

# >>> NEWSLETTER <<< MMTHC NEWS

**Mt. Meru Tumaini Health Clinic &  
Ndoombo Community Foundation**



In January, the road was washed out causing build up of soil and rocks in front of the gate. You can see remnants here.

## TOP NEWS OF THE QUARTER



### READ MORE

**CAPTURING TANZANIA  
WATER FOR OUR  
NEIGHBORS  
UPDATES & PROJECTS**

### A MESSAGE FOR OUR READERS

We could not support Ndoombo without you. Your love, compassion, and gifts build a brighter and healthier future for many. Thank you for all you have helped us achieve. ❤️





# CAPTURING TANZANIA

## A JOURNEY THROUGH THE LENS

By Aaron Johnson

### >>> FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF ARUSHA

From January 23 to February 6, I had the incredible honor of traveling to Tanzania to photograph the Ndoombo Community Dispensary with the Mt. Meru Tumaini Health Clinic and document the essential work they do for the surrounding communities. This journey not only allowed me to witness firsthand the clinic's impact but also offered an immersive experience into the vibrant daily life of the people of Ndoombo and beyond.

After 22 hours of travel, I found myself in the heart of Arusha. The bustling streets were alive with tuk-tuks loaded with bananas, chaotic yet skillful traffic, and open-air markets filled with color and energy. It didn't take long to realize that I wasn't in Wisconsin anymore. As a photographer, I make it a habit to capture images heavily and frequently upon arrival at a new destination. I do this to document every fresh and unfamiliar sight before they become ordinary to my eyes. This mindset was crucial for telling the story of the clinic, the people, and their communities through an unfiltered and fresh perspective.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Arusha is one of Tanzania's major cities, ranking 3rd in population size, with 3.5 million people.



### >>> LIFE IN NDOOMBO AND THE CHALLENGE OF BLENDING IN

The key part of my journey took me into the foothills of Mt. Meru, about 5,000 feet up the 14,980-foot mountain. At the Ndoombo Lutheran Church, it became clear that blending in for candid photography would be a challenge. Instead, I found myself the center of attention, especially among a group of excited children eager to have their pictures taken—and to take some pictures themselves! My cameras and red hair made me an instant attraction, but what they enjoyed most was practicing the English they learn in school.

The warmth and hospitality of the children reflected the kindness of nearly everyone I met. The dispensary staff graciously allowed me to shadow them, and patients permitted me to document their visits despite the stress that medical appointments often bring. I was deeply grateful to those who welcomed me into their homes, helping me share the story of the Ndoombo communities with the world.



## >>> A GLIMPSE INTO MAASAI VILLAGE LIFE

One of the more profound experiences of my trip was following Exaudh Mbise out to a Maasai village where he is working to extend clean water access. This village, untouched by tourism, offered an authentic look into the Maasai way of life. While waiting in what seemed like the middle of nowhere, I saw a young brother and sister casually walking to school. Their journey, a possible two- to three-hour trek each way, was made even more remarkable by the sticks they carried—not for play, but to ward off potential hyena attacks. This moment left an indelible mark on me, highlighting the resilience and determination of these children in their pursuit of education.



**CHURCH IN THE MAASAI VILLAGE**



**HARD AT WORK**



**BROTHER & SISTER WALKING TO SCHOOL**

## >>> THE HEART OF THE CLINIC

For years, my wife and I have supported the Mt. Meru Tumaini Health Clinic from afar. However, my time there gave me a much deeper appreciation for its daily operations and the incredible individuals behind them. Staff members like Barnabas, the lab technician, passionately showed me their work, while Dr. Mary allowed me to observe her patient interactions, answering all my questions along the way.

One touching moment came when a young boy, who had visited the clinic days earlier with abdominal pain, returned bearing gifts for the doctors who had helped him. Gift-giving, often in the form of fresh produce, is a common practice in the community, speaking volumes about their gratitude for the clinic's services.



