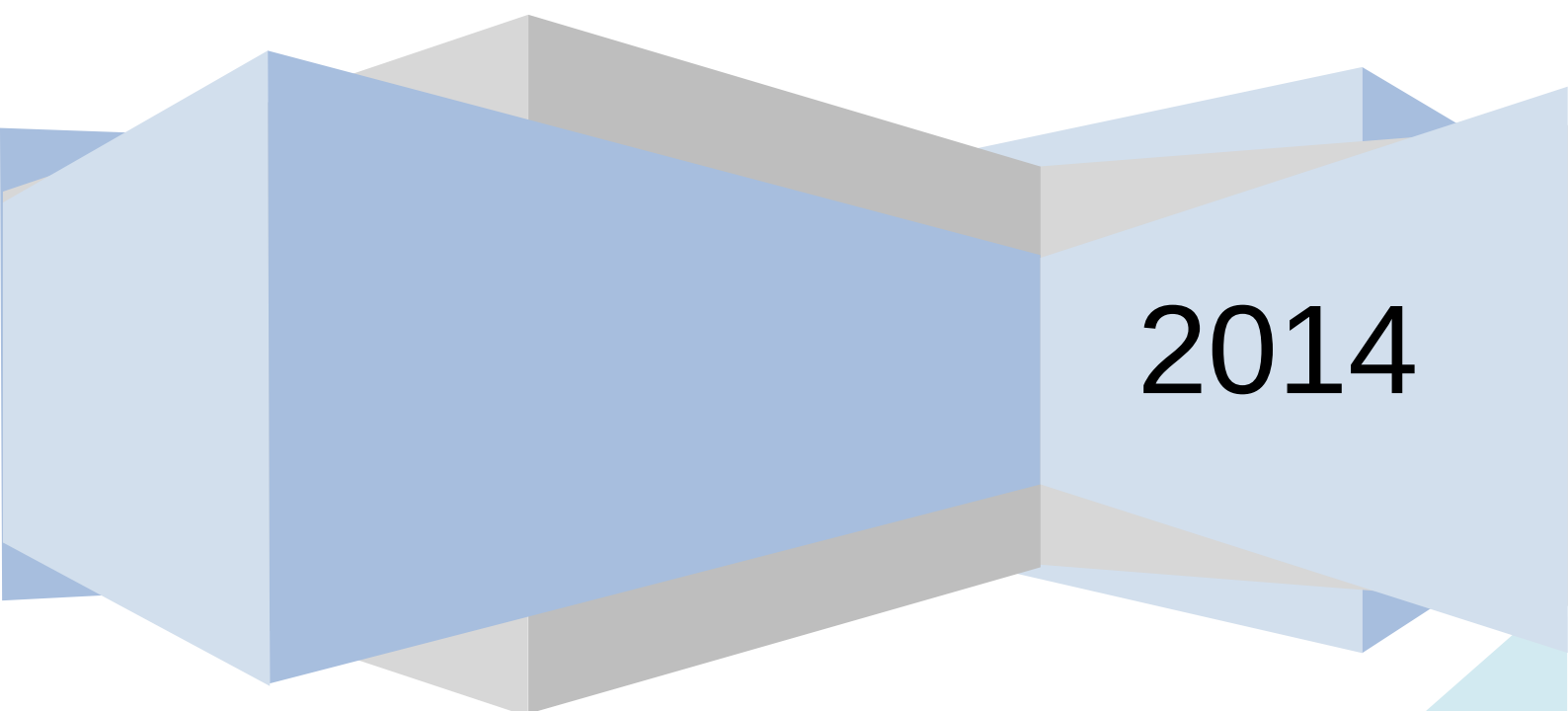


Cwlwm-Monduli Tanzania Link (Registered
Charity 327330)

Tanzania Charity Trip

And the projects undertaken in the
September trip to Ng'uni and Monduli,
Arusha Region, Tanzania

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2014

Introduction

In 2012, as part of the International Disaster Concern society at Coventry University, I led the first trip to the Arusha Region of Tanzania. Last September (2014), I was privileged to lead the second trip to the region, funding and working on 6 more development projects in two different towns- Nure and Monduli.

