



# Watu News

DECEMBER 2021

Now, at the end of 2021, it is 10 years since the first secondary school students – 7 of them – arrived at Shiri. Those 10 years have seen a steady progress towards our goals: a thriving, happy, secondary school of around 200 full time students many of them from financially struggling households, the vast majority of them boarders, a beautiful campus with all essential facilities including spacious classrooms, a junior science laboratory and a fully equipped senior science laboratory, and astonishing examination results at all levels placing WATU Secondary in the top echelons of small schools locally, regionally and even nationally.

But this remarkable journey began several years before those first secondary students arrived. In 2006, a field was purchased with a donation of 4000 dollars. By early 2009 the first building was completed and almost immediately - on 7th February of that year - housed a lively kindergarten which thrives to this day. Three educational conferences for local teachers were held before the secondary school opened definitively in 2012.

Since 2012 more than 450 young people have been educated on WATU Secondary School's campus at Shiri Mgungani and another 79 supported in local schools. 118 have graduated from Form 6, the majority going to university to study subjects as varied as education, engineering, law, medicine and administration whilst others have progressed to vocational colleges or entered full time employment. The impact this education has had on all these students' families, not to mention the wider world, has been impressive, and if we factor in the benefits to the families of all the teachers and ancillary staff as well as those of the many fundis and workers who have been responsible for constructing the buildings over the past 15 years I think we can say quite confidently that the lives of thousands of people have been affected positively.

Josiah Mchome with his dedicated staff, working often in difficult circumstances and under uncertain financial conditions, are responsible for what seems to me to be almost a miracle.

Richard Heery

## The new Senior Science Laboratory

The entirely new senior science laboratory opened its doors to students in July this year. This laboratory is a response to Tanzania's need for doctors, engineers, environmentalists – applied and theoretical scientists of all kinds. WSS has already established itself as highly successful in the humanities and social sciences and, thus, the laboratory enables the school to broaden its curriculum significantly and, thereby, attract and educate more students.

The laboratory, officially approved by the Ministry of Education, is fully equipped with water, electricity and gas, fire extinguishers and smoke detectors and can accommodate 30 students. It is currently being used by 81 young scientists studying for O level and A level Biology and Chemistry. Form 4 students will be taking their public O level examination very soon and we are hoping for excellent results.

Physics is being taught by Mr Alex John in the old junior laboratory, separate labs for each of the sciences being traditional in Tanzania.

Because this is the first year that senior courses in practical Biology and Chemistry have been offered and success has obviously not yet been proven, take-up of these subjects at A level has been not as high as had been hoped. However, student feedback is extremely positive, enthusing lower school pupils, and with expected excellent results next year there is every expectation that numbers at A level will rocket.



**The school is very fortunate to have Mr William Njau teaching biology and Mr Emanuel Kizigha teaching chemistry, both highly respected.**

Mr Njau has been trusted to mark National Examination papers in his subject. He writes enthusiastically about his work at WATU Secondary:

I have been a teacher at WATU Secondary School since 2017. I like the school and expect to work here for many years to come.....I have had the opportunity to attend five seminars all about biology and chemistry preparations and these seminars have helped me a lot. I also have had the privilege to be appointed biology examination marker at both District and National level starting in 2018 and again in 2019 and 2020. I enjoy teaching and my students enjoy learning biology and, so far, more than 60% of the O level students move up to do science combinations at A level (until now these have been in other schools- editor) whilst others get enrolled

in science-based professions such as clinical officers etc. The new science laboratory is a blessing to the school and I expect to see a good number of our students and those from other schools joining WATU Secondary School next year.

The construction and equipping of the science laboratory was made possible through donations from Hannu and Elizabeth Ryoponen who supplied most of the funds for the physical infrastructure of the building and from multiple donors in the UK, Switzerland and America many of whom are themselves scientists. Many thanks from the students of WATU Secondary School.



**Mr. William Njau, teacher of Biology**

## FIRST-CLASS EXAMINATION RESULTS.....AGAIN.

It is particularly impressive that examination results at all stages have been excellent in 2021 because last year, as we all know, was so difficult for both students and teachers. Josiah reports, for instance, how many students were disadvantaged when working from home through not having computers. The absence of face-to-face teaching and individual support required them to be even more determined to succeed than they normally are.

**Huge congratulations are due to all the students and their tireless teachers.**

- **FORM 2: Division One: 16; Division Two: 7; Division Three: 8; Division Four: 2; No failures.**
- **FORM 4: Division One: 11; Division Two: 15; Division Three: 10; Division Four: 5: No failures**
- **FORM 6: Division One: 7; Division Two: 10. Nothing below this.**

As Josiah Mchome reported at the time: these are some of the best results ever recorded by WATU Secondary School students. And below are the students, with Josiah himself, singing to celebrate the end of an exam.





## Letter from Jackson Mgonja

Hello. My name is Jackson Mgonja, former student of WATU Secondary School. I joined the school in 2013 as a private candidate preparing to sit for the Form 4 examination. After doing well in the national O Level exam I was admitted to the A Level programme between 2014 and 2016 with sponsorship from The International School of Geneva. I did my higher education at The University of Dar-es-Salaam and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Education and I am now back at my old school as history teacher and student councillor. One might ask me: "Why did you go back to your former school?" The answer is short. I liked WATU Secondary throughout three years of stay and studying. Relaxed environment, excellent teaching and good care of students. I also welcomed the opportunity I was offered to do things I liked to do such as helping the kitchen staff when they needed it.

WATU Secondary – it's the epicentre of my success and there is nothing better I can do for the school as a symbol of its role towards my achievement but only to work hard for the success of the school and see it grow to be one of the best performing schools in Tanzania.

Thank you for supporting me and for contributing to the development of our country.

## FROM JOSIAH MCHOME:

- The Schools Quality Assurance Department of the Ministry of Education praised the new science laboratory as excellent.
- The government as well as some parents are demanding the construction of a perimeter fence. A generous donation of 5500 Swiss francs from College de Lemman International School in Switzerland has provided half of the funds needed. The safety of students is, of course, a top priority at WATU Secondary
- The TIGO Internet tower: This is not working now because TIGO are demanding \$200/month, "an amount of money that we are not able to afford". Teaching staff are urgently looking into ways and means of finding this money because up to now the ability to access the internet has been essential to our success.
- People's Participation in Education (WATU) has expedited the provision of lunches to many schoolchildren in the Moshi region through the generosity of The Right Foundation.





## In remembrance:

It is with great sorrow that we inform our friends of the passing away of our teaching colleague Limi Sostenes Malimi who passed away on the 20th August 2021 and was laid to rest on the 23rd August 2021.

Limi was our school's English teacher and one of the most hardworking of the teaching staff, who showed a high level of professional maturity, was a great supporter of the school's work targets and showed love and care for the students. She loved the school so much and, on several occasions, spent her private time growing bushes and caring for the plants already in place. She was a friend to her fellow teachers and students and she will be greatly missed.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Josiah Mchome.

Asante Sana



Thank You

## With grateful thanks:

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