**MARY, ROSEFINA, MARSELINA AND DR. HILTY**



**BARNABAS WORKING WITH DR. HILTY**



**MARSELINA WITH THE YOUNG BOY WHO BROUGHT A GIFT**

## >>> SHARING THE JOURNEY IN REAL-TIME

Throughout my stay, I posted a fraction of my daily photos on Facebook. Friends and family back home followed along closely, leaving supportive comments and asking insightful questions. This engagement reminded me of the power of photography—not just to document, but to connect and educate others about places and stories they might never encounter firsthand.

Armed with a handful of Swahili words and phrases, I spent some afternoons exploring the foothills solo. Strangers soon became friends, inviting me into their homesteads, proudly introducing me to their cows, or leading me to hidden waterfalls. My cheeks hurt from smiling so much as friendly "Jambos!" echoed through the hills.



## ➤➤➤ A CHANGE OF PAGE: SAFARI THROUGH NGORONGORO AND TARANGIRE

During my final days, I had the opportunity to join a three-day safari through the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Tarangire National Park. While my time in Ndoombo had been deeply personal, this part of the trip was equally unforgettable.

Lunch under an umbrella tree in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area felt surreal, surrounded by endless horizons teeming with thousands of giraffes, zebras, and wildebeests. One night, I stayed in a (luxury) tent at Nyikani Camp, lulled to sleep by the distant roars of lions. The highlight? Standing in awe as a herd of elephants ambled past, the sounds of their footsteps and the sound of rustling grass forever etched in my memory.



LUNCH UNDER AN UMBRELLA TREE



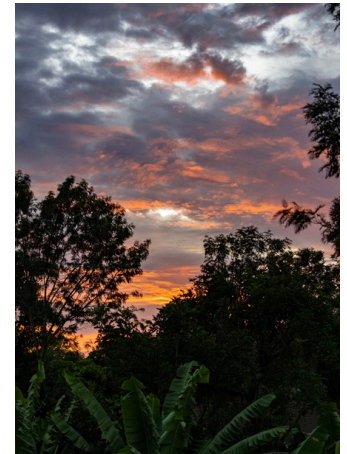
MY LUXURY TENT IN THE NATIONAL PARK



LION ENJOYING SOME MIDDAY SHADE

## ➤➤➤ A PHOTOGRAPHER'S DAILY ROUTINE

My days started early—5:30 a.m. to catch the sunrise, camera in hand. With no itinerary, I simply followed Exaugh each day, letting the adventure unfold organically. By early each evening, I had captured between 1,000 to 2,000 images, and my nights were spent downloading, selecting, editing, and sharing 100-150 final photos with some of the Mt. Meru Tumaini Health Clinic board members. This pace ensured that I could provide a thorough visual record of my journey and plenty of material to help MMTHC tell their story.



## ➤➤➤ REFLECTIONS ON AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

This journey was more than just a photography assignment—it was an opportunity to share my talents and help tell the story of Tanzania, the Ndoombo Community Dispensary, and the resilient, kind-hearted people who make up these communities. These two weeks were filled with warmth, generosity, and vibrant life, and I will forever be grateful for the friendships I made. I only hope that my photographs do them justice.



I SAW A LOT OF JOY AND RESPECT FOR THE ELDERLY



A PATIENT HAPPY WITH THEIR CARE



THE EAGER CREW I MET AT CHURCH





Drilling exhibition in 2024



Semi-arid plains of Maasai land



Exauidh and his Land Rover



A Maasai boma that benefits from the water access



Discussing with village leaders

# WATER FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

Written by Exauidh Mbise

*At MMTHC, we enjoy sharing the good news of our neighbors. This project was a partnership with the village, interested donors and MMTHC. With your help, Exauidh the board liaison worked fervently to see this project to fruition.*

## **Engikaret/Ingutokoit Water Project January 2025**

Water—our bodies are about 70% composed of this precious resource. Yet, despite its importance, clean and accessible water is not available to everyone who needs it. In the Western world, many of us take water for granted. When thirsty, we simply turn on a faucet, and in seconds, we have clean drinking water. Some modern refrigerators even dispense water at our preferred temperature.

