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## From the Director of Mwangaza, Seelah Kissioki

"I don't know what we'd have done without Mwangaza," exclaimed the Headmaster of Dongabesh Secondary School in Mbulu Diocese.

Such a response is repeated over and over and over again whenever the Mwangaza car drives into a school compound. For we bring hope—hope in government textbooks, in computers, and in our presence as Program Coordinator William Kivuyo and I, along with faithful Mwangaza driver Allen at the wheel, bring Mwangaza to them.



We have installed nearly one hundred computers from the container you sent to us from the United States. Two requirements are necessary before schools can receive them: 1) electricity; and 2) a separate, secured room allocated for computer use only.

The Mwangaza Board of Directors chooses seven schools from among the fifty ELCT secondary schools in the nation to receive Mwangaza's "extra attention"; hence, such schools are referred to as "Focus Schools." They stay within our "focus" for three years, receiving not only additional materials, but also opportunities to participate in additional professional development seminars.

In December, teachers from seven Focus Schools will receive instruction in the use of computers in our Mwangaza Computer Laboratory in Arusha.

The following list reveals our current seven Focus Schools, their dioceses and their United States partners. This list concretely shows the reality of our U.S./TZ partnership—not to mention the many miles we have traveled to visit each of these schools this year: **Bishop Moshi** (Northern Diocese/Nebraska); **Ngeteu** (Diocese of Arusha Region/Northern Illinois); **Tumaini** (Ulanga-Kilombero/Eastern Washington and Idaho); **Aya** (Dodoma/Northwest Ohio); **Iluya** (Northeast/New York Metro); **Kidugala** (South Central/Northeast Pennsylvania); and **Dongabesh** (Mbulu/Southeastern Michigan).

As we plan our HIV/AIDS training for students and teachers from six dioceses in May, we are heartened to know that the Wisconsin AIDS Fund has once again supported our program for 2005. By the end of 2006, we will have completed this critical training in all twenty dioceses. We will then begin a fully integrated HIV/AIDS program which means adding this significant component into our three main programs: Binti-Mama, Mwana-Baba, and Secondary School Teacher Professional Development.

Mwangaza matters! You have made this possible with your steadfast support. Asanteeni!

*Friends of Mwangaza, Inc. strives to keep its constituents abreast of its programs and outreach. Should you wish to be removed from further communications, please inform Treasurer Linda Milton by mail at the address above, or via e-mail at artmilton@msn.com.*

*A Resource Issue Highlighting Binti-Mama, one of Mwangaza's Four Programs*

## Tanzanian Women Prioritize their Challenges; Mwangaza's Binti-Mama Program Responds

*Since its inception, the Binti-Mama program has had an impact on over thirty-five thousand Tanzanian women, ranging from semi-professional and professional women employed in urban settings to women leading traditional lives in village settings. Participants at Binti-Mama Seminars create an ecumenical mix of women coming from Lutheran, Muslim, and other Christian denominations. First, an overview of the role of women in Tanzanian society. On pp. 2-3, find more Binti-Mama details.*

"Tanzanian women are, by and large, an able-bodied yet profoundly disadvantaged sub-class in the second poorest country in the world, a fourth world society below the lowest rung of the third world. By no stretch of the imagination are they developing in a developing country." Strong and telling words from the Center for Development and Research in Copenhagen! "Rural Tanzanian women effectively have little say in the changes now underway in Tanzanian life and are far removed from the social, political, and economic changes transforming the rest of the world."

Eighty percent of the nation's labor force is directly involved in growing crops—and nearly ninety percent of that force is made up of women. In fact, women carry the major responsibility for both subsistence agriculture as well as domestic work. They rise before dawn to fetch water and cook, then walk to the fields for planting, weeding, threshing, harvesting, processing, transporting, and storing. Likewise, they are responsible for gathering firewood, cooking, and child-rearing.

As Tanzania changes from a state-run socialist economy to a liberal, free-market economy, the introduction of capital has also affected women's workload. As more and more land is cultivated, there has been a reduction in the forest cover; as a result, it now takes women longer to collect firewood, and their work on family farm fields may be farther away. Education of children exacerbates some of these problems since it deprives women of the assistance of their older children.

Most women lack access to banks and financial services in their own right; men are seen as the controllers of funds. Women, selling some cash crops for income, produce low returns in relation to their work efforts.

