

# THE MESERANI PROJECT

Bringing children from Teesside and Africa together.

Inspired by the pupils, staff and parents of Acklam Grange School, Middlesbrough, England.

Registered charity number: 113567

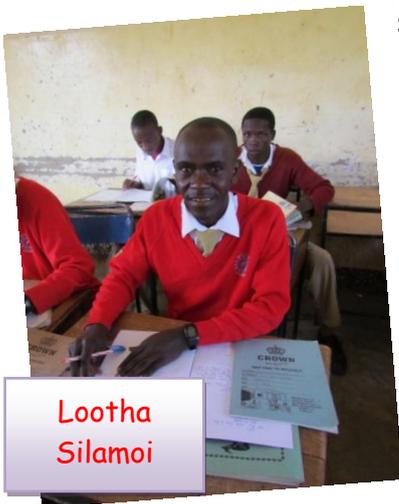
[www.meseraniproject.co.uk](http://www.meseraniproject.co.uk)

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## Newsletter – March 2013

Welcome to our New Year Newsletter for all sponsors and supporters of The Meserani Project. Whilst the newsletter is primarily for those individuals, families, schoolchildren and organisations that sponsor our pupils, we hope that it will also be of value to other interested parties.

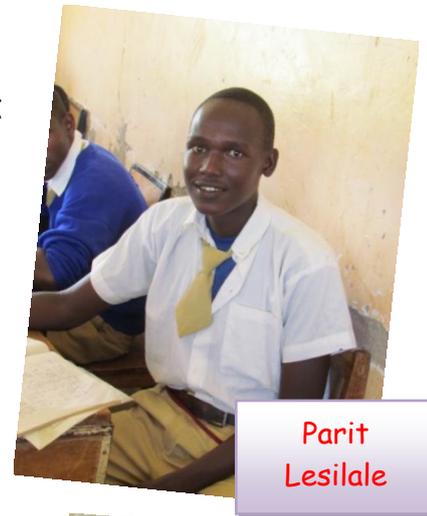
Our most recent visit to Meserani involved a three-week stay in the area in January this year, and was our first opportunity to meet the thirty new sponsored pupils – all due to start their first year of secondary school.



Lootha  
Silamoi

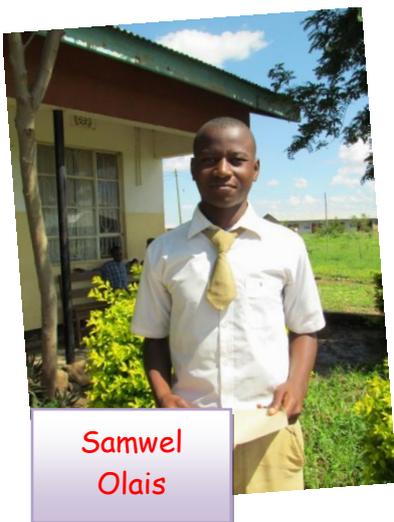
In our first visit to Moita School, we had to take Lootha Silamoi to the clinic at Meserani, and he was then sent to hospital. He was once again diagnosed with malaria, (one of his sisters died from malaria last year). However, within two weeks he was back at school, exhibiting his usual big smile.

Parit Lesilale had also contracted malaria last year – the same year that his mother died of the disease. However, Parit has fully recovered, evidenced by his November examination results where he was placed 19<sup>th</sup>. in a year group of 143 pupils at Moita School.



Parit  
Lesilale

There were some outstanding results in the November examinations, with Samwel Olais coming first in Form One at Moita School, Nasra Shaban coming second in Form One at Kipok School, and five of our pupils being placed in the top six in Form Three at Einoti School.



Samwel  
Olais

Paulo Meseyeki has just started his final year at Einoti School, and not only was he placed second in the school



Paulo  
Meseyeki

examinations, but he has also been selected as Head Boy – we are all very proud of what he has achieved.