The 2012 trip was a great success, with 12 Coventry University students studying Disaster Management raising enough money to finance several different projects, including planting trees with the Tanzanian Military Academy, building a 20,000 litre water tank to supply a tree seedling nursery and working on building the foundations to a new canteen for Ng'uni Secondary School.

This trip saw the team grow slightly, taking 14 students instead of 12. However, with the extra numbers came new specialities, with two engineers joining the team one of them a graduate and several Geography students who were all aspiring teachers, several with overseas teaching experience. The new team experiences and education gave us good grounding for when we were in Tanzania, and proved vital in some of the projects. Furthermore, a recent Biomedical Science graduate accompanied us on the trip, to both work on the development projects as well as spend some time gaining some work experience in the local hospital. One month prior, I had arranged for a good friend and colleague in the army to work in the local hospital for several months, which he said was a very rewarding experience.

The trip, which lasted for the whole of September, followed the same layout as the one in 2012; for two weeks we would work in the more temperate region of Nure, where the local weather would resemble that closer to England's, and then the following two weeks we would work in Monduli, with its warmer and drier, arid environment. Projects were evenly split across the two towns, and as a group we tried splitting the money raised evenly yet trying to meet the different needs of the two towns.

Though most projects were a great success, and some even better than expected, one project stands out. This was the reinforcing of the road running from the centre of Nure to the furthest reach of the road at the start of the National Park forests. In total, 100 truckloads of gravel were brought up from the main road and this was then mixed with soil and flattened into the already existing mud road, which are prone to washing away and rendering the 300 odd homes inaccessible by anything other than foot. This not only had an impact on how people could trade during the rainy seasons, but also on how people could seek medical help when the road was impassable.

One project which proved extremely difficult to organise was the building of the water tank at the new hospital complex in Monduli. Organised by a contractor from Dar Es Salaam, we found that the prices of building material would change each day, there would be lengthy discussions and arguments when prices were challenged. With the help of Mr Ndosa and the engineering and building experiences of the group, and some lengthy negotiation and conflict resolution we were able to resolve issues and get the project on track.

The Projects

Nure

The Road project

The road project was aimed at reinforcing, by means of laying gravel and turning this in to the already existing dirt road. The current condition of the road was very poor, with many areas showing signs of washing away in the rainy season and others causing damage to vehicles because of the presence of large potholes and the general lack of maintenance. This, however, was by no fault of the locals as the 3km stretch of road had been patched up where the conditions were extremely hindering, but reinforcing such a long stretch was well outside of the local funds.

The true extend of the condition of the road had not been seen in the 2012 trip where we were lucky enough not to have any rain for the two weeks we spent at Nure. However, this time there were sporadic and frequent downpours, and though none were overly heavy the road deteriorated very quickly. Travelling to town one day to buy some building supplies I was able to witness the differences between the usual dirt roads, which were treacherous to drive even after a light downpour and at some points impassable to boda-bodas (the most common forms of transport up to Nure). The road sections closer to town which had been reinforced by gravel were in a more drivable state, and the water sank quickly away with the road being untouched. However, the gravel laying is a temporary measure (10 year maximum expectancy) and the idea is for it to be reinforced with tarmac or an equivalent, with the gravel acting as a solid foundation.



An example of the road conditions, while dry look passable but as soon as even the smallest rainfall occurs become slippery and dangerous, both for vehicles and on foot.

The road project consisted of three stages. First, the haulage of 100 truckloads of gravel, from the quarry just off the main road running through Moshi. This process took two days, with 50 truckloads arriving each day. During this stage the group helped move larger rocks out of the main road and break them up, but this was called off after nearly being run down by mad truck drivers eager to make as many trips as they could to increase their earnings.



A truck unloading gravel along the Nure forest road, overseen by Mr Natai.

