

2016 Annual Trip Report

It's been two years since our last trip. In lieu of a trip last year, we held a special fund drive to build an office in the village of Ipagala (just outside of Dodoma) rather than continue to pay high rent in Dodoma (payback was only a few years). Last year's usual travel team donated their personal travel funds to support this fund drive.

This year's trip was unique in that we had the largest group participating since the first trip back in 2005 (the trip that moved our Founders to begin TLP). Our traveling team included Jim Vanderheyden, John & Mary Vanderheyden, Catherine & Paul Trescony, Cindy Johnson, Joseph Moss, Henry Croll and Peter Morawczynski. Each member of the team brought unique talents/gifts, which made for an incredible experience.

As always, we learned much from the wonderful people of Tanzania and certainly were enriched in ways that will forever change our lives. Our time there and experience strengthened our commitment and resolve to continue the great work our donors promote and support.

Ben, Vincent and Agnes did a fantastic job developing a full itinerary for our time there. We saw the new office and visited the villages of Hombolo/Matakulu, Mapunduzi, Isangha, Igandu/Chibwe/Chimwaga and Ngutoto.

The new office looks fantastic! Jim Vanderheyden did an outstanding job designing, modifying and coordinating the building's construction along with our team on the ground in Dodoma. It's a fine structure that will serve our mission well for years to come.

As part of our ongoing Women's Empowerment efforts, we partnered with Days for Girls (www.daysforgirls.org) on a pilot distribution project to bring education and 400 sustainable feminine hygiene kits to girls and women in the villages of Mapunduzi, and Igandu (including Chibwe and Chimwaga). The mission of Days for Girls is to create a more dignified, free and educated world through access to lasting feminine hygiene solutions, ensuring girls can attend school and women can pursue economic activities without missing any "days." Anges Mlula, Mama Mbenanga, Grace Oneya (translator), Mary Vanderheyden, Catherine Trescony and Cindy Johnson worked as a team presenting the education and distributing the Days for Girls hygiene kits.

Hombolo/Matakulu

This is one of the villages asking to be considered for a water project. There are almost 9,000 adults in the main village and 9 "sub-villages." They greeted us with a celebration and ceremony of traditional song and dance followed by a village meeting. We also had an opportunity to see a very small solar-powered water system using a shallow well serving a very small area of one of the villages.

Isangha

The village had a large celebration in thanks for the completion of the water system. They gave us a tour of the pump house, distribution points and reservoirs. The repairs on the old reservoir looked great. Peter distributed friendship bracelets made by children in the USA for children of the village. They were a BIG hit! The children even tried their English to say “thank you!”

Igandu / Chibwe / Chimwaga

The three villages came together to hold the largest celebration we’ve ever seen in thanksgiving for the water systems. Songs were sung by many villagers and even by our own team member Peter! Gifts were exchanged and reports read (some with incredible fervor by a village leader standing on a table to the delight of the crowd). Everyone in the village was smiling and proud of the partnership we had developed. Even the children engaged us in a local game as we walked between a distribution point and the school. This was the largest and most complex project TLP has ever undertaken. Thankfully, the borehole has the highest production of any we’ve ever drilled to support the large number of villagers. While the current pump is powered using an engine, the pump house has already been configured to easily convert to electricity once it is run through the village.

Mapunduzi

We were greeted by a large delegation who immediately brought us to the pump house to show us the progress being made including miles of ditches they dug for the distribution line from the pump house to the new reservoir. We had a village meeting to discuss the three-phase project to complete the installation and asked for their continued partnership and patience, as this will take time to complete. Everyone then gathered to watch as two teams played a “celebratory” soccer match in honor of our time together and our shared efforts to realize the dream of clean water for the village.

Ngutoto

This is another village asking to be considered for our next water project. They were an extremely friendly village, having us for tea and chapati before the village meeting and a traditional meal after. There were the usual introductions, reports read, songs sung and ideas shared as part of the village meeting. However, there were a larger number of young men involved in the singing and dancing with a much more upbeat tempo and feel than other villages. The entire village was very engaged throughout the meeting and gave a hearty “yes” when asked if they would be willing to do all the things required to bring and maintain water in their village. They also were very gracious in allowing us to visit a local house and discuss “a day in their life” with some of the villagers.