

ADEA Newsletter December 2006 - from Douglas McFalls

[If you do not wish to receive my newsletters, please let me know]

Christmas time is always a good motivator to get news out to friends. Since I last wrote in April, I have remained in Seattle (more or less), having returned to support my parents after my father's second bout with congestive heart failure. But that does not mean that ADEA has been stagnating. Oh, no! Au contraire! It has been a fruitful time to reflect on our economic development efforts over the past three years, to shape a vision for the future, and for those in East Africa to make some encouraging developments. Also, in June ADEA received its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, which opens the opportunity for more grants as well as tax deductions for donors. (*Whew! Glad that's over with! Thank you Monica*). Let me begin with an update on what has been happening in Tanzania.

ADEA Tanzania – Work with artisans

Thanks and appreciation is due to my co-director Philipo Lulale, who, with little warning or planning, was left to run the ADEA Tanzania office when I returned to the United States. On his own, Philipo has represented ADEA at the Canadian embassy's "Tanzhands" bazaar in June, the "Makutano" Christmas market in Dar es Salaam, and has hosted increasing numbers of visitors to our office and gift shop. He has managed artisans in their production of a new line of Christmas ornaments, and filled an order for me and the World Market Committee at my church in Seattle. He also managed and filled various other orders from the growing number of wholesale buyers of ADEA products in Tanzania. In addition to this and more, he recruited and trained a new accountant. For all this I give him many thanks and praise.

Though challenged by trying to support him from a distance, I realized that ADEA is succeeding. We are providing increasing economic opportunities for artisans, the office has been entirely managed by Tanzanians, and the funds from product sales have covered all running costs, including rent, utilities, an accountant, and Philipo's salary. It has proven locally sustainable! That is not to say that there is not a lot of room for growth and improvement (as with any project), and we still need support for skills training workshops and forums, but I am encouraged.

HERE IN SEATTLE

During my time in the US, I have had the chance to reflect on what has made ADEA successful, how I would define what we do, and what are our aims. I determined that ADEA's leadership has acted as "Experimenters" or "Seekers": identifying problems, then experimenting until we arrive at a viable solution. (I will discuss this more in future newsletters, but William Easterly advocates for this well in his book, The White Man's Burden, where he contrasts Planners vs. Seekers). The Four Aims we've striven for and will expand upon are:

- Promoting the Skillful
- Identifying and Addressing Development Obstacles,
- Listening to those we've committed to help
- Including beneficiaries in the Bigger picture

In this newsletter I'm going to say a little about the last of these aims (I'll look at the others in future letters). Let me begin by recounting a story involving my Maasai friends in Rombo region of Kenya. During my first visit to their humble community, they showed me their "homesteads"

(called bomas), wood and earthen homes, their cows and goats, and finally their beehives. For 5 years they have been keeping these hives faithfully ever since a friend of a local priest set them up to keep bees for the production of honey to generate much needed income. Regularly someone had collected the honey and paid the beekeepers. However, about 2 years ago the honey collector stop coming. Nevertheless, my friends continued to raise the bees. Left with hives full of honey, they told me of their attempts to sell this honey in the local market, but with little success. Intrigued and interested to know its taste, I asked them if they would bring me some to try. What they brought to me was a dish of raw honey full of pieces of beeswax. This is what they had been trying to sell in the marketplace. These Maasai had never seen nor eaten processed honey, and they believed that what they served me was all that honey is supposed to be. They did not understand that they were just a part in the process of producing sellable honey. Had they known this they might have taken a different plan of action in dealing with their raw honey. It was then I realized the danger of sharing only a portion of the development picture and thus perpetuating, not alleviating dependency.

As much as possible, my efforts with ADEA will be to expose those I work with to the Big Picture. I will avoid problem solving, research and networking on my own (only sharing the found results), and instead, include those I work with in the journey. They will experience what strategizing and creative problem solving is like in development. My goal is to work myself out of a job. In the short-term, this strategy may not be viewed as time effective (what I might be able to do in a week, they will require a month initially), nor as cost effective (as compensation and travel expenses for more time and people will be required), but in the long term, they will gain from empirical experience in the Bigger Picture, the most effective way to learn.

SOMETHING NEW IN KENYA - Rombo One-room School House Project:

In my April newsletter I mentioned a young Maasai man, Tipape Loomu, who stayed with me in Mtwara. Together we shaped the plan to introduce One-Room Schoolhouses to his home community in Rombo, Kenya (the same community mentioned above). They have suffered the loss of their grazing land and dry season water source to the Tsavo West Game Reserve. Now desperately poor, they see the need for modern education to help them survive and develop, but boarding school is currently the only option (with all its drawbacks). Fewer than 15% of the school age Maasai children receive an education due to the cost and the need for the children's help at home. The children who do attend boarding schools struggle with their identity in school systems uninterested in the richness of their culture.