Second, the original plan was for the group to work with local villagers to spread the gravel along the 3km stretch of road and then begin turning the gravel in to the dirt. Once it rained, the dirt and gravel would be naturally bind together. This process would have taken the group a considerable amount of time and effort. However, impressed with the groups' dedication to the project, the local contractor supplied us with a 'grader', which completed the work in one day.



The grader made quick work of a daunting task, and with better results.

The third stage of the projects was handled by nature. When strong rains come the dirt and gravel would be bound together due to a binding agent added at the quarry. This would then keep the gravel in place and, when the rainy seasons come, allow vehicles to continue to pass.

Once the road had been finished, there was a mini press conference held where the regional head engineer came to inspect the work and commend the group and the villagers for their work; this would then make the national newspapers.



The road, after the gravel had been turned in.



The groups work being recognised in the national newspaper.

Lighting and Electricity at Nure Primary

The second project in Nure was the installation of lighting and electricity at Nure primary school. Next to the church, the primary school had limited access to reliable power and no lighting in place for any of the classrooms. The headmaster's office was supplied by a single power socket. On darker days, students would struggle to read and write while in class.

The project involved installing lighting in each of the classrooms, and power sockets in the assembly hall (next to the canteen where the last group helped build the walkway). However, the project involved connecting the school lighting and electricity to the mains power line, running in excess of some 1000 watts. For this reason, the project was handled by a local electrician and his team. In two days they had installed lighting and plug sockets in all of the school buildings. With excess material, the electrician also agreed to supply lighting to the adjacent dispensary toilets.

The local electrician and his team



Completed- the assembly hall lit up.



Ng'uni Secondary School Water Tank

The secondary school were in need of an extra water tank to supplement their already stretched supply. This would be used to supplement the kitchen supply and used for washing of hands during the dry seasons where water was scarce, and when the supply was adequate would be used for science teaching.

The group purchased a plastic 3,000 litre water tank from Moshi which was transported by a local ex-teacher who was impressed with what we were doing. The group then had to dig a foundation and create a raised platform for the tank to sit on which would support the 3 tonnes of water. This saw the group working alongside ex-students and teachers and proved to be a good bonding experience.



Clockwise from Top Left: the 3,000 litre water tank rolled uphill; the group work digging foundations with teachers under torch light; the creation of the raised platform; the final platform and the water tank on top.

Teaching and Community Engagement

While in Nure, the group were privileged to be allowed to teach in the local secondary school. From the information collected during the previous trip as well as speaking to teachers when first arriving, what the students lack the most is the ability to engage with foreigners, especially those who speak English. For this reason, many of the students struggle to grasp the language fully, which is the primary teaching language in secondary school. The group ran two days of teaching for the school, as well as organising a football match and attending an inter-school cup.



Nure Cup game with crowds gathering.



Facing the might of the Ng'uni Secondary School A team.

While no teaching took place in the Primary schools because of national examinations, the students did get the chance to spend one lunchtime at the school where the pupils of the primary school were able to teach them songs and games they played.



Having lunch with the secondary school teachers while on break from teaching.

Monduli

Tree Planting with the TMA

The work of the tree planting done in 2012 was seen this time around, with the surrounding area morphed from arid desert into grassland, with pumpkin plants scattered frequently around trees. The surrounding area has already started to show signs of growth, with thick green grass stretching 100 metres past the tree line. The project followed the same process as last time, with the Tanzanian Military Academy purchasing the trees with the money supplied, and then the soldiers with the students helped plant 100 specially grown drought resistant trees. The work took only one afternoon with nearly 100 Tanzanian soldiers pitching in to help.



Clockwise from Top Left: the TMA soldiers helping with planting; the size of the pumpkins now growing, exchanging a tree and shaking hands with the TMA Commander; the area of land which was an arid desert only 2 years ago is now lush green vegetation.

