - \$3200
Uniforms – Ksh 48,000 - \$730
~~Curriculum – Ksh 24,000 – \$365~~ Covered
Desk/Chairs - Ksh 216,000 - \$3270
Cultural Acquisitions Ksh 100,000 - \$1500
Painting of Classrooms Ksh 40,000 - \$600
Office Internet Installation – Ksh 12,000 - \$180
Travel – Ksh 60,000 - \$900
Office Costs – Ksh 60,000 - \$900

Est 2008 budget – Ksh 1,240,000 [\$15,500]

(Est. Budget as of Nov 20, 2007)

DAILY TIDBITS:

- ☛ As we sat in the heat and dust of the day, it was a bizarre shock to hear Jingle Bells playing over the radio.
- ☛ Goat liver is much nicer than cow liver! Or was it because the diet is completely organic?
- ☛ Pray for Kenya. In the recent elections large number of members of parliament were not re-elected; thus may reject the results and invoke violence. This lack of respect for elections is discouraging to many.
- ☛ Buffalo Horns make great mortars; a smooth stone can suffice as the pestle.

SPIRITUAL NOTE: I need to remember the lessons I already know! With lots of work, heat and many visitors, I am often moving too fast to consider lessons that I have learned from past experiences. I am sure God is thinking – “Kupikita (that’s me) why are you asking that question? Haven’t we been through this already?” I plan to slow down over Christmas week to take inventory of what I already know about this life as I prepare to move into 2008.

Next month: Visit of mom and friends, the Makutano Christmas Market, and progress with ADEA TZ

Kristmas Ngema na Heri Mwaka Mpia to you all!! Thanks for your support and interest. Christmas is the hardest time of year to be away! No eggnog, no chocolate, negligible parties, decorations and music. And clearly no cold, frosty days.

Douglas – Kupikita – Oloikurrukurr