Many other pupils were placed in the top twenty of their year group in the November examinations, as detailed in the table below:

Pupil	Year group	School	Position	Pupils in year group
Samwel Olais	One	Moita	1 <sup>st</sup> .	137
Paulo Meseyeki	Three	Einoti	2 <sup>nd</sup> .=	231
Maria Ngimasirwa	Three	Einoti	2 <sup>nd</sup> .=	231
Baba Lotumieki	Three	Einoti	2 <sup>nd</sup> .=	231
Nasra Shaban	One	Kipok	2 <sup>nd</sup> .	137
Edward Kuresoi	Three	Einoti	5 <sup>rd</sup> .	231
Daniel Migaro	One	Moita	4 <sup>th</sup> .	137
Jonathan Ndeleo	Three	Einoti	6 <sup>th</sup> .	231
Sangingo Loisulie	Two	Moita	5 <sup>th</sup> .	134
Evaline Elias	Two	Kipok	7 <sup>th</sup> .	106
Lootha Silamoi	Two	Moita	9 <sup>th</sup> .	134
Winnie Michael	Two	Kipok	9 <sup>th</sup> .	106
Mariam Isa	One	Kipok	12 <sup>th</sup> .	137
Namelock Mrumbe	Two	Kipok	12 <sup>th</sup> .	106
Minyali Saingorie	Two	Moita	13 <sup>th</sup> .	134
Pendaël Emanuel	One	Kipok	17 <sup>th</sup> .	137
Lalahe Melayeki	One	Moita	19 <sup>th</sup> .	137
Edward Saiboku	Two	Moita	19 <sup>th</sup> .	134
Parit Lesilale	One	Moita	19 <sup>th</sup> .	143
Upendo Lengiyeu	One	Kipok	20 <sup>th</sup> .	137
Fatuma Omari	Two	Kipok	20 <sup>th</sup> .	106

One other piece of good news that met us when we arrived at Meserani

was that one of the new sponsored pupils had actually been offered a place at Ilboru Special School by the government. Ilboru School is a Secondary Boys Boarding School on the outskirts of Arusha, and only pupils who achieve above a certain mark in their Primary School National Examinations are offered places at such schools. Whilst it was a great honour for Paulo Saingorie to gain a place at Ilboru School, his mother would not have been able to pay his



Paulo's mother



Paulo Saingorie

fees, and both Paulo and his mother were extremely grateful for the support of his sponsor. It took a two-day shopping spree in Arusha to kit Paulo out with all the clothing and equipment that he needed, but it was a proud moment for The Meserani Project when he started his first day.



Paulo with Diane and  
Loth Naparana

## Our 'First Nine'

In 2009 our first nine sponsored pupils started their secondary education at Einoti School, and they are now waiting for their National Examination results to see if they have been given a place at High School or College. The results are due out any time now, and much time was spent during our visit in January looking at what needed doing should any of the pupils be successful in this respect. We met with Principals, Head Teachers and Academic Masters at a number of High Schools and Colleges, and we also had a formal meeting with four District Councillors to discuss the logistics of sending the pupils to College or High School while we ourselves were in the U.K., should any be successful.



Einoti School Pupils  
2009

## Meserani Chini Primary School

One of our current projects is to refurbish the teachers' houses at Meserani Chini Primary School. This particular school



Meserani Chini Head  
Teacher's house 2012



has a most impressive Head Teacher, Mr. Prosper Tesha, and the results he achieves for his pupils are extremely commendable. A major problem that he faces however, is the recruitment of teachers, and this is because of the remoteness of the school. It is a half-hour landrover drive from Meserani to the school, but his teachers have to cycle this route each morning and evening, and this is proving to be a deterrent. The teachers' houses at the school are uninhabitable, and the Head Teacher himself is not able to house his family of four at the school. To date The Meserani Project has built and equipped two brand new classrooms, and has provided text books for all pupils and teachers in all subjects. We

are now funding the refurbishment of the teachers' houses

so that they do not have to cycle to and from Meserani each day. The work is already well under way, and the Head

Teacher's house is almost completed.



Meserani Chini Head Teacher's house 2013

## Theresia's story

Many of you will be aware of the Theresia William story, but will not know the full details. Her story is a truly remarkable one, and recognises what can be achieved through sheer willpower and determination, when everything is stacked up against you.

Theresia started Kipok Girls Secondary Boarding School in January 2010, and this prevented her from being married off by her parents to an older man. She completed her first year in December 2011, but in the middle of 2012 she stopped attending school.

Because her family lived 70 Km. from Meserani, it took some time to find out what had happened. According to her neighbours she was pregnant, and her family had taken

her away. Her sponsors, the Heward family, were given

the bad news just before Christmas. However, whilst we were actually at Meserani in January our 'Key Worker' Loth Naparana took a telephone call from Theresia, and a remarkable story unfurled.