Other challenges abound. Women play a limited role in decision-making, and there is an increase in violence against women.

Traditionally and formally as well, women lack legal rights to land. In a society where men are expected to be the breadwinners, boys are regarded as an asset. Many girls are regarded merely as persons who should get married, with the family benefiting from the dowry paid by the husband's family. Only three percent of the nation's adolescent girls finish secondary school. Factors responsible include adolescent pregnancy, forced early marriage, the socialization that promotes passive female behavior, and the expectation to care for the sick.



With the coming of HIV/AIDS in Tanzania in the early 80's, most young men and women were regarded as an HIV risk-free group. Fearing for themselves, however, many men turned toward schoolgirls for "safe sex." As a result, many adolescents—especially girls—were infected with HIV and are now dying of AIDS-related illnesses. Sixty percent of new HIV infections are occurring among youths between seventeen and nineteen years of age. Gender conflicts arise from differing priorities, cultural norms, and more freedom of speech that resulted from the shift from a one-party to a multiparty political system. While men may want to cultivate more land to earn more cash, women feel they have no time or energy for even more farming. Men have the final say in how money

is spent. Women on average spend almost triple the amount of time on all domestic and agricultural activities. Some documentation exists that shows that the more women worked, the less men did.

During mealtimes, men normally receive the lion's share of food. When meals include meat—a rarity—men become the servers and, as heads of household, they are entitled to have the best choice at meals and more than their fair share when food is short. Women's nutrition issues are closely linked to health issues. As a result, women are at significantly higher risk than men of malnutrition and mortality. Women's understanding of nutrition is critical since it provides for their own health, productivity, and quality of life—as well as the survival and healthy development of their children and other family members who depend on them.

Despite the facts presented thus far, Tanzanian women can not be described as despondent. A majority accept their present roles as subsistence farmers and child-rearers. They remain unaware of the changes wrought in Tanzanian society by population growth, political evolution, and the commercialization of the economy. They are aware of the fact that good land is getting hard to find, that maize yields are falling, that prices are rising faster than incomes and that wealth is being redistributed—but not to them.

For them, the use of a telephone is most rare. They move about the nation on foot. Their circle of acquaintances is small. The lack of books and unavailability of video and television means that they are ill-informed about the outside world.

Responding to these issues, Mwangaza's Binti-Mama program is providing opportunities for women throughout the nation to acquire and apply new information, for in Tanzania, to educate a woman educates a family and builds a nation.

## Another Year of Growth for Mwangaza

### Partnership and Program Offerings Intensify



by Lynda Tidemann  
Minnick,  
Friends of Mwangaza  
Board Member

## You did it!

You enabled Friends of Mwangaza to achieve its 2004 fundraising goal of \$80,000 for Mwangaza's programmatic use in 2005.

Donations from 250 individuals, several congregations and interested groups totaled \$82,178, an increase of \$20,000 over 2003 contributions.

Gifts ranged from \$5 to \$5,000, all gratefully received.

Nearly half of the contributions were first-time gifts, indicating that the news of Mwangaza's important work is

### Include Mwangaza in Your Planned Giving

As you plan a cash gift for Mwangaza, explore additional options for ensuring the long-term sustainability of this vital education program: include Mwangaza in your will or trust agreement, create a charitable gift annuity, make Mwangaza the beneficiary of an insurance policy, sell or transfer stock to Mwangaza.

A number of supporters have either designated memorial funds for Mwangaza or have honored friends or family members by gifting Mwangaza in their names.

For more information on these giving options, contact Lynda Tidemann Minnick at [lyndaminnick@aol.com](mailto:lyndaminnick@aol.com).

spreading. Over half of the contributors have been supporting Mwangaza for two or three years, often in increasing amounts.

Many gifts honored loved ones--for Christmas, anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, and memorials.

Mwangaza is built on a foundation of partnership with many players: the Mwangaza staff, the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, twenty U.S. synods and their Tanzanian companion dioceses, Wisconsin AIDS Foundation, and a host of Mwangaza contributors.

As these resources are gathered together, Mwangaza is able to continue to respond to expanding needs.

In 2005, the Mwangaza staff will present professional development seminars for secondary teachers, train male leaders to facilitate the Father-Son course in six more dioceses, develop Phase IV training of women leaders for the Mother-Daughter program, and expand the integrated HIV-AIDS community education and prevention program.

