



# **Report of Trustees, Bridget and Leslie Green's visit to the Amani Centre for Persons with Disabilities, Morogoro Tanzania August 2023**

This report is based on conversations and observations made during our nine-day visit to the Amani Centre, 21 to 30 August 2023.

## **Overview**

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is generally going well and most workers are very committed. There is no doubt that the growing community of nuns at Amani who care for the children 24 hours a day are a real asset. They all have additional roles - undertaking massage, physiotherapy, working in the office, looking after the hostel and supporting the non-disabled young people in the Amani Community. It is hoped that as more of the novices take their vows, one or two of the more experienced nuns can be sponsored to train as nurses, special needs teachers etc, to reduce Amani's reliance on outside workers.

**Challenges** - Amani faces a number of on-going and new challenges as detailed below.

- 1. Food** is still a challenge! The extreme heat and late arrival of the rains this year decimated the maize crop (essential for the staple diet of Ugali). Once the rains arrived Amani planted millet, a more hardy crop which they expect to harvest in September. They will use some to make a more coarse 'porridge' (not very popular!) and sell the remainder to purchase maize, but this will not be enough to feed the over 150 'mouths' in the Amani Community across its three sites. FOAT was unable to send the expected amount in June for Amani to purchase maize when prices in the market are traditionally at their lowest. Amani is redoubling its efforts to generate funds for food from the local community. Aware that FOAT's efforts are principally directed towards supporting CBR work and sustainable projects, Amani requests help with a water project - a second deep well at Mikese (see below) - to provide water for irrigation of farm land on that site.
- 2. Medicines** - This has become a problem since the Government refused block health insurance.

Recently, Italian supporters (Mama Tanzania <https://www.mamatanzania.org/>) paid for health insurance for six children but then the hospital refused to give medicines. The incidence of sickness amongst children with disabilities is inevitably higher than in the

general population. Without medical insurance for a child, Amani has to pay i) to see a doctor 10,000Tsh (£3.20), ii) for testing 45,000Tsh (£14.50), and iii) for medicines, (cost depending what they are). The new laboratory will eliminate i) and ii) for most common illnesses (Malaria, Typhoid and UTIs), but Amani will still need to purchase medicines. We suggested Fr Beatus ask Italian donors to support medicines, rather than insurance after the Government's change in policy.

The Government was due to inspect the new Maabara (Testing Laboratory) at Amani Chamwino during our visit so that Bishop could do the official opening on 30 August, but officials failed to visit on two occasions so it still cannot open!



### 3. Retention of professional staff

Amani is a registered charitable organisation in Tanzania. It has limited funds and is not able to pay salaries to professional staff, but manages to pay an honorarium as funds allow. The backbone of CBR of children with disabilities is social work, physiotherapy and remedial teaching. There is a general shortage of qualified physiotherapists in Tanzania and retention of physiotherapists in particular, is a problem. Over the years, Amani has built up a group of people (mainly nuns and novices) who are now very capable of providing massage and physiotherapy under the direction of a trained physiotherapist. The new physiotherapist - Dr Joseph - seems well respected and starting to assume a leadership role, but with a family of his own to support it is not known how long he will remain at Amani.



Dr Joseph at work

#### 4. Mvomero Secondary School

- i) **Teacher turnover** still a problem as no government salaries are being paid despite a contract being signed between Amani and the Government when the Primary School was registered over eight years ago. A local donor is still contributing to monthly honoraria payments for the staff.
- ii) **Mvomero new buildings** - classrooms and boys' dormitory completed; girls' dormitory are almost complete, but no power is presently supplied to any of the new buildings. Amani had hoped to run this from the existing supply, but the Government requires new line at a cost of 1,264,500Tsh (£400). We were pleased to make a private donation to Amani to fund this during our visit.



**Secondary School Buildings**

L to R – Boys Dorm, 2 x classrooms, Girls' dorm



Inside the 'almost complete' girls' dorm

- iii) **Mvomero fuel for cooking** – this has become an increasing challenge as the traditional method of cooking using wood and charcoal is not sustainable. Amani is spending increasing amounts of money to bring wood from its land at Mikese (80Km away) to cook for the 90+ residents at Mvomero School and farm. Amani has requested FOAT to seek funds for a Biogas generator to be installed at Mvomero for its cooking needs. Cost estimate £2,500.



Main cook house – using wood



Cooking outside Elizabeth's house using charcoal

## 5. A second borehole at Mikese

FOAT, supported by the Rotary Club of Reading, was pleased to donate funds to Amani in 2021 for the digging of a borehole and the supply of a generator to provide water for animal and human consumption at Amani's farm at Mikese. Amani is now requesting FOAT to seek funds for the digging of a second borehole on the opposite side of the farm and the supply of a solar pump and irrigation pipes at a cost of £12,000.

This really could be a potential game changer for Amani, allowing irrigation to a substantial acreage of land to grow maize and other staple crops thereby reducing the need for food donations.

## Some good news stories

### 6. Developments at Magubike

The construction of the four buildings for Phase 1 of Amani Magubike is now complete - reception area and store, main hall, staff house and toilets (x 2). The two physiotherapy staff are now living on site but still using church rooms for clinics three times a week.