The vision is to establish one-room schoolhouses throughout Rombo so that each school will be no more than a 60-minute walk from home. Some advantages to this program are: Families remain intact, households are exposed to education, children are able to continue their traditional home duties, high boarding school costs are eliminated, the necessity to favor one child over another is alleviated, the curriculum allows for schedule flexibility, and curriculum can be customized to include Maasai culture and history.

In an effort to make this project locally sustainable ADEA USA is supporting Tipape so that he can learn about the various issues related to starting a school – issues of curriculum, registration, costs, training, and coordination. In August, Tipape and a local Maasai teacher completed the training to be monitors of the A.C.E.* curriculum. Material for 20 preschool children was recently granted to the project and classes will begin soon. The school committee has over 30 parents deeply committed to this school, with a vision to be able to take this model to other

Maasai communities who are also struggling in modern times. They have currently identified 200 children to enroll. They also want these schoolhouses to be able to accommodate their handicapped children. Along with guiding them into the exploration and establishment of the school program, we will explore income-generating opportunities to help fund the schools and support their families. We will consider jewelry making (using their superior beading skills) and bee keeping, as well as other activities that can come out of the rich tradition of, arguably, the most famous tribe of Africa.

Special thanks to the children of the University Presbyterian Church '06 Night Camp program who contributed \$400 and 2 large boxes of school supplies to get the school started.

I will spend time in Rombo, Kenya in mid February to learn first-hand how they are feeling about the school's progress, to learn more about their culture and skills, and to encourage and challenge them as we move ahead. Not to mention to enjoy their warm hospitality – Cow fresh milk and blood anyone?

ON A SPIRITUAL NOTE: During these months at home, while enjoying the bounties of food, activities and entertainment, I found myself lured to the temptation of self-dependency and self-sufficiency – considering reestablishing my design practice beyond the occasional jobs I now do to afford greater economic security and a more secure distant future. (Please, don't get me wrong. There are occasions where there is nothing wrong with planning for the future. What a privileged society we live in to be able to do so. But we professing Christians believe in an all-powerful God, one to whom ALL THINGS are subject (even our future), one that commands us not to worry what we shall eat or wear *-not now nor in the future* (Matt. 6:25-35). As I found myself shying away from my "call" to East Africa - due to embracing fears of things out of my control (and the allure of stuff) - I felt my spirit of life dying and myself heart becoming stale. A series of quotes I discovered woke me from my nervous state, and I am once again, very enthusiastic about my return and the future development of ADEA.

"If a man secures himself from all risk he ends up like a cocoon of self protection wondering all the while why he is suffocating." – J Eldredge

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive." – G. Bailie

"Naturally, we are inclined to be so mathematical and calculating that we look upon uncertainty as a bad thing...Certainty is the mark of the common sense life: gracious uncertainty is a mark of spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways, we do not know what a day may bring forth. This is generally said with a sigh of sadness; it should rather be an expression of breathless expectation." – O. Chambers

CLOSING NOTES:

Travel Plans: I return to East Africa January 25 – intending to return to the U.S. in late April or early May.

Upcoming Speaking Engagements: University of Vermont (Jan 10-11) and Boston Design Center (hopefully Jan 15).

2ND GLANCE REUNITES: Fundraising Concert
Saturday, January 20, 2007 - 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
University Presbyterian Church Sanctuary – 4540 15th Ave. N.E. - Seattle

NOTE OF THANKS: Thanks belong to so many of you who have helped and encouraged me over the past year. I'd like to mention special thanks to Cherry Haas, Debbie Yungquist, John & Kari Medina, Sherry Golden, Karen Freeze, Peter Gilbert, Sandra & John Moss, Justin & Clare Stokes, Debbie Jenner, Maryanne Hagen, my parents, and the men of Second Glance (and their wives).

Enough said. Have a wonderful Christmas Season, and a blessed New Year.

KRISTMAS NJEMA NA HERI MWAKA MPIA!!

Douglas - Kupikita

*A.C.E (Accelerated Christian Education) is a home schooling curriculum originally developed in the United States. The A.C.E. offices in South Africa, concerned for the educational plight of Africa, is producing A.C.E. materials at a greatly reduced cost. This curriculum allows for high levels of educational standards to be taught to communities without formally trained teachers. Also, each child studies individually allowing a student can begin studies at any age and for greater study flexibility (allowing for the interruption of home duties and illnesses like malaria). I was introduced to this curriculum through a friend and the Light of Africa orphanage in Moshi, Tanzania that uses this curriculum with outstanding results. Rombo leaders, parents and children visited Light of Africa, and spoke with the schools Maasai board of directors member before deciding that they wanted this curriculum for their schools. A.C.E. regional directors in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam are also able to encourage this community and give it credibility as a school system.