

Stephen and Angelina Cowan

Location: **Tuum, KENYA**

Mission: **Church-based community development and outreach**

July/August 2024



One of the STEM (Short Term Engagement in Mission) volunteers from FOCUS Kenya (Fellowship of Christian Unions) shares her first impressions; *“Greetings in the name of Jesus. Tuum as an area is unique but good generally only that it is a bit isolated. People are welcoming but I find the way of working and vision very challenging. Customer services are poor basically due to lack of competition and exposure. For my year ahead challenges could include the language barrier, poor and delayed services leading to so many disappointments and poor coordination of errands. Expectations for the year are a significant growth in spirituality especially among the school students, a change in mindset and attitude towards work, education and life generally and female empowerment for the sake of the less regarded girl child”.*

A second STEM volunteer is based in Wuaso Rongei and is continuing the impressive agricultural work started by last year’s volunteer. Much of the produce from the small garden can be used at the monthly seminars and is a visual reminder and encouragement of what can happen when hard work and vision are present.

After a long drive, twenty 4WD vehicles accompanying the safari tour guide operator, *Mara Nomads*, arrived at the SAA compound to pitch camp. Good rain and protection from overgrazing had enabled the growth of thick green grass, and many on the safari commented on the surprising lushness in a semi-desert area. Within the compound, and on small areas outside, the grass has now been cut, the seeds collected, and the stalks tied up into many bales of hay. A newly constructed handcart is being checked out for balance and braking capacity and has proved

very useful to transport the hay to its storage shed. The handcart was commissioned by an older man from a small village at the end of the mountain. He has paid for its materials and construction, and we trust his vision for its use will encourage him and others.

The 11 young people from ‘Generation Impact’ discipleship school have completed their month-long mission experience. They shared their faith, often one to one, in Tuum, Wuaso Rongei and Seren, and saw first-hand some of the challenges of an area still largely controlled by engrained cultural influence. One of the ceremonies that young men must take part in as a rite of passage towards eldership has just finished. Within the local community most hearts and minds have been focused on the 4 days of ritual slaughter and eating of the meat. Some young men who are committed Christians choose not to be involved, a courageous stand which is noted by many.



Prayer Points:

- Pray that Christ’s longing for a deep relationship with every person would continue to be effectively shared by transformed Samburu believers and Kenyan Christians from other parts of the country.
- Pray for ongoing preparations for the August youth camps. A team of 8 (four from Waringstown Presbyterian Church and four from Nairobi churches) will lead the camps.
- Give thanks that Kenyan safari companies continue to avail of the facilities provided by the SAA project. Their business is a small but useful source of income for the project.