Staff House



Main Hall/classroom



Staff Toilets behind staff house



Inside reception room



Children's toilets behind hall

All that remains now is the guttering, water collection tanks and connection to the power supply. The FOAT Treasurer identified some restricted funds remaining in FOAT account for Magubike which has now been sent to Amani. Fr Beatus was very grateful for this as it will enable completion of guttering and tanks. Amani Magubike is expected to be officially opened by the Bishop in December.

## 7. Mvomero Shamba (Vegetable Garden)

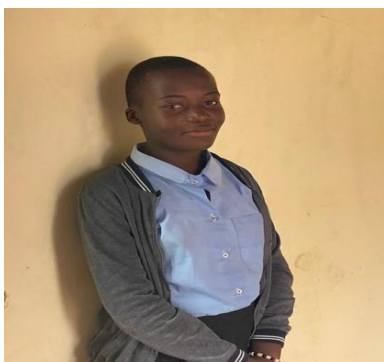
There are now three distinct areas of land near the main hostel at Mvomero where vegetables are being grown intensively. One of these is using a simple drip irrigation system.

The foods for our lunch and dinner were all 'home grown' - rice (grown in June), tomatoes, ochre, pumpkin, spinach, Chinese leaves, beans (and 'local' chicken, reared on site). The local ward councillor has funded a new 15 ft well adjacent to one of the vegetable patches. Amani is just awaiting a hand pump to be fitted.



## 8. Mvomero girls' sponsorship

Four of the students with hearing impairments in Form 2 at Mvomero Secondary School whose parents are too poor to afford the School fees are being sponsored by the Park Family Charitable Trust for the four years of their secondary education. We met with the girls and spoke to them about their education. They have all been receiving remedial teaching and it is hoped they will each pass the National Examination at the end of November.



Catherine



Jackline



Tatu



Shadya

### 9. A visit to Berega, Anglican Hospital and Orphanage

The Ecumenical Coordinator from the Anglican Church, Rev Enock Chibada, arranged for us to visit the Anglican Hospital and Orphanage at Berega. The purpose of our visit with Fr Beatus was to strengthen the relationship between Amani and both the Anglican institutions. Since the inception of the ecumenical project in 2014, two nurses from Berega Hospital have accompanied Amani on outreach visits. Last year, we met the 'new' Director of the Orphanage, Lemsanya Tisho (known as Tisho) and realised what an asset he could be to the ecumenical working group.

Cannon Isaac - Director of the Hospital and Primary School - gave us an excellent tour of the hospital and explained how he was developing the medical training school; now training nurses, clinical officers and pharmacists with a plan to start social work training when demand is high enough.



Berega Hospital



Patient and relatives



Two-day old baby delivered by C-section

Tisho introduced us to some of the children and carers at the orphanage. He told us of some of the developments he had spearheaded: compulsory tailoring classes for all carers; lessons in drip irrigation for shamba; expansion of dairy herd – now producing enough milk for all children and more for yoghurt and cheese manufacture and sunflower oil press – income generating.



## 10. Ecumenical Group

It was pleasing to meet Bp Jacob Mameo from the Lutheran Diocese of Morogoro who is very supportive of joint fundraising to support Amani. Joining the meeting for the first time was Lemsanya Tisho, Director of the Orphanage at Berega

The Ecumenical Group agreed that aside from its own fundraising for its various centres, the group should explore opportunities for joint fundraising to contribute to Amani's needs as children from all denominations and none are supported at the Amani Centre.

The steering group agreed to establish a working group comprising Fr Beatus, Emmanuel (RC Church), Rev Enock, Tisho (Anglican Church) and Rev Paulo Thomas (Lutheran Church); for the working group to build a database of ***Friends of Amani Morogoro*** from local contacts who already support Amani and to create a WhatsApp Group; for the working group to develop a Friends of Amani Morogoro banner to include logos of all three churches; and for the working group to consider opportunities for fundraising at joint services (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost) and community events.

## 11. More children to benefit from surgery

Just prior to leaving for our visit to Amani, FOAT was delighted to learn that the Park Family Charitable Trust had agreed to extend its sponsorship for Amani's surgery enablement programme. This will permit five children for the next four years to benefit from surgery and thereby improve their life chances. We caught up with some of these children during our visit.



Haris



Rehema



Said

## Conclusions

This was our 15<sup>th</sup> visit to Amani in 17 years. Most noticeable was the impact of climate change and drought. Fr Beatus, Director of the Amani Centre is very worried about food supplies for the coming months. He welcomes FOAT's decision to focus on fundraising for core costs and sustainable projects (Biogas at Mvomero and 2<sup>nd</sup> deep well at Mikese). He was also very grateful to FOAT Associate, Barbara, for her fundraising efforts, in particular to construct the Maaraba as this will save some of the medical expenses incurred by Amani in taking children to hospital for routine medical tests when they are unwell.

The challenges for Fr Beatus are not made easier by the Government's continued failure to deliver on its promises to pay salaries of Mvomero teachers. However, Fr Beatus remains very positive and encouraged by recent developments including:

- i) the growth of the Masista community – six more (to add to the existing four) will take their first vows in January 2024 – thereby allowing some reshuffling of staff into leadership posts;
- ii) the strengthening of the ecumenical partnership to include the Lutheran Church and the focus on fundraising for Amani;
- iii) developments at Magubike which will start to relieve pressure on Amani Chamwino, and
- iv) Further sponsorship from the Park Family Trust for the Surgery enablement programme.

**Bridget Green, FOAT Trustee**

**8 September 2023**