



Wednesday March 1st 2006

Stove construction at Idodoma Primary School

When we arrive to Idodoma Primary School at 10.00 PM as agreed, we find that the kitchen still is not ready. There are people working on the kitchen (1 are working and 10 are looking) with the roofing. It is very unsteady and I say that this seems a bit risky, what will happen if it will be windy, probably the roof will go away. They inform that it is just temporary; when the walls are ready (which they not are...) they will have the roofing attached to the walls as well and fixed with wires.



Kitchen is not ready



The School

I ask them why only one man is working on the roof, if they at least have 2 hammers, another man or I myself can assist. They say that this is a complicated building and only the carpenter can do this job! But after further investigations and questions, we are informed that this is not the real carpenter, it is the "second" team as the carpenter are fetching the cement bricks (which also not are in place...). After a while they have found another hammer and now 2 men are working. We are a bit disappointed that the building not are ready and discuss if we should postpone the implementation of a stove at this kitchen and go to next school according to the plan.



Worried and disappointed

We discuss this with the local government and they say that this will only take 2 hours, and we think this is waste of our time as we also do not know when the people will arrive with the cement bricks. At the end we decide to stay until 13.00 hours to find out if all material is in place. If this will be the case, we will construct the stove.

In the meantime the breakfast is ready for the children and also at this school they intend to start serving the oldest children. We immediately inform the School Committee, the Head Master and the local Government that they need to change routine. The youngest children shall always be served first. The reason for this is to secure that the most vulnerable really gets food, as it sometimes happen that they not have prepared food enough to everybody. This can have several reasons; the most common is that they have calculated wrong. For instance, when calculating for CSB, they need 150 grams per student when preparing the food and if they not have counted the children correct that day, some students will be out of food. And it is easier for older students to accept and understand that they need to wait until more food is prepared. But this should not happen; all students shall have food at the same time.



Hungry and waiting for food

We also inform that they need to wash their hands prior to every meal and this is immediately arranged. The children's plates, bowls or buckets, are all dirty and it is obvious that the hygiene is a problem. Soon we have buckets with water enabling the children to wash their hands before the meal.

We find that in this school, they always up to date have used the wrong formula when calculating the needs, which means that some of the youngest children will not be served. Today we have changed the routine so the youngest children are served first, and at the end 54 children have not been served. Some of them finds one of the empty cooking pots and tries to get the last bits and pieces of the soap. The cook is being instructed to prepare more food immediately to ensure that also these children receive a meal.



Trying to get some extra food from the cooking pot

The construction of the kitchen goes slowly and I begin to believe that this will never work out, especially when I see that the tin sheets they have started to put in



position not are in line with the building. I notice them about this and nothing happens, they continue to construct the roof which in the end nearly has no roof at the end of the other corner of the building. Talk about carpenter... During the time the "carpenter" is working, the rest of the people just standing and looking at the others who are working with the roof instead of starting to finish the walls. Also this is noticed and after a long while they start to work with the walls as well. POLEPOLE. You really need to have patience and think of the differences of the cultures.



The collapsed building

It starts to rain (a good proof why the building needs a roof, which we clearly insisted to have) and we are invited to the Head masters house and are being served some meat. At the same time the Head master says that he needs some help. And we ask him of what kind. He informs that he has a pump but no pipes, and he shows us the pump which is completely new, and says that the pump is to be used at the river to pump water to his own farm. We ask him if there isn't something that the SCHOOL needs, as we are really disturb that he only asks for private favours. We thanks him for the meat and goes back to the school kitchen to find out the progress.



Re-using old bricks

After a while the first man arrives on a bicycle with the first load of cement bricks, he has 6 (six only) and we need 100... it takes a very long time until the next arrives, but after some hour all bricks is here ready to be used and the mason from MIGESADO (Peter Msafari) can start constructing the stove. Meanwhile, the people continue to finish the walls and they are now using bricks from an old building which has collapsed earlier. Before they came up with the idea of using these old bricks they only used clay for the walls.

As we always do at all schools, playing with the children, we also do here. We have a skipping rope and it takes a while until they start to use it, but as soon as they have started, everybody wants to join. We also arrange the orchestra to have a parade (all schools have an orchestra), and they start to play and march, but the marching is under no control at all so I am trying to learn them how to march in a good manner, after a while it works and everybody is happy.



Skipping is always fun

The time is running but finally the stove is ready and they can start to build the domestic small stove as well. It is now very late in the afternoon and we can soon leave the village with a new kitchen with one fuel efficient stove as well as a domestic small stove.



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