Solar Lighting Project

Two of the outlying dispensaries in the Monduli district were without power. Dispensaries, though the name suggests administers drugs, in fact act much more like small hospitals as they deal with the whole range of medical issues, from sickness to child birth. The District Medical Officer worked with us to select the two dispensaries most at need, and the electrical contractor discounted the cost. Though no work was carried out by the group, we were able to see the completed work. When arriving at the remote dispensary closest to the town (though still a 1 and a half hour drives away) we met the nurse in charge, who at the age of 23 was delivering babies in lamp light. The solar panel supplied lighting as well as power to the two dispensaries.



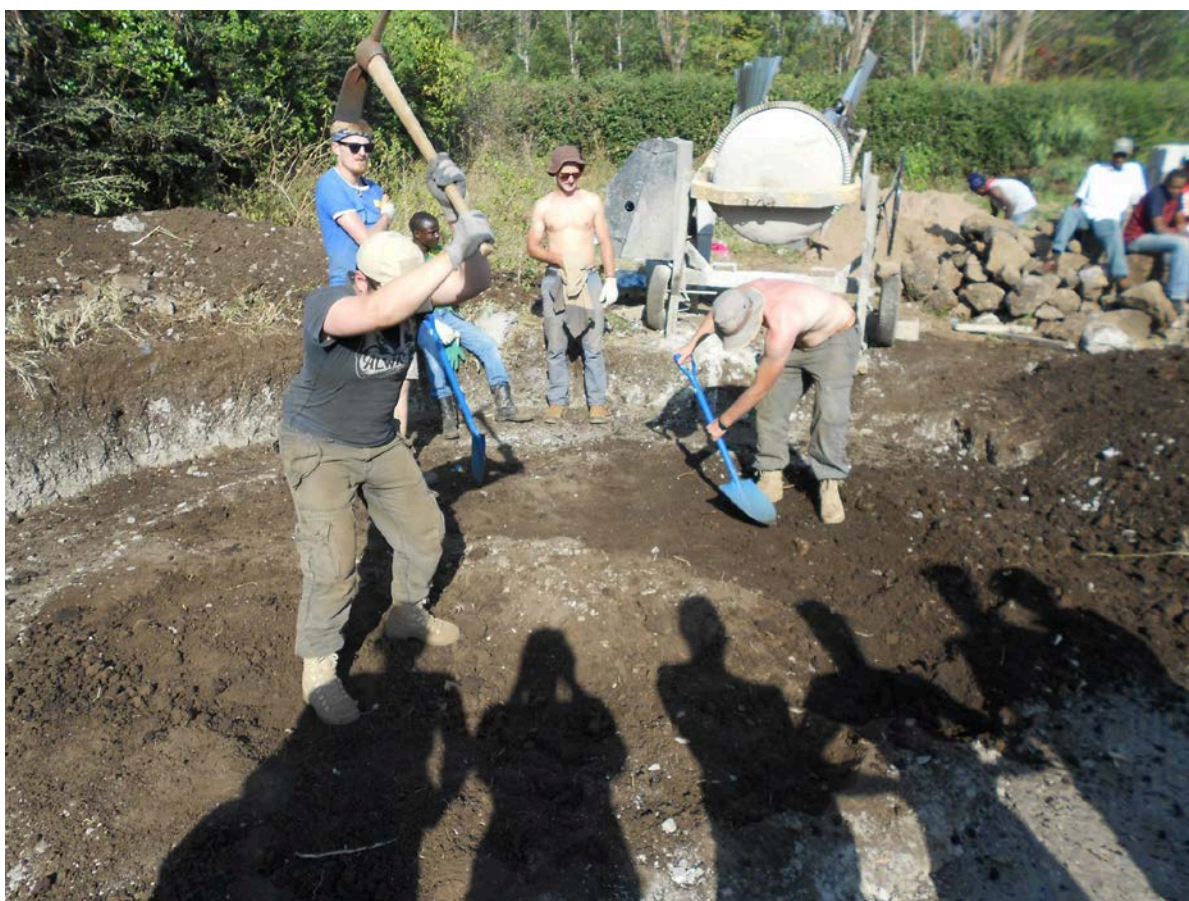
The solar dish, visible on the roof, supplies lighting and electricity to the dispensary. The woman in pink is the 23 year old nurse in charge of the clinic responsible with 5000 people, mainly Maasai.

