



RWANDAN UPDATE

Tom MacGregor October 2007



Dear Friends,

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all once again for your kind support, emails and prayers. They are all really appreciated and they do make a real difference to my life here in Rwanda.

This last month has been very busy with a tour of the Child Development Programs (CDP) in the east, continuing with my language and job training, tree planting and starting work on the Marketing of the Micro Enterprises Products.



Although I will not be working directly with CDP to get a better idea of what FH do in Rwanda I did go on a tour of their programs in the East. Basically CDP are involved in supporting particularly poor and vulnerable children through school. This involves raising money to provide the costs associated with schooling and also visiting them to ensure their continued wellbeing. They are also involved in class room building and equipment sourcing projects because as you will note from the picture some of the classes still meet outside under trees. I never really appreciate all that I had when I was at school until I saw these kids trying to write on scraps of paper resting on their knees. If you are interested

in being more involved with what FH do through the CDP please do let me know and I will happily provide you with all the information you need.

Over the last three weeks I have been undergoing an intensive training program with other international staff. Some are working here in Africa in the neighboring countries and the others are based in the East (Cambodia, China and the Philippines). It was really good to be able to share ideas and coping strategies with others who are experiencing similar things to me and the training seminars where really useful in dealing with day to day life as well as providing in depth knowledge on how to effectively do my job.

During the training we had the opportunity to go and work within the community. FH have just completed work building a number of terraces to improve efficiency of farming and to stop soil erosion. To stabilize these terraces small trees need to be planted all along the banks and therefore that is what we did. I am a little ashamed to say it but I was really quite useless at this task but luckily we were working with people from within the local community who after recovering from laughing at my appalling efforts took me under their wing. It was a really tiring but enjoyable time and an eye opener to the kind of work that is involved in cultivating the land by hand.



I am continuing with the language training part time but I have now started work on a number of projects. I am primarily working in the research and development department obtaining information to assist with the marketing and sale of the products made in the poorer rural communities. What this

entails is firstly cataloguing every product that is being produced and finding sale opportunities. I have already met with DFID (Department for International Development) in the hope of forming of partnerships with Rwandan and British Businesses. It is very early days and the majority of my time is taken up by searching for information. If any of you have ideas or contacts that would be able to assist with my work here, please do not hesitate to drop me an email. All help and advice is happily received.

The picture on the right is a group of children who live near the office In Gitarama. Everyday they rush up and greet me with big smiles and it makes the start to my working day even more enjoyable.



As my work will entail frequent meetings in both Butare and Kigali it has been decided that it is best for me to be based in-between them here in Gitarama and so this is now my home for the foreseeable future. I have already looked at some houses here and I have seen a little flat that fits all my requirements. I am still waiting for the agreement to be finalised but unless there are some major problems it is likely that I will be moving in shortly. I have also started driving lessons with one of my work colleagues because although I know how to drive, driving on these lumpy, bumpy roads it is a completely different ball game.



Now it is not just all work and no play here in Rwanda over the last couple of months I have also had some time off to enjoy the sights and sounds of Africa. I have had the opportunity to trek through the rainforest and go on safari in the national park. I have seen, Giraffe, Hippos, Zebra, Monkeys, Baboons, and loads of wild antelope type things. I am extremely lucky to be in such a beautiful country.



Prayer Requests

There is just so much going on at the moment I could probably fill another two pages with prayer requests but the three main areas are:

1. Settling in to my new home in Gitarama – both the practicalities of moving into a new house and also building strong friendships.
2. Help finding all of the market information that is needed to successfully promote business within the rural communities of Rwanda
3. Safety on the roads – both me and the others around me as I get used to driving out here

I trust that this all makes sense and I thank you once again for your interest, support and prayers. It is all really appreciated. If you do want any more specific information please do not hesitate to contact me via email at thomasmacgregor@hotmail.com or by regular mail sent to PO Box 911, Kigali, Rwanda. Also remember to visit my page at www.facebook.com if you would like to see more photographs.

Many thanks,
Tom