Theresia William



Theresa waiting to meet the District Councillors

What had actually happened to Theresa last summer was that her father had forced her to marry a man in his fifties, (Theresa was sixteen at the time). This man lived 150 Km. from Theresa's home, and over the past few months she had tried on many occasions to run away and find her way back home. On each occasion she did not get very far,



District Councillors Meeting

and was taken back to her husband. However, in January she had actually managed to walk the 150 Km., from village to village, back to her mother, where she was hidden for a week. Unfortunately for Theresa her mother planned to return her to her husband at the end of the week, and Theresa's incredible efforts and resilience appeared to have all been in vain. Her opportunity to be rescued came when an aunt sent Theresa to a local kiosk to top up a mobile 'phone with some credit. Theresa put the credit on the 'phone, but then telephoned Loth at Meserani literally crying out for help. Loth was actually with us in the Monduli mountains at the time, so Theresa had to walk another 70 Km. to meet us the next day.



Hospital Tests



A meeting was held with local councillors in order to satisfy any legal issues, and they agreed to allow us to take Theresa back to Kipok Boarding School. They also stipulated that she was not allowed to go back to her parents during the school holidays, so we made arrangements for her to stay at the Meserani Orphanage at these times.

The next day Diane had to take Theresa to Monduli Hospital for HIV, Malaria and Pregnancy Tests (all proved negative), and then she had to take her shopping for all the basic essentials and necessities that she no longer



Shopping



had. One day later she returned to school, and a warm reception from her former teachers and classmates was arranged.

The next task was to break the good news to her sponsors – a heart-warming task indeed!



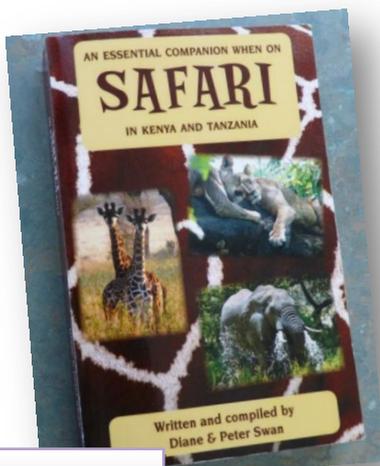
## Book Launch

Some of you will know that we have set up and registered a publishing company – *Meserani Publishing* – and have

purchased ten ISBN numbers. This is so that we can raise funds for the project by writing and publishing our own books. The first book is already with the printers, York Publishing Company, and there will be a book launch some time in the next two months. The book is a wildlife guide, and the forward has been written by BBC Wildlife Presenter Chris Packham, in which he says, *This guide provides the perfect introduction*

*to the most frequently encountered creatures and supplements everything about their behaviour and ecologies. It's accessible, easy to use, concise and has plenty of little nuggets of interest and importance.*

A number of other celebrities and wildlife experts have already written positive reviews, including Mike Dilger, BBC Wildlife Presenter and regular contributor to the BBC *The One Show*.



Front cover



Back cover

Some excerpts are detailed below:

*This Travel guide is a must for your tour of Eastern Africa. This book is easy to read and gives you not only simple to read facts, but great information of not only the animals that you may come across but about the area you are visiting.* Geoff Collins, African Wildlife Guide Trainer and Assessor for F.G.A.S.A. (Field Guides Association of South Africa).

*Speaking as someone who has never ventured into the southern hemisphere, let alone on Safari, I am struck by the authors' passion and enthusiasm for what seems like their vocation in life.* John Kettle, BBC Presenter.

The book will be on sale with *Amazon* and *York Publishing Company* once the Book Launch Weekend has taken place, but if you would like to buy a copy at the book launch, not only will you be able to buy it at a discount cost, but all sales that weekend are being 'price-matched' by Barclays Bank, Stockton on Tees. We will let you know once a date has been arranged for the Book Launch Weekend. Please bear in mind that all profits from the sales of the book go to The Meserani Project – the authors and the publishing company are taking no expenses out at all.

## **New website**

Our website is currently being completely redesigned, and the launch date will be announced soon. We are indebted to former Acklam Grange School pupil, Brad Johnson, for providing the services of his company *Yellow Box Marketing* ([www.yellowboxmarketing.co.uk](http://www.yellowboxmarketing.co.uk)) free of charge. Brad has spent a considerable amount of his personal time on the new website, and the results of his work are fantastic.

## **Other news items**

- We are currently working on an itinerary for the proposed Adults Trip to Kenya and Tanzania in 2014 – if you would like details sending to you when they are ready, and have not already told us, please e-mail us to register your initial interest.

