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IOP NEWSLETTER DECEMBER- 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Hello there and welcome to yet another Newsletter and the final one for 2024! We sincerely thank you for your time in reading all the newsletters up until this one. IOP has had many activities this year, and we sure believe that the next year will bring many more. Our operations



and diligent work will continue in order to bring our goal to life. That goal being to help break the cycle of poverty for vulnerable and orphan kids by giving them the resources, support, and education to thrive in their future lives. This goal is being supported by you, the readers, who thankfully donate and support our vast

programs.

Thank you so much for supporting our work, and thank you for enabling a positive change here at Ilula. In this Christmas and New Year's Spirit, we ask upon you to reflect on how you can change more lives going into 2025. Whether that be in your own local communities or abroad, like the Ilula Orphanage Program. Children are the future, and the best possible outcome for them should always be tried for. Thank you once again for reading this, and we wish you all the best from us at IOP!

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM BONANZA IN IMAGE VILLAGE

On December 9th, a significant event took place in the villages of the Image Ward, organized by the various groups under Change and the Programs Office, Anti-Drug Abuse Club, Scouts,



and Strengthening Youth Voice. This sports bonanza was part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, an initiative that runs annually from November 25 to December 10. The campaign aims to raise awareness and mobilize action to end violence against women and girls globally.

The primary goal of the bonanza was to continue providing education on sexual violence and its prevention within the community.

There were many activities hosted that day in Image. One category was sports activities where the bonanza featured engaging activities such as football and relay games, attracting a large number of participants from various villages. This not only promoted physical activity but also fostered community spirit. Also, there were performances where youth showcased their creativity through songs, dances, and plays that conveyed important messages related to gender-based violence and other social issues. These performances served as a medium for education and awareness among attendees.

Various critical topics were discussed during the event, including mental health, gender-based violence, the effects of drug use, and reproductive health education. These discussions aimed to educate the community, particularly focusing on the vulnerabilities faced by women and children regarding sexual violence.



Participants had the opportunity to ask questions about pressing social issues, demonstrating a strong community interest in learning about cross-cutting issues affecting their lives.

The event's success highlights the importance of community involvement in addressing gender-based violence and underscores the role of youth in advocating for change. By combining sports with education and cultural expression, this initiative not only entertained but also informed participants about crucial social issues, reinforcing the message that collective action is essential in combating gender-based violence.

GRADUATION PARTIES FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN



Sunflower preschool children

This December was a remarkable month as preschool children from our two schools celebrated their graduation. At Sunflower, 57 students graduated, while Kids Corner saw 33 students complete their preschool journey. The events were filled with joy as the children showcased their talents through singing, dancing, and acting.

During the ceremonies, students were honored with certificates by guests of honor, marking their transition to the next level of education in 2025. The atmosphere was festive, culminating in a delightful cake-cutting ceremony where the graduates' shared slices with their guardians. It was truly a beautiful event, celebrating both achievement and new beginnings.



Kid's Corner preschool children

CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR IOP CENTER CHILDREN

On December 22nd, the children at the orphanage celebrated their Christmas party, beginning with a Sunday service. Afterwards, in the evening, they gathered at the IOP hall for a festive celebration filled with joy and activities.



The party featured a variety of engaging activities, including acting, singing, and a quiz, allowing all the children to participate and showcase their talents. This inclusive atmosphere contributed to the overall delight of the event. Following the activities, some of the children received gifts from their sponsors, ensuring that

they felt cherished during this special time of year. Additionally, volunteers prepared food packages for the children to take home, allowing them to share the festive spirit with their families.

The evening concluded with a wonderful meal shared among the children and their nannies, creating a warm and communal dining experience. The success of this event was made possible by the generous donations from sponsors and volunteers, who provided various items that facilitated the celebration. The gratitude expressed by everyone involved highlighted the importance of



community support in making such events memorable for children in need.