The essence of Mwangaza Education for Partnership is caught in the Kiswahili word "ujamaa," meaning "familyhood." Ujamaa carvings feature many figures simultaneously lifting heavy loads and leaning on one another.

Together we lift the load of strengthening learning in Tanzania—and our own as well, leaning on one another in confidence and hope.

# Binti-Mama: Making a Difference!

In 1996, Mwangaza's first year of operation had been organized to increase secondary school teachers' professional skills.

Yet concerns began to be raised during seminars regarding the low percentage of girls completing secondary school. Again and again, the issue arose. Mwangaza soon learned that a crisis was at hand.

Chair of the ELCT Women's Desk, Rachel Ramadthani was and continues to be a valuable resource, who, along with other women Diocese leaders, prioritized issues that would make up the content of the program, emphasizing throughout the importance of educating daughters.

Mwangaza responded by piloting a course for women in 1998, upon approval of the diocese

*"I think I made a mistake because I had so many children. I will not want my daughters to do that; raising children now is so expensive! It is important to learn about family planning!" (A Binti-Mama participant)*

General Secretary. Thanks to an anonymous gift of five thousand dollars from a woman in Meru's Milwaukee USA companion ELCA synod, the instruction of twenty women for two weeks in the first phase of what is now known as Binti-Mama began.

There in Meru, the goings-on were most suspicious! A local pastor approached Mwangaza's Dr. Hartwig and Seelah Kissioki, voicing his concern that Mwangaza was making feminists in his parish. Two years later suspicions were gone: that same pastor requested a similar program for men, subsequently called Mwana-Baba (Father-Son)!

Since that time, women from all twenty dioceses of the ELCT have attended all three phases of Binti-Mama training. Phase One focuses on health, women's life cycle, women of the Bible, leadership, and the importance of education for women. Phase Two continues the emphasis on women's health, women of the Bible, leadership, and education for women, while adding the issues of child care and HIV/AIDS. Phase Three

teaches gender mainstreaming which addresses issues of health, HIV/AIDS, and legal issues regarding marriage, land and property.

*Where Women Have No Doctors* provides the text for issues of women's health, a volume of important information yet to be exhausted.

At the same time women are learning new content, they are learning how to teach this new information to others--achieved through the use of problem-posing pictures, small group discussions, dialogues, and plays.

To complete these three phases and to train five women from each diocese has taken five years.



Mwangaza's Binti-Mama Program is indebted to a Hunger Grant from the ELCA which supported this important program for five years.

Binti-Mama participants become trainers when they return to their dioceses. Each woman selected for training has been pre-identified as a leader in her community; as a result, each is responsible to lead no fewer than thirty to forty women in meetings on a regular basis. There, they teach all that they have learned at Mwangaza.

Stories of powerful women in the Bible are used as models during training. Using Esther, Miriam, and others have encouraged women to take a stand, find their voices, and persevere in spite of many obstacles. Tanzanian women related to these women because they new understand that the Jews treated their women much the same as Tanzanian men treat *them*. Until Binti-Mama, such a realization was unclear. Since Tanzanian women don't have time for reading the Bible, Binti-

Mama provided a new opportunity for actual study--and they loved it!

First, participants read the Bible story and fol-

*"The Binti-Mama training we have had just comes into my heart and fills me up!" (A Binti-Mama participant)*

low that by brainstorming issues regarding the strengths and weaknesses, leadership qualities and obstacles of all the characters. Next, they discuss what these women had to do to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others. Role-playing and singing lead to further understandings.

Binti-Mama participants have said that Mwangaza training has empowered them to speak out on important issues. They celebrate new understandings related to women's life cycle, rape, violence against women, family planning and gender awareness.

Resulting from all this, women have noted positive changes within the family, work and equity within the household, as well as legal issues, especially regarding inheritance.

Other women now view Binti-Mama trainers as women knowledgeable on many matters whose counsel is sought.

Trainers continue to seek more information to pass along to others. Issues regarding gender mainstreaming, economics, violence against

*"My father divided land equally between both girls and boys in my family. My brothers thought this was wrong; I felt the same. But when Mwangaza taught us information regarding land issues, I knew I also had rights to claim land." (A Binti-Mama participant)*

women, HIV/AIDS, management and women's rights have come to the forefront in a country where corruption and drug abuse abound.

While the program's Binti-Mama name refers to the special relationship between mothers and daughters, benefits from its training is extended to the whole family.