



P.O. Box 2696 Dodoma

All children have an equal right to good education.

Dear friends and donors,

At the time of writing here in my office in Dodoma, Tanzania, I am looking at the trees, which should be full of leaves, but have now just become dry branches. The beautiful clouds in the sky will once again bring no rain today, so let's hope for tomorrow, as we continue to do every day. Many villages around Dodoma have a huge water shortage and people often have to go out in the middle of the night to look for a central tap in their neighbourhood, where water may be available at that time. We also have a large water shortage at our school, as you can see by looking at the trees in the photo. I have never seen it this dry during my 26 years in Tanzania. Thanks to your support, we can still provide our deaf school with water, but the situation is becoming more difficult every day. The question is whether El Niño will really hit Dodoma and what effect it will have after almost 3 years of major drought with only some rain during the rainy season. Hopefully things will improve in the coming

months, so that in January after the Christmas holidays there will be enough water to provide all 150 deaf children with a good, safe and healthy environment at school, so that they can continue with their education.

(Robin van Donkersgoed)



Introducing Mustafa Shabani Iddy

Mustafa was one of the first deaf students in the EOTAS Vocational Training Program. He was attending Kigwe primary school, about 40 kilometers outside Dodoma, when EOTAS started extra practical lessons in addition to the regular education in 1997. After primary school, Mustafa was allowed to go to "Bwiru Boys Secondary School" in Mwanza. After having completed secondary school, he was able to continue with a practical training course in electrics at Yombo Technical School in Dar Es-Salaam. Due to his positive attitude, reliability and good efforts, Mustafa was selected to join EOTAS as a handyman.

He subsequently learned many practical skills, including how to use the computer. Because of this knowledge and his dedication, Mustafa now also teaches computer skills to the pupils at our school.

Even though Mustafa has greatly expanded his skills through training at EOTAS and has a good understanding of language, it remains a major challenge for him to keep up with society, because virtually no one in the hearing world knows sign language. This makes communication very difficult, as everything has to be written down in order to properly understand each other.

In the photo you can see Mustafa demonstrating his plastering work in one of the classrooms, a skill he has learned also with EOTAS. All maintenance personnel at EOTAS must master multiple skills, so that everyone can participate in maintenance and construction work. In addition, versatility helps to carry out odd jobs outside the organization and earn money on the side. Mustafa has done his best to learn a lot in recent years and has become a valuable employee of the organization. Thanks to your previous support, we have been able to help Mustafa develop from a deaf child without opportunities into a successful adult, who has his own home and family. He is now a true role model for our deaf children and young people.

Public holiday in honour of the opening of the Presidential Palace in Dodoma

In May this year, a special national holiday was organized to mark the opening of the presidential palace in Chamwino just outside Dodoma. The government had decided that this would be a special sports day for schools, in which the Dodoma Deaf School was also invited to participate. It is a



positive sign that our school is recognized and is also invited to participate in official national festivities. Football matches for the boys and netball matches for the girls were held during the day. These



meetings with other schools are of great importance to promote the acceptance of deaf children in society. This day of meeting and exercising together ended with a shared meal with children from other schools and employees of the Dodoma city council. This was another important day of recognition for the deaf children at our school.

Farewell party for school leavers

At our school we organize a farewell party every year for our students who have completed primary school. As is customary in Tanzania, a guest of honour was also invited. This year it was the Director of the Special Education Department at the Ministry of Education in Tanzania, Mrs. Matonya. Parents, representatives of the city council and other organizations were also invited.



This year, 14 of our students successfully completed their primary education. This group consisted of 8 girls and 6 boys, who (like anywhere else in the world) were very happy to have finally finished school. Students had prepared plays and dance performances to entertain the guests and other children on this beautiful day.



Once more, a communal meal was organized at the end of all activities. In Tanzania, most festivities end with a communal meal. It is a great opportunity for parents, children and other guests to spend time together and, above all, to recognize the skills of deaf children. It was a day with a mixture of happiness, sadness, relief and excitement for our school leavers.

Introducing Rehema Charles Olambo.

Rehema is from Rorya, Mara region. After completing her A levels, she was selected to continue her studies at the University of Dodoma, where she completed the "Special Education" course. In addition, Rehema herself followed additional training in subjects in which she was interested.





A few years ago she came to work at our school as a volunteer to teach one of our Preschool groups. It quickly became clear that Rehema had many talents and that she was also very creative. That made her very suitable to take over the leadership of our Wanaziwi Creative Center when her predecessor left. Rehema organizes all kinds of creative activities for the children depending on their age and interests. She is supported by a number

of other EOTAS employees, because many children come to these fun-filled afternoons. The children are free to come, but usually the activity area is completely full with 50 children or even more. Most children come from an environment of neglect and misunderstanding, which is detrimental to good development.

For the older children in groups 5 to 9, Rehema organizes activities like decorating for parties, making soap, cutting, sewing and measuring, making decorative items such as earrings, bracelets, key holders and necklaces. These creative activities at our school are very important for the children, because they learn to work together and accept each other through play.



Rehema also helps with supervision of the girls who board at our school, due to long distances or problems at home. Rehema has her own room next to the dormitories and together with the other supervisor (Mama Lati) they ensure that everything runs smoothly with the girls at school 7 days a week. Rehema

ensures that the children clean everything every morning and make their own beds, wash and dress neatly before having breakfast.



The children also learn to take proper care of the outside environment by watering the trees and plants. Like several countries, Tanzania also faces serious deforestation. We therefore teach the children why trees and plants are an important part of their living environment. Although Rehema came as a volunteer, she has by now become a very important employee in our EOTAS team.

News from our Preschool

Mama Lati and Rehema not only supervise the girls in boarding at school, but they also teach the youngest children. This is a real challenge, because the youngest children (or children who only come to school for the first time at a later age) not only have a huge language delay, but they also have delays in many other areas of development. The inability to communicate clearly leads to many misunderstandings and conflicts, especially in the beginning. Fortunately, most children are eager to pick up their first signs in the signing environment at our



school. In preschool, the youngest are also offered a structured preschool Swahili sign language program, which quickly stimulates their language and social-

emotional development. Besides, the preschool class is based on the Montessori method, which uses specific materials aimed at stimulating the cognitive development of the children. This material is used so intensively that it also wears out and breaks quickly. The Montessori Association in Tanzania therefore organizes special workshops to repair materials and refresh knowledge about their proper use. The headmaster of the school, Mr. Kennedy and Mama Lati participated in Montessori repair workshop in September. They have had a fruitful time and returned to school with new inspiration and materials that looks as good as new. *(Monique Bekker)*



Dear friends and donors,

We are grateful for the people who continue to support us in these difficult times. Unfortunately, donations have decreased in recent years, forcing us to make cuts in education and facilities for the deaf children here. It is a good ambition to make Tanzanian society and the children's parents more responsible for the children in this country, but that does not happen overnight. In the meantime, it is important that today's children do not become the victims of political interests and good intentions. Achieving acceptance, good protection and appropriate education for deaf children takes a lot of time. EOTAS continues to achieve more positive involvement of parents and society, but in the meantime it is important to ensure the education and safety of the children who are alive today. Your financial support for their education is very welcome, any amount, large or small, will be helpful.

On behalf of the deaf children in Tanzania and our board, I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2024,

Robin van Donkersgoed (robindonkersgoed@yahoo.co.uk)

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