



Dear, dear friends,

I have just learned that our latest newsletter will be sent out now (very soon), but the Tiko Christmas party yesterday was so nice, I have to send you a report.

As often, it started with a misunderstanding. I thought that, like always, our party would start at 14.30 hrs. and that the crew would have been given lunch. But no, they had assumed, since it was a Saturday, that we would meet at 12.00, as we had done on December 24, to distribute food, and will do again on December 31<sup>st</sup> to distribute more food. So, we started at 12.00 hrs., with the people looking forward to the one discerning feature of any party at Tiko: a meal at the end, with heaps of Nsima, rice, two vegies and meat.

I always get a chance to say something at our parties, so I reported that 2019 had been a good year – we had had the excitement of research with Oxford University and that with the help of so many of our regular donors – we had been ok, and, especially with Federico's help, we would survive, but that right now we were broke. But, that especially towards the end of the year, we had had such kind visitors, that we would have more help with our PR.

I left out that we had a delay with our newsletter, but that, God be thanked, Lorraine was back to working, in spite of bad pain, and that – with a delay at Katherine's place in London, the letter would be out and hopefully we would get some more help, once people realized we were still there. I also did not refer to the fact that price rises had just been announced for petrol and electricity, (despite all the downloads) And I did – our thinking was right and if nothing else, the crew are growing and eating Moringa now and eat it with legumes. Change of mind-set, hurrah!

So, it was time for a new idea: We had given up on planting the whole land of Tiko, with the cows and the chicken and, in the end, hungry people sharing. But, the rains are hesitating, we are told we can still plant and so I suggested we buy more seeds (worth some \$ 750) to plant all our land and have as much food as we possibly can the next season, with another step forward Have Nsima maize/cassava ap only once a day and another staple, namely sweet potato, for the midday meal. If they then have soya porridge in the morning, their diet would be truly balanced.

Now, if the whole of Tiko is cultivated, even the ten gardeners we have do not suffice, because it will end up with the need to water and water and water again. You may remember that we had tried winter maize, but that failed for the very fact, that the gardeners did not come and complain when the watering was obviously insufficient

I did ask whether people agreed (it was a near general meeting) and most hands came up.

Then the party started and this time it was pre-loved items – second-hand clothes and shoes brought by Jens and his crew, sent regularly by Andreas, brought by new friends, Mandy and Phil, who, just after reading about us, asked what they could bring and more – not to forget Heinke, who gave us extra food boxes among other things. Tigris had sorted everything in heaps, worth 5 K (3 cents), 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35. Five cents were given by Tiko, and any extra were worth half a day of work in the garden. And note, that is not extra work, it is part of their ordinary days. But, once they continue working in the



garden regularly, we will add those five to everybody who turns up. That might make the project work – keep fingers crossed, please.

Now we had a list of random numbers for the crew, and while one after the other could go through the heaps and choose, the group were entertained. One contest was about who could jump the rope most – and Hilda's daughter won and I had one black doll, which she did not let out of her arms any more. But then there was still time left, so, for the first time, we suggested doing charades. The people guessing what the show person was doing. I demonstrated with yoga – (yes, thanks to Tony, we are doing Yoga twice a week and some 20 of us just love it. Tony will try to get us volunteer teachers all the time, ha. He does not work in an Ashram for nothing).

That was delightful – many of the crew volunteered to demonstrate some activity and even the headmen representatives joined in. And the last number was a sketch about Elke, being busy on her PC and asking the visitor to please give her the time to finish her sentence, then the same visitors coming back, her saying that they knew we were broke and there was no money and then a third visit, where they started explaining that the person they had brought, had been left by her husband and needed help. That's when Elke said 'Ok, you go to Edith (who keeps the stores) and get mealie meal'. The crowd just loved it, as I did, but I tell you, they do bring the most desperate people to us! And the crew bring them, nobody tells them that there is not enough to share! I feel so fortunate to be with the people here.



*A bunch of Christmas "gifts"*