THE IOP STAFF SECRET FRIENDS REVEAL AND CHRISTMAS PARTY



The evening of December 23rd was filled with joy as the IOP staff and volunteers gathered to celebrate their Christmas party. The event commenced with warm Christmas greetings from Bibi Berit and the managing director, who outlined the organization's direction for 2025, detailing the responsibilities each department would undertake in the coming year.

Following the speeches, the atmosphere became festive as all staff members joined in singing the beloved Christmas carol "Silent Night." A highlight of the evening was the gift exchange, where each staff member picked a gift with their name from a table. This thoughtful gesture allowed everyone to discover their Secret Santa, as many friends included personalized cards and heartfelt letters with their gifts.



The occasion was truly beautiful, characterized by the exchange of gifts, hugs, and warm greetings among colleagues, fostering a sense of community and celebration within the organization.

IOP PARTNERS MEETING

The IOP (Ilula Orphan Program) concluded its working year for 2024 with a successful meeting involving various partners to discuss critical issues, including the approval of the budget, work

plans, and strategic plans. This gathering was particularly significant as it focused on the IOP's priorities for 2025, emphasizing the Sustainable and Inclusive Development Project.



During the meeting, stakeholders provided valuable feedback on the 2025 budget and expressed enthusiasm about the project's expansion into two districts in Iringa: Kilolo and Iringa Rural.

This marks a notable increase from the previous initiative, which operated solely in Kilolo. The engagement allowed participants to share insights on IOP's strategic direction for 2025-2029, outlining major plans for the coming four years.

The session proved beneficial for all attendees, as it fostered collaboration among stakeholders and clarified IOP's objectives moving forward. The discussions not only reinforced IOP's commitment to enhancing community development but also highlighted the organization's adaptability in addressing local needs effectively.



YOUNG MOTHERS CHRISTMAS PARTY

On December 24, a heartwarming Christmas party was held for young mothers and their children, marking a special occasion filled with joy and community spirit. The event featured a variety of activities that fostered a festive atmosphere, including singing traditional hymns, engaging in Christmas games, and sharing the joy of cutting a cake together. Music played an essential role in enhancing the celebratory mood, making it a memorable gathering for all attendees.



Throughout the party, greetings and well-wishes were received from project sponsors and the Change team, who have been instrumental in supporting these young mothers. Their presence underscored the importance of community and collaboration in uplifting families during the holiday season.

As the festivities concluded, mothers and their children enjoyed a meal together, which was prepared as part of this significant end-of-year celebration. This gathering not only provided an opportunity for enjoyment but also served as a moment for reflection on their annual progress and achievements over the past year.

A heartfelt expression of gratitude was extended to all donors and sponsors whose generosity made this event possible. Their contributions played a vital role in ensuring that the Christmas party was a resounding success, bringing hope and happiness to these young families as they look forward to 2025.



THE CHANGE PROGRAM - "DECEMBER OF WORK, SEND-OFF AND HOLIDAYS"

Hello dear readers, Andrea and Jan are here to once again share what the Change Program did for the final month of 2024. For us at the program, it was a month filled with a variety of things happening. This included facilitation for a scout camp in Iringa, the wrap-up of the 16 Days of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Image, and the send-off to our Youth Club and Young Mothers and finally, our very own holiday spanning Northern and Eastern Tanzania. Hope you'll enjoy this month as much as we enjoyed it too!

Scout Camp Iringa - Day of Facilitation and Education for the Youth:



In December, we were invited to facilitate talks about topics related to the youth at an annual Scout Camp. This was also in accordance with the 16 Days of Gender-Based Violence weeks that were also ongoing. This was happening close to Iringa Town and was a large scout camp. The ages ranged from as young as 9, up

towards 18.

The topics we decided on were broad but intended to give the scouts an important piece of knowledge from each category. They were about children's rights, their mental health, and reproductive health. By giving a range of topics, we intended for the youth to engage these topics with debate and engagement. They did in fact engage in the topic by asking us several questions afterwards and talking to each other after the facilitation was completed.

