

# 2017 Annual Trip Report

This year's traveling team was smaller than last year but we still accomplished a lot! The traveling team consisted of Paul and Catherine Trescony along with John and Mary Vanderheyden.

Our first stop was the TLP office. The office, designed by Jim Vanderheyden and built in 2015, provided a comfortable and efficient place to meet to review the week's itinerary and prepare for the days ahead. We were also able to have some very good discussions on best practices, as much is always learned from each village visit. As usual, Ben, Vincent, and Agnes did an exemplary job of coordinating our time during our stay.

## **Mapinduzi (population 3,600)**

Time to celebrate! The villagers of Mapinduzi enthusiastically greeted us to celebrate their completed water system—even using a sound system with microphones run by a generator! The villagers showed us how happy they are through song and dance in thanksgiving for the clean water. Out of appreciation, the village gave our group a number of gifts: bowls, bow and arrows, large bag of peanuts, and a live chicken!

Two women of the village gave testimony on how the clean water has changed their lives. Both women told of the difficulties in obtaining water in the days before the water system. Women had to walk dangerously far, sometimes leaving their homes as early as 3am to go find a local water source. Once they found water, they would have to stand in line and wait their turn. Many times the owner of the well would make the women wait to draw water until all his animals had a chance to drink first. The women felt a lack of human dignity in these moments. They usually were only able to obtain one 20-liter bucket (about five gallons) of water per family per day. The time away from the home was also a stressor on the family. Now women are enjoying life in a new way with the availability of clean water within their own village. Their children will now be raised in a different lifestyle and human dignity is upheld!

## **Ngutoto (population 3,000)**

The Ngutoto villagers have been very excited as they anticipate the completion of their water system sometime early next year. Trenches have been eagerly dug and are just waiting for pipes to be purchased and laid. Ben Mlula read a letter to the village written by Jim Vanderheyden. The Ward Councilor for the village said: "Jim's words are so passionate and strong it is as if he is here! Jim's letter has a very good message and the entire village should embrace it." He went further to say, "There are several categories of poverty in the village with lack of water being the worst. Water is the number one human need. TLP's presence here is important and the village looks forward to working together." We look to our faithful supporters to help provide the funding needed to complete this village as soon as possible!

## **Iwondo**

We made a visit to the village of Iwondo to look at some upgrades made to their water system. We were greeted warmly by the village and again experienced their cultural way of thanking us for bringing water through song and dance. A villager by the name of Mary Chilatu told us her

personal story to emphasize how much the clean water they now have means to the village. Her story is posted on our [Facebook](#) page.

### **New Potential Villages**

This year our group visited three potential new villages: Zepisa (population 4,900), Chololo (population 4,000), and Nghonghona (population 15,000). Each village responded affirmatively to understanding their responsibilities if selected for the next water project. In the coming months, our Board will discuss the merits of all three villages and give our recommendation to TLP (T) as input to their decision for the next water installation.

### **Empowerment Seminars**

Making clean water readily available in a village drastically changes the culture because it increases the amount of time women have to pursue other endeavors. Over the last few years TLP thought it was important to provide empowerment seminars for women. The empowerment seminars educate women on ways to transition from their traditional role to a more progressive one that benefits their families and community. We realized this past year that in order for the women to be successful, we also needed to provide the men in the villages seminars to help them understand their unique role in this transition.

Earlier this year, we held both a women's and men's seminar in Ngutoto. The women's seminar was facilitated by a respected local woman named Mama Mbenanga. It was enlightening and well received by the women. The men's seminar was facilitated by Peter Mnyangulu, a retired social worker and native Tanzanian.

During our visit to Ngutoto, we had the opportunity to interview all the seminar participants. The response was overwhelmingly positive. They embraced the ideas presented in the seminars and are very hopeful about the positive impact they can have on their future. Given these positive results, we plan to continue offering both Women's and Men's Seminars in the villages we serve.

### **Days for Girls**

We again partnered with [Days for Girls](#) to distribute 200 sustainable feminine hygiene kits to the girls and young women in the village of Chisichili.

Tanzanian Grace Oneya helped facilitate the educational component along with TLP (T)'s Agnes Mlula. We were able to run two sessions simultaneously with Grace teaching the 10-15-year-old girls and Agnes teaching the older girls and young women. All girls and women agree that these kits are a healthy, secure, and sustainable solution for their needs!

We also did some follow up regarding last year's distribution. We spoke with two nurses in the village of Mapinduzi. The nurses reported the life of girls using the kits has changed because they have what they need and are prepared. Girls no longer have to leave school and stay at home. With the availability of clean water, girls are able to care for themselves and the kits. Word is spreading—more girls would like to obtain kits!