



Newsletter: May 2008 Douglas McFalls

USA: P.O. Box 45751 – Seattle, WA 98145 Tel. 206.227.0082

Tanzania: P.O. Box 233 – Mtwara, Tanzania

Kenya: P.O. Box 142 – Loitokitok, Kenya

Email: Douglas@ADEAAfrica.org

www.ADEAAfrica.org

*ADEA is a registered 501c3 Not for Profit and all contributions are tax deductible
Your support is greatly appreciated.*

On April 14th at 5:00 a.m. I opened the door of my Tanzanian house to make the 10 minute muddy trek to the bus stand to begin my trip north to Kenya. Seeing the rain, I brought my handy aqua-marine, mini, fold-it-away-and-put-in-your-pocket umbrella. It brought me to the diesel spewing bus relatively dry. As our journey began, the rain continued– this time over my seat. Having long since abandoned dignity for comfort, I opened my now esteemed fold-it-away-and-put-it-in-your-pocket umbrella inside the bus, propped between the storage rack above and my shoulder below. I kept my sea colored canopy over my head for the next two hours at a slight tilt directing the inner-rains to the window wall, and not onto my fellow passengers. Welcome to Mtwara, the place where buses come to die.

FOCUS OF NEWSLETTER: Maasai Boma School

Dear friends,

Since my last newsletter I have been staying in the bush near Rombo, Kenya, living and working with Tipape Loomu, and others of the Maasai committee: Tumaina, Philip, Osmond and Amadeus. So much is happening – many challenges, yet in the end, many brilliant things. I will begin this letter with bullets of various developments, then at the end of this newsletter, I will elaborate more.

PILLAR OF MAASAI DEVELOPMENT: PMD was legally registered in early April of this year. PMD was set up as an umbrella organization by Tipape Loomu (our school Director) and four other young local leaders to give legal credence and cohesiveness to the educational, cultural, economic, environmental and health challenges of Rombo. ADEA now officially partners with PMD.



ESUKUTA BOMA SCHOOL: On May 19th our first preschool class will open to +/- 38 children. Thanks to generous contributions of several of you, we have built this new building. On the 5th we celebrated its opening. The next question is: Do we put in a cement floor or build a second classroom with the funds you provided that surpassed our immediate need and expectations?

LEMONG'O BOMA SCHOOL: With all the political and community challenges with our school, we had expected to move the children to our new site in Esukuta, but parents pleaded with us to keep them in the church building for now – so the children would be closer to home. We now have two schools! Here is a picture of the LBS preschools and 1st graders receiving their uniforms (Maasai shukas).



VISUALS: For the opening celebration of the Esukuta School I brought some seashells, a poster of the human skeleton, a world map and a globe. Most had never seen a seashell, or understood the human skeletal structure. And until that day, these men in the picture had assumed the world was flat and the sun really rose. Visuals are a vital part of education for people who have seen so little and, for the most part, are illiterate. Our aim is to acquire many more learning visuals. (“Vision Trumps All”, Dr. John

Medina, Brain Rules)

If you have any educational DVDs (or Videos) or books, posters, models, games etc... that you would like to send (or can highly recommend) to our schools, we'd be grateful. Please send them to: PMD – Tipape Loomu – P.O. 142 – Loitokitok, Kenya. If you would like a tax deduction for these items (and postage) please send a list of the items, their value and your shipping costs to: ADEA – P.O. Box 45751 – Seattle, WA 98145 USA.

ADULT EDUCATION: Pilot program: On May 20th we will be launching our experimental Adult Education and Culture Program. Adults 14-74 will be invited to study the same material as the preschoolers. Elders will also instruct on and oversee learning of traditional skills. Moran (warrior) will work with the boys on dancing, jumping and spear throwing, while the women work on their dances, songs and beadwork.

GROWING INTEREST: Another community of Rombo has requested we establish a school, and two more sites have been brought to our attention. Our long-term target is seven schools – but for now “pole pole” (slowly).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: As their future as herders is no longer viable, we are exploring new income-generating projects: traditional leatherwork, gourd work, beads, bee keeping (for honey and bees' wax). *I am putting together a “packet” for people with access to various church, school or community markets. The mothers make beaded ornaments and bracelets (and many other wonderful things) that they*



sell to pay for tuition and family needs. ADEA and PMD is considering sending out packages of 50 to 100 ornaments to people interested to support the school through ornament sales. If you'd like more details, let me know (Douglas@adeafrica.org). Don't you think this image would make a cool puzzle?

CONTRIBUTIONS: Thanks to all of you who are supporting this school project. It is so needed and they are so poor. We still have hundreds of children and families to help. What I love most is the education we are providing is excellent education – high standards so rarely found in rural East African schools. We are currently applying for funds from Feed the Minds, the Japanese Embassy, the Australian Embassy and the Canadian Embassy. If we can secure these funds, it will be a very promising 2009.

THE FUZZY CURSE: Cute and cuddly is not universal: It seems that a well-meaning visitor wrapped small teddy bears in white tissue paper and gave them to several children in Rombo; three of these children were Tipape's small siblings. At first they delighted in these soft white packages, until they were told the white paper was just the wrapping. So they dutifully tore off the white paper to discover, to their horror, mini fuzzy brown creatures with human like bodies and a dog like head (there are no bears Kenya). These gifts were quickly abandoned by the weeping and frightened children. Now, anytime Tipape desires to be left alone for rest or work, he merely has to place one of these brown bears in front of his door, and the children will remain away in fear of the fuzzy curse. One just never knows how things will work out here.

As for me, I am doing well. The task of helping a community with so many needs can be overwhelming, and even disheartening. But these people are so kind, and appreciative. For all of us this is new – none of us have started schools before. I suppose more experienced people would have secured more funds and strategies before they started – but perhaps this is the best way because it is Tipape and the Maasai who are doing the work, and learning daily as they move forward .

