



Rufiji Leprosy Trust Newsletter

Autumn 2017
Issues 107 & 108

Dear Reader

I hope this message finds you well. You may notice we are taking a slightly different approach to this newsletter - and so there has been a bit of a delay getting this to you. Also, I must apologise; work, family commitments and then two strong earthquakes in Mexico have meant that I have not been able to give the newsletter my full attention. In the end we have decided, on this occasion, to combine newsletters 107 and 108. That means that this year you will receive 3 (rather than 4) newsletters from your friends at Kindwitwi.

For those supporters who receive our newsletter online we are trialling a more interactive and accessible format. We hope you enjoy hearing what we are doing and how projects in Kindwitwi are progressing. If you have any questions or feedback regarding the newsletter please do not hesitate to get in touch.

News from the village – from Salum Kipoloya, our shoemaker

Leprosy News

We are pleased to let you know there has been good news from the village during the last two quarters with only two new cases detected. One patient came from the village of Muyuyu and is 40 years old. He has started his course of treatment, which he will take for the next 12 months.

Village News

I am sorry to tell you, one of our former patients Mzee Somoe Msham Liokoele died at the end of May. Mzee Somoe was the widow of Mzee Matyanga who sadly passed away three years ago. As I am sure you are aware, one of the main areas in which your generous donations support is the care of long-term patients on the Ward. These members of our community are people unable to care for themselves (as a result of having disabilities from leprosy) and do not have family members to care for them at home. The villagers living on the Ward make up a vibrant part of our community and Mzee Somoe, like her husband, will be sorely missed.



Our second item of sad news is rather distressing. We are shocked to report the death of Muharami Ndete (brother of Jumanne's who was our former Occupational Therapist). Muharami and his friend went at night fishing on the river and were attacked by a crocodile. His friend survived the attack but unfortunately, Muharami did not. Following the incident, Government game rangers killed two crocodiles. This is a stark reminder of the dangers we face living here in Kindwitwi and how we constantly try to find the balance between a healthy diet and personal safety. Our thoughts go out to the family of Muharami at this very difficult time.

Siasa Primary School graduation

Education is a very important theme in our community and we try to support and celebrate the achievements of the young people in our community. One way we do this is by celebrating our students when they graduate to a new class with a public celebration. Many of our young people from Kindwitwi attend a primary school called Siasa. We recently celebrated the graduation of two students, Omari and Bahati as they recently completed their standard seven (primary school) and are now moving on to secondary school. Both students took their national exams and did very well. The Head Teacher also singled them out for special commendation for their good behaviour and dedication to their studies.

As part of the graduation ceremony, the teachers and pupils sang a special song and did a dance. Both Omari and Bahati were given gifts by their parents as well as a certificate from the school to recognise their achievement. I am sure you will join us in congratulating them and wishing them well for their future studies.

Local Updates

The Utete Ferry

We thought you might like to hear more about this new ferry as it has made such a difference to us. The Government has purchased another boat after the first one broke down. The new boat is small and is only for passengers rather than vehicles or motorbikes. This boat can carry up to 40 passengers and is called MV MKONGO. Villagers from Kindwitwi will benefit from this boat because they will be able to transport their crops from their fields to the market easier.



Growing Season 2016/2017

We are pleased to inform our readers the rains this season were much better than in previous years. This means we were able to plant and grow larger amounts of rice as well as simsim (sesame), used to sell at the market or for personal use. We have been told simsim is not a common crop in the United Kingdom so we wanted to share with you some information about it so you can see why it is so important for us here in Kindwitwi. Simsim is a flowering plant cultivated for its edible seeds. It has one of the highest oil contents of any seed and is believed to be the oldest oilseed crop known to man, domesticated well over 5000 years ago. Simsim is a very drought-tolerant plant with an ability to grow where most crops fail and Tanzania is the 5th largest producer of simsim worldwide. In fact, because the rains were so prolific this season we actually lost some of the simsim produce because it turned rotten in the flood plains. This loss was offset by the fact we had plenty of rice and a lot of the simsim was preserved in a good condition. Now the rice and Simsim season is coming to an end we are planting maize, pumpkins and other vegetables in the flood plains by the Rufiji River.

Cash crops are an important part of life in Kindwitwi including Watermelon which can be sold for between 1500 – 2500 TSHs (50 – 85p).

In the picture you can see one of the community members from Kindwitwi, Maulid Ngasinda, inspecting his watermelon field. Watermelons have not been traditionally grown in the village, however they were introduced by the Singida and Mwanza communities and have proven to be very popular!

We also harvest cashews (*Anacardium occidentale*) which you may know is indigenous to Brazil. In the 15th and 16th century, it was taken to West Africa, East Africa and India by the Portuguese. It spread naturally because it is undemanding, tolerating poor soils, low rainfall and its commercial potential especially for Cashew Nut Shell Liquid (CNSL) and the raw nut (RCN). In recent years the government in Tanzania has increased its focus on cashew nut production, seeing this as a potential source of wealth for Tanzania that is currently under explored. As such in our region we are being strongly encouraged to grow cashews and receive subsidies and support from the government to do so. We are currently in the season where we can harvest the cashew nut fruits and send them to market to be sold in November.

News from the Trustees

In late October our co-chair Dr Sarah Feather is visiting Kindwitwi to meet with members of KLCCDA and provide reports back to all of our supporters. Please look out for updates from Sarah in our social media channels, throughout the newsletter and on our website later this year.

Several years ago the Rufiji Leprosy Trust introduced Kindwitwi to an organisation called 'Better Lives'. We felt 'Better Lives' would be able to offer more opportunities for development in the village and act independently from RLT, providing another source of income for Kindwitwi outside of the support we provide for Leprosy and Education.

We thought you would like to see how this individual introduction has gone on to benefit the village in many ways. More information about the work of 'Better Lives' can be found at <http://betterlives.org/africa/tanzania/kcm/>.

As always, thank you very much for your continued support for all that we do. Please feedback your views on our new style newsletter. You will continue to find our contact details on the back page of this newsletter.

Our best wishes

Jenny Cosgrave

Newsletter Editor and Trustee RLT



For queries, please contact rufijilt@gmail.com

To make a donation or if you are considering a legacy donation please contact:

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More information:

Rufiji Leprosy Trust

KLCCDA

Kindwitwi Leprosy Care and Community Development Association
(registered in Tanzania, Certificate No 58593)

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For more information on the history of RLT please visit www.rufijileprosytrust.org

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