However, in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, the situation is vastly different. I speak about Africa because I know it personally. I grew up on the slopes of Mount Meru in Arusha, where we had rivers and streams. We carried buckets, filled them, and brought water home. Though we lacked running water in our houses, we never felt deprived—it was a short 15-minute trip to the river. As an adult, after witnessing the struggles of other communities in Arusha, particularly the Maasai in the western part, I now realize that even my people took water for granted because of our proximity to natural water sources. I'm not saying the water we collected was safe by Western standards, but at least it was flowing and appeared clear to the naked eye.

## **The Origin of the Maasai Water Project**

The Engikaret and Ingutokoit Water Project is a promise I made to myself in the 1990s. At that time, I worked for a diocese in the Arusha region, which included these two villages. The diocese had an educational extension about two hours west of Arusha. One day, I was tasked with delivering a letter to this institution.

I owned an old Land Rover Series 3, and this was my first time driving it such a long distance beyond my usual route between home and the office. As I neared my destination, about 30 minutes away, I noticed smoke rising from under the hood of my car.

The area was semi-arid, with sparse vegetation. It was summertime, and the land was dry and dusty, stretching out like the Sahara. In the distance, I spotted two young Maasai boys, around 7 or 8 years old—the typical age for children tending livestock.

I stopped my struggling car and approached them. Though I didn't speak their language, I hoped they would recognize the Swahili word “maji” (water). I gestured toward my car and asked for water. One of the boys seemed to understand and turned to his companion, likely explaining my request.



Then, both of them looked at me with an expression I will never forget—an unspoken message that struck me straight in the heart. Their dry, cracked lips and weary eyes silently asked, “Can’t you see? We have no water ourselves, and yet you’re asking us for some?”

That moment changed me. Their faces are forever etched in my memory.

## >>> A Long Journey Toward Water Access

I had to resort to Plan B. Since I was on the main Arusha-Namanga road, I hoped to flag down a passing vehicle. Before long, a logging truck appeared. I waved it down and pointed to my overheated car. The driver stopped and handed me a jerry can with about two gallons of water. I poured it into my radiator, restarted the car, and completed my journey to deliver the letter.

On my way back, I made sure to collect more water to reach home safely. This experience planted the seed for the Maasai Water Project.

After the engineer set his plans, the pipes path was dug by hand. The underground network will connect three Maasai Boma’s (villages) with the water source.



## >>> Challenges and Breakthroughs

Fast forward to January 2024. A group of us, including the primary project donor, traveled to Engikaret to drill a well. After reaching a depth of 125 meters, the driller informed us - *there was no water*. We had already spent a significant sum on the drilling process, and this news was devastating.

I wrestled with the decision of whether to fund another expensive drilling attempt without any certainty of finding water. I prayed endlessly, searching for an answer.

Then, in December 2024, just a month before my next trip to Arusha, an idea came to me: *“What if, instead of drilling again, we connected to another village’s existing water supply and shared their water?”*

By pursuing this alternative, we successfully provided water to three villages and a school.

As I write this, two villages are already receiving water, and trenches are being dug to bring water to Engikaret—the village where our drilling attempt failed but where the need remains great.

From now on, I will never waste precious time and resources on uncertain drilling projects in areas without advanced water detection technology. I thank God for the wisdom that led to this solution.

## >>> A Promise Fulfilled

This journey started with a simple breakdown in the middle of the arid plains. A moment of need opened my eyes to the suffering of others. Today, the dream of bringing water to these Maasai communities is becoming a reality. Although this was not a project funded by the MMTHC. I am grateful for their support through every step of this process. We feel it’s important to share the good work our neighbors are providing.