Well, for those of you who want to read more details of what was noted above and other stories, carry on! Thanks for taking the time to read about my life in East Africa. Let me know what you are up to. **Douglas**

Now there are Two Maasai Boma Schools: Esukuta and Lemong'o

Esukuta Boma School is our new campus: We officially opened May 2 in the school building we were able to erect thanks to the generosity of several of you. Esukuta is a Maasai community adjacent to Lemongo (where our first school was launched in March 2007). In Esukua there was previously no school to serve the 45 families living there and their children (an average of five per family). They are enthusiastic and grateful to have such a school because the journey to other schools in neighboring areas was far and treacherous with wild animals.

Lemong'o Boma School update: We lost our five classrooms that had been contributed there, due to political issues at an election time. We had to moved the children to the local church building as a temporary solution. The families in Lemong'o have asked that we allow them to try to



find a new plot of land in Lemong'o instead of joining the school at Esukuta. So the children will remain in the church at least until December of 2008. In October we will try to assess whether or not the school that took over our former campus will survive as the level of commitment of the founders is uncertain. We don't know if the school was a short term political promise or a long-term vision to which they are committed. I have heard that the children who are now enrolled there, who had previously studied with the Maasai Boma School but chose to move to the "new" school, are all the top performers in their classes. Their parents realize the quality of schooling their children gave up and some are now asking to reenroll their children in our school. We cannot do this now because of leanness of funds.

Tipape with the Lemong'o school kids (above) & the parents give me a gift of a beaded scepter of a Maasai leader



Adult Education: Beginning this month we are launching our first adult education program. This will bring 14 to 74 year old Maasai together in an experiment to see if by offering parallel classes for children and adults, the community enthusiasm for learning might increase. In addition, elders will be asked to teach the history of the Maasai, and oversee the production of traditional Maasai life artifacts or celebration garb. In this way there will be intergenerational transfer of knowledge, as well as all ages of the community becoming aware of formal education. We want our centers for learning to further unite the community in a time when the crisis of modern living is pulling them apart. This program will be overseen by Tipape and Tumaina (the Pillar of Maasai Development director of Maasai culture). Classes will be offered Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday to accommodate for market days. We will watch this project's progress closely to see if we should implement the same at our Lemong'o school.

Vision trumps all:

In Dr. John Medina's new book, Brain Rules, he explains that the brain remembers 60% more of what it sees versus what it merely hears. John (a dear friend) has been sharing this with me for years, and this became very clear to me during the visit of one parent to our office. He was fully outfitted in shukas and beads – and missing one ear from his foolhardy but successful attempt to kill a buffalo, alone, with his knife and spear (to affirm his manliness). Pointing to a map in our office, I asked him if he knew what it was. He thought it was a map, but of what he did not know. We explained that it was of the world and showed him various countries he had heard of like China and America. THEN we brought out the globe. He had no idea the world was round and wondered (as so many of us considered as children), “are they walking upside down on the other side of the world?” In ten short minutes, this father's mind had been wonderfully challenged – and the globe helped make the concepts so much easier for him to grasp.



Modern education references things that mean nothing to people who have never walked more than ten miles from home. Many have never seen a television, or a magazine, or a picture of a dinosaur or a fish, or a building more than two stories tall. If possible, in the not to distant future, we hope to acquire solar panels, batteries and a large screen or

projector to show educational DVD's to the children and adults: DVD's on educational programs: math, science, language, nature, travel, ... almost anything (even School House Rock). Until we have the funds for that we will collect posters, books, models, science projects, learning games, foreign languages, pictures of planets... Your contributions and product suggestions are welcome.

A goat and a sheep

It is good to be with the Maasai. I am becoming more and more known. Last Friday, in my fatigue, I wanted a “shopping fix” (you know, that odd American stimulant?). Friday is market day here. Not much to buy but fruits, vegetables, used clothes from Europe and Chinese home-wares, plus Maasai essentials like shukas (the sheet-like clothes), beads and snuff. There are also some natural Maasai medicines and shoes made from old tires. This is the day the Maasai come in from the bush to sell their cows, goats and sheep. And well...I bought a goat. I bought it somehow spontaneously. One of the committee members from the Esukuta school was selling a goat. My friend showed me all the things he would look for in a goat (checking the eyes, looking for ticks in the ears, soft fur and clean hooves). It is a very pretty goat (that's what mattered most to me!). It has beautiful red hair on its head which blends like freckles into a white body. My friend asked his father, who was there, if he could keep my goat at his boma (homestead). He agreed. In gratitude I bought the sheep he had brought to the market to sell. The sheep was bought out of thanks, not for design esthetic. To make this second less-inspired purchase even more pathetic, I later learned the sheep was castrated – so my investment won't be even procreating to increase my return. It seems I must settle to wait a few years until it is well fattened and can be resold at a profit. So now I own an attractive goat and a bachelor sheep. On the bright side, my purchases in the public market that day have moved me one step closer to authentic Maasai-hood in the community's mind. I have the clothes, I have the beads, I have the name (Oloikurrukurr), and now I have the mini herd. Next...a cow? Killing a lion? 2 wives?



Maasai warrior trivia

Moran is the title for the warrior period of a Maasai male's life. His primary purpose is the protection of the livestock and the community. They are famed for their fearlessness. I learned from my Moran friend that traditionally the Moran were discouraged from becoming close to their wives and children – as this might hinder their willingness to fight to the death or spend long periods away from home.

That's all for now! Be blessed!



The financial needs are always growing – we do what we can afford. If you'd like to give – welcome (www.adeafrica.org). Think about coming to visit or even teach for a few weeks!! - Douglas - Oloikurrukurr