

## RWANDAN UPDATE

Tom MacGregor August 2016



Dear Friends,

As some of you may have heard, the biggest piece of news for our little family is that we will be adding a new member to the clan (due date is mid Jan 2017). That is right baby number two is on route. Some of you may remember my joy, fear and worry that accompanied the news of our first child, well I am pleased to announce this time it is just joy. I guess the fear and worry are not there because this is not new ground for me. I guess as for most people, worry and fear take hold of me when something is unknown and I am unsure if I will cope but, once I have experienced the reality everything seems much less daunting. I am sure there will be moments of fear in the future (particularly as we are planning to have the birth in Rwanda, which is an unknown for me) but for now I feel at peace. I guess that is the same for most things in life, when we enter into something new or unknown our mind conjures up the most terrible things but the reality is usually far less terrible than we imagined. I love being a dad and if I had let fear of the unknown stop me doing that I would never have experienced some of the most amazing times in my life.



Despite being a bit sick and extra tired (first trimester) Ritah has continued to grow her business. There has been a steady flow of new orders; new designs and new products (follow her facebook page to see more <https://www.facebook.com/ToddleCare/>). All the selling is done online or from our home at the moment but as we mentioned in the last update, we were on the hunt for the perfect shop location (for a price we could afford). Sadly that proved much trickier than we had originally hoped. However, we are very excited because we think we may have finally found the place! The landlord needs to complete some repairs before Ritah can move in but hopefully that will be completed soon. The shop has a big display area and then a smaller room that will double as an office and sewing workshop. The added bonus is that it is just a 10 minute walk from our house. Praise God.



At Azizi Life, I (Tom) stepped down from being the CEO of the craft business. It has always been the long term plan to hand over each social enterprise we start to local ownership. This marks a big milestone and something that we have been working toward for many years. I am so proud of Jeannine, who takes over as CEO and Sheila who has become the COO, I am excited to see how they chose to grow the business they have been given. I will still be around to help out when they need it, but it has freed up time for me to focus more on the tourism side of our work and also the new areas we are moving into – Adult Literacy & Azizi Life

Gourmet. Photo left to right – Jeannine, Venantie (in charge of Community Development) & Sheila.

The adult literacy got quite delayed as we worked our way through the official government channels. Although we still have some work to do on that, we have managed to secure the materials (for free) that we need to start our pilot program. We have secured funding from a business in the US who will pay for the first year but are waiting for their money to come through. As soon as it does we will recruit the teachers and begin training them. My hope is to open the first class before the end of this year.

Azizi Life Gourmet is just the beginning of an idea that will hopefully become the next Social Enterprise in Rwanda. This business will focus on paying above the market price to rural farmers for local grown produce, that we will then turn into high quality, well packaged food items, such as Chutney, Honey, Coffee and Sauces. We will focus on the gift market and high end consumer. Our hope is that this new business will not only provide more income for the rural farmers but will also support the other non-profit activities we are involved in. This is all just in the planning stages at the moment, but as we are already producing and selling high quality honey I am confident this will become a reality.



Keza continues to grow taller and pick up new skills every day. She can already say many simple sentences (plus songs and can count to 10) and, is very adept at putting words together to make sure she is understood. Her English is still the strongest but she is picking up more and more Rwandan. She also achieved the two footed jump last month, which is something she has been working on for a long time. She now happily bounces around the house. As with all Toddlers who often hang out with other kids, we seem to have been having back to back colds at the moment. It's annoying having a running nose, sore throat and cough but it does not seem to slow Keza down at all. I must admit I wish could harness some of that energy because both Ritah and I seem to be tired a lot of the time.

Our visit to the UK in April seems like a life time ago now, but what a wonderful time it was! Thank you to everyone who let us hang out with them, it was wonderful to catch up. We are sorry to those who we did not manage to get to see, time just seemed to fly past and we were back in Rwanda before we knew it. It will probably be a while before we can get back to the UK again, but if anyone

ever fancies a holiday in Rwanda, we would love to show you around.

It has been very hectic in our house (and will continue to be so) as we helped celebrate Ritah's sister's (Anita) marriage to Frank. As is common here the wedding celebrations are spread over a number of weeks. We have already had the Bridal Shower, Dowry (engagement) and the Civil Ceremony and, then the final Church wedding with reception will be held at the end of the month. As Ritah is the maid of honour (and sister) she has been heavily involved in the planning and execution of each event – the logistics of these things can be quite a challenge but so far everything has gone wonderfully.



### Prayer Requests

1. Please join us in thanking God for his continued provision. In the last update you may remember that we were struggling to make ends meet financially, but whilst in the UK a number of new supporters came on board and also some of the existing ones increased what they kindly give us. Thanks to you all we now have what we need.
2. Please pray for Rwanda - the dry season started early and has lasted much longer than normal. The majority of people here are still subsistence farmers and many are struggling to get enough to eat and water shortage has become a major issue in some places.
3. Please pray for the health of our family, along with the colds, I (Tom) had a recent bout of Amoebas, and in general we are all feeling very tired and run down. Please specifically pray that Ritah and our new baby stay well.

If you do want any more specific information, please do not hesitate to contact me via my email, which is [tom@azizilife.com](mailto:tom@azizilife.com), or by regular mail to my postal address **PO Box 146, Gitarama, Muhanga, Rwanda**. Also remember to visit mine or Azizi Life's or Toddle Cares page on Facebook or our websites ([www.azizilife.com](http://www.azizilife.com) or [www.toddlecare.com](http://www.toddlecare.com)) if you would like to see more photographs and details about the work we are doing.

Many thanks,  
Tom, Ritah & Keza