Shipment of pipe arriving.



The feeder tank connected to all three bomas.



Pipes



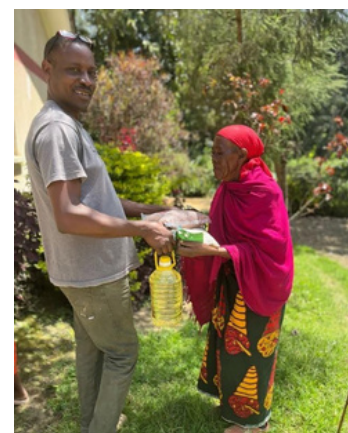
# WHAT'S THE NEWS?

## >>> UPDATES OF THE QUARTER

- In January while our liaison and medical director were on the ground, upgrades were made to the solar power system. This system feeds the Ndoombo Community Dispensary and ensures power at all times. We upgraded so that there is an automatic switch from electric to solar when the power goes out. Before, the switch was done manually. This allows for the staff to never miss a beat while providing patient care.
- Needs in the community were heard. In January, Dispensary staff were able to provide a small food distribution to a handful of community members in need. The weather in Tanzania has not followed normal patterns, causing farmers to have difficulty to know when to plant and to harvest. This causes a food shortage for many.
- Incorporating new staff and new roles: Welcome to Tumaini Urrio (Pharmacy Tech & Cashier), Mary Daniels (Clinical Officer), and Barnabas John (Laboratory Technician).
- Dr. Hilty is working with the team to expand the laboratory services offered at the dispensary.



STAFF OUT FOR DINNER IN JANUARY



FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO AN ELDER

## >>> UPCOMING SERVICE TRIPS

- A big thank you to our partners at Vision Health International. They will be holding another eye clinic at the Ndoombo Community Dispensary this October 2025. More eye exams, vision screening and glasses!
- October will be a busy month. We will also have a medical group from Children's Wisconsin to focus on the pediatric population in Ndoombo: seeing patients and conducting education sessions with staff on various pediatric pathologies.



## FISCAL YEAR PROJECTS




WE ARE IN NEED OF SOME MEDICAL EQUIPMENT BY OCTOBER. THE GOAL



IS TO RAISE \$500 FOR AN ADDITIONAL MANUAL BLOOD PRESSURE SET WITH CUFF SIZES FOR ALL AGES, THERMOMETER, TWO OTOSCOPES, AND PULSE OXIMETERS.



CONSIDER SUPPORTING GENERAL OPERATIONS. YOUR SUPPORT MAKES SURE WE CONTINUE TO KEEP THE DISPENSARY RUNNING AND THAT HELP IS THERE  WHEREVER AND WHENEVER IT'S NEEDED.

The Wound Care Room is in dire need of repairs (see photos below). By donating, you are supporting a place where people get important treatments and comfort. The goal is to raise \$10,000 for wall repairs, paint, replacing the exam table top, a chair for staff during procedures, stainless steel stand for supplies, IV pole, medical instruments for wound exploration and debridement, wound care supplies, mayo stand, shelving and an additional sterilizer. A new and improved wound care room with the latest technology will ensure patients who need laceration and wound care, IV medications and hydration care have a better experience. Every donation, no matter how small, helps to make this space more efficient and effective, benefiting everyone. Together, we can turn this room into a place of hope and healing for those who need it. Your kindness can make a big difference in many lives—please consider donating today.



CURRENT WOUND CARE ROOM





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## WAYS TO GIVE



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Venmo @mmthclinic

Links on the website  
[www.mmthc.org](http://www.mmthc.org)

By mail at our mailing address  
above

Money isn't the only donation we  
accept.

If you are interested in  
volunteering for events contact us  
on social media, our website or via  
email.

If you are interested in service trip  
opportunities, fill out our  
application online.

Trips occur annually with an  
**estimated** cost of \$4,000 including  
airfare.

## PARTNERSHIPS:





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