



Newsletter: July 2012 Douglas McFalls

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In June I traveled to Rombo, Kenya to visit the core team of bead workers for the Maasai Winter Disk Ornament project (see May 2012 Newsletter). Seven women have been selected because of their considerable skill and leadership ability. In the future, as demand grows, it is their intent to expand the production circles to help other suffering Maasai families in their area. The purpose of my visit was to conduct interviews to understand the current state of their lives, and how the beaded ornament production would help them. I was saddened by what I found, and convinced more than ever of the need to implement this project.

The suffering of the Maasai more profound than I had realized



Grace stand in her empty corral that once help more than three hundred cows; she remains with one.



“We’ve been reduced to beggars. We suffer verbal abuse from the day labor field managers as we hire ourselves out for just enough to feed our family porridge. We feel degraded and tired.”



The drought of 2007-2009 has left these women, their families and countless others Maasai in Rombo, Kenya destitute. Communities of this mighty tribe, famed for its wealth in livestock and proud spirit, have been “reduced to beggars” with near 100% cattle loss. These women, who once knew the relative leisure of being wives of prosperous Maasai herders were responsible primarily for the milking of cows and rearing their children, allowed them ample time to master the art of beadwork for the lavish adornment of their family. Now, they struggle daily to secure meager earnings by collecting firewood to sell in town or hiring themselves out as day workers, requiring them to learn the unfamiliar skill of working the land while suffering the shame of frequently abusive and degrading managers. Some of their husbands and sons decide to leave their families to take on the dangerous work of security guards in Nairobi or Mombasa (Leah’s husband was killed doing such work two years ago). While, more tragically, others men turn to drink to drown their despair; two of these women suffer under such negligent husbands. Each day is a question of survival. With their daily diet reduced to porridge they feel their bodies and health weakening. Many children remain at home due to no spare money for school fees. Each woman has her own story of hardship, yet their gracious and fighting spirit is nothing less than inspirational and humbling. The ability to earn a living with beadwork would allow them to work from home and restore dignity in their efforts to care for their families. A steady income will pay for food, school fees and eventually buy cows that can provide milk for their families and restore the traditional security so dear to the Maasai.

“Ornaments of Hope” - Maasai Winter Disk - Mini Launch Project

PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Title of project	Maasai Winter Disk Ornaments – Mini Launch Project 2012
Supervising Organizations	ADEA USA (African Development through Economics and the Arts) – Seattle, USA Pillar of Maasai Development (PMD) Rombo, Kenya
Objective	To produce and sell Winter Disk Ornaments for the 2012 Christmas Season in preparation for larger production and sales in 2013.
Specific Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide employment for seven Maasai women (the core Winter Disk team) doing beadwork for 22 weeks as an alternative to degrading day-labor fieldwork. • To introduce Winter Disk Ornaments for the 2012 Christmas market in anticipation of a larger 2013 market. • To practice systems in Kenya of quality control, timely production and shipping in preparation for larger 2013 markets. • To produce promotional material and website - providing as a test period in prep for larger 2013 marketing. • Systems of Sales Developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Packages 10 – 30 WD bags to be sold or returned by interested individuals, families or groups. ○ Sales through www.Etsy.com ○ Wholesale market ○ Website sales ○ Christmas Markets
Expected output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maasai women delivered from the shame of fieldwork under oppressive managers. • Winter Disk introduced into the 2012 Christmas market. • Solid foundation laid for WD 2013 market • Enough income generated to repay loans, cover costs and invest in 2013 production.
Type of Activity	Winter Disk Ornament production and sales
Targeted Group	Seven member – Maasai core production team
Location	Rombo, Kenya
Product Overall Director (ADEA)	Douglas McFalls
Maasai Kenyan Director (PMD)	Tumaina Ole Ipite
Maasai Bead Workers	Grace Nkoirisha, Lea Motialo, Grace Nterere Surumo, Mary Parerian, Lucy Mamaai, Meoshi Kaika, Nkatarina Sitelu
Expected Duration	Six months (July – December)
Source from whom funds	Private Investors – Supporters <i>Please consider if you like to contribute or make a loan to ADEA for this.</i>
Total Cost:	\$8,550 (see attached budget)



Core Maasai Winter Disk Ornament production team.

“We would be grateful to be able to earn daily income in a dignified way.”

BLOWN DOWN MAASAI SCHOOL STANDING AGAIN

Thanks to the handful of you who contributed to help repair the damaged schoolhouse in Rombo. I was able to visit the school in June and was very please to see four active classrooms of students – and a preschool in the nearby church building. Though the facilities are very lean and wages low and irregular, the school team has managed to keep the school going since January of this year.

It is ADEA hope that through the Maasai Winter Disk Ornaments (Ornaments of Hope) school fees will be able to be faithfully paid, and greater awareness of the school needs made through the Winter Disk website which will result in support for new classrooms, cement floors and over all school improvements.



This Newsletter is dedicated to the loving memory of the Anthony Mwambe

Anthony Mwambe (1964 – 2012) Anthony was the most brilliant, creative and talented painter and instructor I have ever known in Africa. Anthony was the first painter with whom ADEA worked. Highly skilled and passionate about painting, he help develop many of the painted products which are sold by ADEA today, as well as the majority of card designs ADEA sells in the USA during the Christmas season. The loss of such a talent is acute, not only to be felt in product production, but more importantly for his mentoring, teaching, and his extraordinary imagination and attention for detail in his paintings. Anthony, you are already gravely missed.



Spiritual Note:

Are we making the beds we really want to lie in?

I am 48 years old now. I woke up late last week with the weighty consideration that I have more or less thirty-five years of life left. That struck me as not a very long period of time. So what am I going to do with them? Reflecting on myself, with so many years of life under my belt I know pretty well what brings me joy and fulfillment. Even so, I find myself tempted to chase after that which I know does not fulfill. What odd creatures we are. I pray that the next half of my life will find me wise enough to make this life a profound delight – even in the reality of its hardships. I hope the same for you.

Thank you Amy and Dave for your visit! It was great fun and a blessing to me and Tembo!

Sincerely, *Douglas, Kupikita, Oloikurrukurr*



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