

DOWN to EARTH

Emmanuel International UK News
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A Sharpe Tanzanian report!

strong, and materialism is less pronounced than in the West. So there are quite a lot of aspects of Tanzanian society that are better than Western society.

This week we have finished up our formal Kiswahili language study having done eight weeks. We now have a basis for conversing with people in Swahili, if rather slowly and in basic form. As we start to get stuck into projects and liaising with others here over the coming months I'm sure we will become quicker and more proficient, but right now we wouldn't describe ourselves as confident in Kiswahili! It is fairly easy to speak the language badly but in a way which is understandable, but we need to get to the point of being able to speak it reasonably correctly as well as understandably, and that is far more difficult. Who said Swahili is an easy language to learn?

On Sunday a couple of weeks back we went to a village Anglican Church about two hours out from here with Andrew, Miriam and their boys. As is usual here, the village has no electricity or water supply and the villagers are subsistence farmers. Nevertheless the pastor had prepared



Andy and Angela Sharpe are in Tanzania to run El's Rain Water Harvesting project. Here they share their experiences of settling into a new country, a new language and different culture with us.

After just two months here in Iringa, Tanzania, what are our first impressions settling in?

Well, it is surprisingly green in this area but it is dusty and dirty as we expected nevertheless. We wake each morning to hear African birdsongs which are very different from European birdsongs, so we are reminded straight away that we are in Africa. At night Iringa seems disproportionately noisy, with dogs barking, the Imam calling and chickens crowing. We have been warmly welcomed by all the people we have met here and especially the Wingfield family, so Angela and I have been encouraged knowing that this is where God has called us to for this time. Being here is also scary as there is so much to learn in this new place, so we have to rely on His guidance.

We have found Tanzanian people to be polite, gentle and reserved, but at the same time hospitable and welcoming, so it has been a joy to start to get to know the culture and people. Most Tanzanians profess a faith (Christian or Islamic), and it seems to us that the spiritual dimension plays a much bigger part in life here than in UK. It also seems that everything 'just about works' but there is no safety net if things fail. Family ties and responsibilities are very



Inside village pastor's house



Tanzanian cooking lesson!

Chai and *Maandaazi* (tea and 'donuts') for us on arrival. The Swahili church service lasted about 2 hours, with a congregation of 50 or so. As visitors, Andrew was invited to preach, which he did (in Swahili – I'm hoping I don't have to do that for quite a while yet!). After the service, it was back to the pastor's house for a lunch they had prepared, of rice and fish stew, a luxury meal for them really, so amazingly generous to do so for us. We sat round inside the mud walled house eating, and there were all sorts of folks hanging around the *shamba* (homestead) to see us and what was going on. It reminded me a bit of a biblical scene where Jesus got invited to a pharisee's house for a meal and a



A rainwater tank almost finished by EI at Uhambingeto Primary School

woman came in and washed Jesus' feet with her tears. I can see how it might happen now!

So we are happy to be here where God has called us, thankful we have made steady progress in settling in and learning Kiswahili, and have kept healthy too. It has been especially good to have these two months to focus fully on Kiswahili without having to worry about projects and other work. We are now starting to get to grips with the work we are to do, so along with adjusting to life here, our prayer request for the coming month is that we need wisdom to know what and what not to get involved in, in terms of people, projects and other things.

Dates for your diary...

Emmanuel International is 35 years old this year! The Canadian and International offices will be celebrating this at their **Spring Banquet** on 6 May 2010. Sue will be attending this as she will be in Canada at the time.

The next **EIUK Board meeting** will take place on 14 May 2010 in Surbiton.

EI Garden Party will take place on 10 July 2010 at the Bendell's in Surbiton. Sue has been working with EI for 25 years this year! There is a lot to celebrate and we plan to make the garden party a big reunion. As usual it will be an informal drop-in affair, but to help us with the arrangements, it would be appreciated if you could let us know if you are thinking of attending.

We are planning a **Short Term Team to Northern Uganda** in August this year. This is an exciting opportunity to participate in the rebuilding of a devastated area. No special skills are required - just a willingness to get involved and make a difference! The team will be involved in building work and children's ministry. Please contact the office on tel 01243 534070 or info@eiuk.org.uk for more information. Please also make this information available at your church and amongst friends and family.

EIUK Annual Conference 2011 will take place from 11 to 13 February 2011 at Sunbury Court, London.



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