

TANZANIA
LIFE
PROJECT

Unedited Excerpts from Vincent Chiwamba Report September 12, 2006

Vincent Chiwamba lives in Mtumba, Tanzania and has created a partner organization there called Tanzania Life Project, Tanzania (TLP – T) to support the efforts of Tanzania Life Project, USA (TLP – USA). The following are excerpts from a lengthy report Vincent sent to James Vanderheyden of TLP – USA on September 12th, 2006.

BACKGROUND

“75% of the households are estimated to survive below the Tanzania’s subsistence level...”

“(Since) the arrival in June 2005 of James Vanderheyden with his team from Minnesota, USA things have started changing. Now you can go to the small market area and buy plenty of green vegetables ranging from cabbages, onions, French beans, Chinese spinach etc. The American team made friendship with the village residents and drew many conclusions which led to assistance through money and advice...”

“Through the bright thinking and calculated decision making of James Vanderheyden, an NGO named Tanzania Life Project (T) has been formed and registered giving a leeway for the American partners to assist the marginalized community of Mtumba and other villages through the legal channels and as per policies laid down...”

AGRICULTURE (and HIV/AIDS)

“95% of the village population mainly depend on agriculture, livestock and soil eroding and deforestation activities of gravel and charcoal making for their livelihoods...”

“Agriculture, the principal sources of local livelihoods, has been negatively affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Adults who had the agricultural skills and knowledge are either taking care of the sick, bedridden or have died...”

“Due to a lack of labour, many households have stopped growing labour intensive, highly nutritious food crops such as millet, leading to reduce nutritious status of households and a decline in production and income...”

“In the course of fulfilling the above objectives TLP (T) also managed to form a board consisting of 8 members. At its first meeting the board among other issues resolved to include the food assistance objective whose activity would be for TLP (USA) to provide funds for purchase of food to the Mtumba Community. After brainstorming both TLP (USA) and TLP (T) came to understand that this idea was the wrong way to make people self sufficient. If a person asks for a fish it is better to provide him/her with a net for fishing rather than the fish. In this way a long term perspective will be created. With this in our heads we now have arrived at very sound objectives and activities which TLP (USA) and TLP (T) are fighting to have them achieved.”

TANZANIA LIFE PROJECT

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WATER

“The community is enjoying clean water from the borehole and at least 50% of the previous diarrhea diseases have been reduced.”

ELECTRICITY

“The dream that one day Mtumba would have electricity came true in June 2006. The community can easily charge their electronics devices ranging from batteries, mobile phones etc. Computers have started being used. This is a globalization step. Students can read at night. It’s a real change in the community development efforts brought about by TLP (USA) in collaboration with TLP (T). Other parts of the village are yet to have poles brought near and enable them to have electricity. The borehole is also still using diesel engine power.

HEALTHCARE

The microscope has greatly reduced the burden to the community which used to travel to Dodoma for investigation purposes. Bicycles helping the nurses to visit distant patients.

SCHOOLS

“On completion of the machineries building the machines are likely to provide financial access to the Primary and secondary schools. The community will also enjoy the fruits of the machineries as they will grind at reasonable prices. Employment will be enhanced. Primary school children are enjoying the classrooms which were repaired by TLP (USA) recently.”

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT/DEVELOPMENT

“To provide capacity building to women with the intention of empowering them over their efforts to self reliance.

Activities:

- ✓ To conduct seminars for them.
- ✓ To assist them financially for their credit system.”

“TLP (USA) funded a seminar for Mtumba women that was conducted at the women centre in January/February 2006. More than that they funded the women for beginning income generating. The women used the money by giving credit to a group of 30 and the credit is being repaid at reasonable interest to boost up their fund. As a result of this successful venture TLP (USA) has pledged to boost them with another funding to expand their group activities.”

“About 50% of the Mtumba women have been sensitized and are now more democratic and would like to be trained more on advocacy and lobbying so as to cope with the current social economic changes.

Many women have benefited from the first credit by borrowing and repaying back. They are able to transport their pots to the eastern districts where they come back with maize for food.”



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“Almost 100% of the women are now active and are attending meetings promptly when summoned.

They are very actively participating everywhere especially agricultural and empowerment meetings. The participation before TLP (USA) intervention was less than 50%.”