Monduli Hospital Water Tank

The aim of the project was to build a water tank which would supply the newly constructed multi-storey hospital complex, which was to become the main hospital in the district in December 2014 (though when we left, the work was still behind schedule).

The work was taxing, both because of the high temperatures in Monduli, the dry, hard pact soil, as well as interference from the contractors who had won the construction bid. Being from Dar Es Salaam, they reflected nothing of the locals who, though often charged small amounts more, were generally not trying to rip us off. The contractors would often raise prices, turn up late or not at all, and try to charge us for their input as they were overseeing the construction of the hospital buildings. Several days of setbacks, lack of building supplies and contractors not turning up resulted in an argument with the contractors. However, in collaboration with the DMO, Mr Ndosa and the contractors, we were able to resolve the issue.

The project was a good chance for the group to work on a larger project, as well as hire some local help from building workers who were without work. The group were able to accomplish a great deal while working on the project, digging the top layer of soil, digging a deep foundation and laying the concrete foundation. The work was then handed over to local bricklayers. When we left, the walls were almost up and the money left so that the work could be completed.



Three days in to digging the foundations. The majority of the work was done with pickaxes as the soil was extremely tough, hard pact and dry.



Picking at the soil took the group three days to go 1 metre down.



Having a quick break with some hired support that put us to shame with the speed the dug. Without them, we would never have got the hole dug in time.



Clockwise from Top Left: concrete is spread into the foundations; rebar is laid in the second concrete layer; the walls start to take shape.

Irrigation System

The group was able to take part in helping Mr Ndosa dig and install an irrigation system in the tree seedling nursery the group helped develop in 2012. The irrigation system was connected to the 20,000 litre water tank previously worked on to help constantly keep the trees supplied with water, collected in the tank by means of a rain water harvesting system Ndosa had set up over the previous year.



The girls help dig the long irrigation ditches the pipes were laid in.

Closing Remarks

The projects were a great effort by the team, both in raising the money needed to supply them, but also working in uncomfortable temperatures carrying out arduous tasks. The top of which was cutting through layers of dirt, mere centimetres at a time, in Monduli while building the foundations for the water tank. In each of the projects we worked in, locals would freely supply their help and were gracious of what we were attempting to achieve. Though for the majority of the time we provided humour at our poor digging technique and slow pace of work in the heat and humidity of both environments, we got along well with locals and in doing so, brought about personal development for both cultures. Both children and adults would interact with the group and provide much needed help. At times however, being 'out dug' by a 70 year old cause some embarrassment among 20 odd year old students, though this only proved to provide much needed humour and to a greater extend, admiration.

A Note on Future Work

The development projects undertaken provided further foundations for further projects. The most notable was the tree planting, with such amazing results after two years- from an arid desert, the surrounding area is now full of lush vegetation and very sizable pumpkins. For such a small investment, the projects benefits are incredible. The fertilisation of the local soil is something which could be expanded elsewhere around Monduli.

Having spent a great deal of time with local dispensaries in Nure and Monduli, one area greatly lacking funding from the government and over stretched is the health care system. My suggestion is to work with local medical groups, possible medical students, and organise further supplies of medical equipment and medication.

The tourist project looks promising, and the road laid between Nure and the national park provides grounds for this to be expanded. If carried out correctly, this will provide much needed revenue through Nure and, following an increase in trade, will hopefully bring development. A word of warning is that this needs oversight, so that the money is equally spread across the community. Ndosa has ensured me that a community steering group will be set up should the Community Tourism project gain ground.

The schools would benefit greatly from the placement of English teachers, and from speaking with teachers in both towns, short term placements would be a strong possibility. This is something which may be able to be arranged with the University at a later date.