We walked away with the notion that the Scouts had been given some knowledge and that they could delve further into the topics on their own and within their Scout Groups.

Image and the Wrap-Up of 16 Days of Gender-Based Violence:

Following the Scout Camp was the day of our wrap-up of 16 Days of GBV. This was to take place in Image, a village further inland from Ilula. Here, the Change Team was asked to come as facilitators. In addition to that role, we were also there to guide the showcasing by our own young mothers and members of the Youth Club.

It became a long and big day as there were football matches, dancing, and an atmosphere where the youth were having fun but also learning about GBV from the facilitation we arranged. The fact that it was a mixed day



made it so that the youth could pick up on our talks and have enough breaks in order to understand and process the information provided.

Bon Voyage and a Happy Holiday Send-Off to the Young Mothers and Youth Club:

Before our departure from Ilula on the 14th of December, we gave both the Young Mothers and Youth Club members our very own Change Send-Off.

We gave them all a day where they could enjoy themselves and not focus on learning something new or changing up their usual activities. Our day had the presence of our very own Santa Claus visiting them, card and decoration making, and small snacks being given to everybody.

What made it truly enjoyable was the open talk over groups and ages. The kids of the Young Mothers talking and playing with others and Young Mothers talking to Youth Club members. Oftentimes, we forget that the age groups of the Young Mothers and Youth Club are very close and similar. Therefore, it was refreshing for both groups to interact with each other as regular, normal human beings rather than people from two separate groups.

The Change Team Holiday Adventure: From Mountains to Lowlands to an Island and Back!

After all our work had been accomplished for the month, we started to embark on our journey across the country. Many of us wanted to see what Tanzania could give us in terms of experiences, and so we planned an itinerary that would show us the North and the East of Tanzania.

Our journey started from Iringa, heading to Arusha. Our first leg would be in one of the most famous and well-known cities in East Africa. Known for its tourism opportunities and a vibrant culture, it would be the great start of our long journey. We met many different people and had a chance to see the local markets and the African Heritage Museum (being one of the biggest museums in East Africa). From Arusha, we also had a day visit to Moshi as well embedded into the program.

After Arusha came Lushoto, an old German town now known for its great and lush scenic locations around it. Our trip there was intended to be an opportunity to get a break from the

cityscape but also visit Lushoto Peacemakers. Both things managed to get fulfilled in Lushoto. Not only did we see stunning sights and spectacles in Lushoto, but we also got a visit to Peacemakers through Yasin, a former Change participant.

From Lushoto, our destination became Dar es Salaam, the largest city in Tanzania. It is seen as the commercial and economical heart of Tanzania, and we got to see that with the number of trucks always visible in the streets. Our trip here was for us to meet our old friends. There were former internship students at IOP and a person we met from our training with Norec back in August. It became a visit of re-linking with friends and having an opportunity to make and share new memories.

Our journey continued to Zanzibar, where the heat and humidity invited us to befriend the ocean at nearly all times. It was a fun experience being on an island with so much history, natural wildlife, and the enjoyment of long, stretching beaches. It became many lazy days there of doing very little and getting a well-deserved rest. We visited Stone Town, did snorkeling and diving, saw turtles and dolphins, and had a wonderful break on the island. After our time was up in Zanzibar, we went back to Dar for a few days before coming back to Ilula once again. We only have a few weeks left of our program in IOP, so we're excited to be back and do the best that we can do!

Final Words:

Thank you so much for reading this and for being with us for the year of 2024. As another year has arrived, we welcome you to another year of updates, changes, and our journey to help out more kids. The pursuit of safe environments and education for kids and youth is a pursuit that is never-ending. So, thank you so much for your continued support, and we truly hope and wish you'll keep supporting such a fundamentally important program. We thank you for your time reading this!



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