- If anyone is thinking of visiting Africa themselves, either on a budget camping trip or a luxury safari lodge tour, and you would like some advice/guidance/help, then do not hesitate to let us know.
- Barclays Bank, Stockton on Tees, continue to provide generous support to The Meserani Project – they ‘price-matched’ the money raised at our Annual African Jewellery & Handicraft Sale in November, and they are doing the same at our forthcoming book launch weekend.
- Whilst we are proud that The Meserani Project continues to belong to the people of the North East, particularly those from Teesside, we are delighted to welcome two supporters from overseas. Doreen DiBiagio is from the U.S.A., and she is sponsoring Paulina Losieki throughout her four years of secondary education at Kipok School. Sandi Norman runs a truly wonderful bed & breakfast establishment in Rotorua, New Zealand, ([www.sandisbedandbreakfast.co.nz](http://www.sandisbedandbreakfast.co.nz)) and she recently made a generous donation to the project.
- We are indebted to Zoe Wildsmith, Editor of *Websters International*, for her guidance and support whilst we have been writing the East Africa Safari Guide. Her help over the past five years has been immense.
- Some sponsors have commented that the letters they receive from their pupils sometimes appear to have been written by two different people. This is because when the pupils are on holiday from school and at home, they often get family members or neighbours to write the letters for them. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the pupils worry considerably about the standard of their letter writing, bearing in mind that for some of them it will be the first time they have ever written any sort of letter, never mind one in a foreign language; secondly, neighbours and family members often want to be involved in the letter writing because of the appreciation they have themselves for what the sponsors are doing for the children.

## What next?

We are back in July with a group of 28 from Acklam Grange School, and then returning ourselves in September, and have a number of challenges that need addressing:

- We will be looking into the success of the building refurbishment of the teachers’ homes at Meserani Chini School, with a view towards

possibly supplying basic furniture and installing solar power and water tanks.

- We will be meeting with staff from our three link secondary schools, (Einoti, Moita and Kipok), to review their national examination results, and look at what support we can offer in terms of raising achievement levels.
- Look at the possibility of providing laminate whiteboards for our link primary and secondary schools, (they all currently use blackboards, most of which are in an unacceptable condition).
- Promoting sales of the East Africa Safari Guide.

Two of our sponsors are still busy knitting the infamous Meserani Slippers, but are running out of wool. If you have any spare **balls of wool** sat in a drawer that you could donate to us, please let us know. We are also still collecting **old or unwanted clothes, shoes, handbags and belts** – these can be new or second hand, and are used to raise funds for the project. **Plain, black leather shoes** (in good condition), **white shirts** (long and short-sleeved, new and second-hand – particularly medium and large sizes), **P.E. shorts, tracksuit bottoms** and **ankle socks** are desperately needed as part of the pupils' school uniform. Please contact us if you have any such items that you would like to get rid of.

Like all charities, we are struggling to raise funds in the current economical climate, but this simply means that we have to work even harder to do what we can for those who rely on our support in Tanzania. If any of you feel that you would like to help in any way, there are a number of options:

- \* You could host an African Jewellery & Handicrafts Sale, (we will provide everything for you – we have a large stock of traditional African Jewellery & Handicrafts that we have bought from markets in Tanzania and Kenya).
  - \* You could organise a fundraising event yourself.
- \* You may wish to fund a water tank for one of our schools, (all schools are in remote, desolate locations, and currently pupils have to walk many miles each day to collect water, thereby taking time out of their studies). The cost of each water tank is £295 and we would make sure that the water tank had your name on it – a lasting and meaningful legacy for you!
  - \* You may wish to sponsor a pupil through their secondary education, or you may know someone who would be interested in doing this.

- \* You may have links or access to commercial organisations who may wish to support our charity. Kipok Boarding School is in desperate need of new classrooms and dormitories, and a commercial organisation may wish to fund the building project.

**Please remember that The Meserani Project does not take expenses out of any money that is raised or donated. All people that work for the project do so entirely at their own expense, and every penny goes directly to the young people whose lives we are changing.**

Thank you as always to our sponsors and fundraisers for your continued support – the project would not survive without you, and you are making a real difference to someone’s life.

Diane & Peter Swan



Diane & Paulo Sainqories' mother



Moita School new Form One pupils

Peter & Kisongo pupils



Kipok School new Form One pupils