

# RWANDAN UPDATE

February 2024



Dear Friends,

There is occasion in my line of work where I am required to take a “Moto Taxi.” As the name suggests this is a motorbike taxi and not a car. They are relatively cheap and very convenient but also extremely nerve-racking. You wind in and out of the traffic with a poorly fitting helmet that you struggle to keep on with one hand. (I have little hope the thing would stay on my head if I was to take a tumble), whilst the other hand grips to the back of the bike. My favourite moto drivers are those that opt to go slowly & cautiously but sadly they are few and far between. The majority ride with an unwarranted level of faith in their own ability to dodge and weave out of the jaws of danger. It is on these white-knuckle rides that I get to contemplate my own mortality, my life flashes before my eyes and I am aware of not just the opportunities I took but also of the ones I missed. I am thankful for the wonderful opportunities I have been given and grateful that I did more than I missed. However, I am also spurred on to seize the day and not miss out on what God has for me.

## Azizi Life (crafts & tourism) and Beautiful Creations (Bee Keeping and bee related products)



The work of Azizi life continues to grow and although the export sales were lower in 2023 than they had been in previous years, our “in Rwanda” sales totally made up for it. We were able to provide much needed work for our 700 plus artisan partners. In November we hosted representatives from each group as we reviewed how the year had gone and discussed together how we can improve and become even better in the future.

Not only were we able to host the artisan council in our new building but it has also opened up new areas of community work. This year just before Christmas we ran a children’s Christmas Party, and we ended up with about one hundred kids, mostly from the local neighbourhood.



## Toddle Care

Ritah & the Toddle Care team successfully completed the contract to provide a range of wooden learning toys to over 2,000 schools. Although stressful at times, this was a great learning curve for them and they have used some of the money they got from that project to invest in a beautiful new shop in a better location. The new shop started running in November & so far the sales are excellent. The team is now focused on connecting with more schools and nurseries. They are also working on an environmental upcycling project in partnership with another local furniture manufacture. The plan is to design and make early learning toys from the off cuts of wood from furniture production.

## Azizi Life Impact Projects

In 2023 we taught over 1,200 adults how to read and write taking our total to over 4,300 people since we started this project. The team is keen on expanding and growing the program so that we will have taught over 10,000 by 2025. I think that is a bit of a longshot as we would need to more than double what we do, but I also lacked faith we would break the 1,000 people a year barrier and, so what do I know?



The wonderful guys from Amor Europe ([www.amoreurope.org](http://www.amoreurope.org)) will be back again in April to do the next stage of the children's worker training. Last year we did the first stage with 34 participants from 11 churches and one Mosque. Everyone will be invited back to do the next stage; this is in line with our desire to get more involved in empowering the local churches. We have so many churches in Rwanda doing amazing things, we are keen to support them in their goal to develop and grow. Amor Europe also plan to come out again in May and pilot their Water Filter and Pads programs. This will be the first time Amor Europe have done these projects in Rwanda and we are excited to see the impact this has on our neighbourhood.



### Family

Our girls have both celebrated birthdays over the last few months. Keza 9 in September was Princess themed, and Tona 7 was all about Unicorns.

Ritah's hard work has been recognised as she has just been selected to take part in an international leadership exchange program in the US at the end of the year.

Our family is planning to visit the UK this summer (in July and August 2024) and will be trying to catch up with as many people as possible. If you would like to meet up please drop me an email ([tom@azizilife.com](mailto:tom@azizilife.com)) so I can get something in the Calendar.



## Prayer Requests

1. Please pray for the continued growth and development in all areas of our work in Rwanda.
2. Please pray for our visit to the UK. For all the logistics and, also for our colleagues that will be covering things in Rwanda whilst we are away.
3. Please join us in thanking God for the amazing opportunities he has given us this year and pray that we will make the most of each and everyone.

If you do want any more specific information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or regular mail (**PO Box 146, Gitarama, Muhanga, Rwanda**). Also remember to visit our Facebook pages ([www.facebook.com/azizilife](http://www.facebook.com/azizilife) and [www.facebook.com/toddlecare](http://www.facebook.com/toddlecare)) to see more photographs and details about what we are doing. If you would like support us & our work financially, then you can do that via this Stewardship link - [www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20418419](http://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20418419)

Much Love,  
Tom, Ritah, Keza, Tona and Buster (our Sausage dog)