

February 25, 2009

Jambo and Greetings from Tanzania,

By day 4, we've come to the realization that the children's "enthusiasm" for our being here can be a bit overwhelming. This morning we had our driver sneak us out the back way. We almost made it to the gate before the paparazzi spotted us and came running and screaming. A quick instruction to the driver to "twende, twende!" (roughly translated as, "step on it") and we escaped unharmed. (Don't worry, we'll spend some quality time with them tomorrow)

Today, in a record accomplishment for the Kilimanjaro area, we successfully conducted two meetings before lunch. We met with Mike Mosha the project architect and Theodore Masaui the Ministry of Education Officer for the Kilimanjaro Region.

Architect Mike Mosha drove all the way from Dar es Salam (4~5 hours) to meet with us. After a site walk thru we sat down to discuss the detailed estimates he prepared for completing the ground floor of the guesthouse. His (very) detailed estimates are inline with preliminary estimates and perhaps even a bit lower. On the surprising side, he believes the work to finish the ground floor could be completed in 90 days if funds were available. We would have guessed 6 months, minimum.

Mike also provided us a solid estimate for framing and building the 1st floor superstructure. His advice is that if capital constrained we opt to complete the 1st floor superstructure (framing and addition of the ceiling slab in preparation for roofing) before starting the more detailed finishing work on the ground floor.

He agreed with our suggestion to reroute the entrance drive to further reduce costs.

As it turns out, Nathan did not have to threaten nor bribe the Education Ministry officer (good thing, as the AK-47 lying on the guard's lap looked well oiled). He was a very cordial gentleman and to our surprise not only already knew of our school, but had visited the site. He paid high compliment to the school buildings he saw. He assured us that the access road and kitchen concept we had come up with yesterday would be sufficient.

He informed us that the schedule for reviewing school registration submissions was more flexible than we had originally thought – saying that he and the District officer would review our submissions upon receipt and suggested it would not take long to gain approval. He provided us with an example submission (~15 page document) and suggested we complete and submit as soon as possible.

The search for a suitable headmaster for the school continues to be challenging and one of the most important tasks to be accomplished. It has been suggested (with a knowing smile) by more than one advisor that a Catholic Sister would make the best choice. The

trick is of course how to find one available for the role – a task best left to the men of the cloth.

Tomorrow, as promised, we will be photographing watoto candidates, determining sponsorship and delivering the letters, pictures and gifts sent with us to the children. We've also arranged a meeting with Mama Msuwa, Head Mistress of an English-medium primary school in Moshi. She is a friend to the project and provided us valuable insight into school operating costs when we met with her last year. We'll round out the day with a fact finding trip to Kibosho hospital (further up Kilimanjaro) to review some construction there and meet with our good friend Dr. Alan.

Kwaheri na mpaka kesho,

Stan & Nathan