



Matt & Becki Dillingham in Tanzania

A New Aircraft Arrives

MAF Tanzania recently welcomed a new member of the team – BIL. Named after its registration (5X-BIL), it is a Cessna Caravan, which has been part of MAF's fleet for over 30 years, serving in Uganda and Ethiopia.

Since relocating to Arusha in 2014, MAF Tanzania has been operating two Cessna 206's, which are ideally suited to getting in to the short airstrips in the north of the country. However the 206 can carry a maximum of 5 passengers so it's payload and range restrict who and where MAF can fly. Areas in the south and west of the country have been identified, where the challenges of isolation are even greater, so the addition of a Caravan will open up possibilities to serve these communities too.

Pilot, Roshan said "I feel like the number of seats has always been a challenge since I arrived in the programme, we always take off with maximum load. So, I feel that with the Caravan we'll be able to do that better, to fly more people and cargo. This will definitely be useful".

In the south of Tanzania, an eye doctor is keen to partner with MAF to do clinics in remote areas. By taking fuel by road, it would be possible to use the 206 but he would be limited to just diagnosing the problems. Patients would then need to take a journey of several days to hospital to get treatment, which they would be unlikely to do. But with the Caravan, we will be able to take him, together with his equipment, to the villages to carry out life-changing surgery.

The Caravan will also have a big impact on the monthly safaris that MAF Tanzania currently fly for Haydom Hospital and Malambo Bible College. It will mean that 2 or 3 teams can travel, instead of just one, increasing the number of clinics that can be held each day. Multiple teams means we can do more and go further to reach isolated people.

BIL flew from Uganda to Tanzania in September 2024. Andrew Parker, who previously served in Tanzania, was the pilot and members of the MAF Tanzania team travelled to Dodoma to welcome them. It was an exciting day for everyone who had worked hard to make it happen. Program Manager, Stewart Ayling, summed up his excitement with these words: "This marks a significant milestone for our programme as we look forward to the new ministry opportunities this aircraft will bring." The aircraft is still in Dodoma,

being prepared for service while the paperwork is processed but is expected to be ready to start flying in January 2025.

In the meantime a team of people are working on getting the airstrips ready for the Caravan. They have started on airstrips in the Malambo region, which need to be made longer and given wider turning points. Malambo is the main airstrip, from which equipment, food, water and Bibles are loaded onto the aircraft. This strip has been extended by 200m and rolled flat before the team travelled, with their roller, to work on the next airstrip. Not all strips can be made suitable for the Caravan and flights with smaller payload will be more economical on the 206, so having both aircraft available will have a big impact on our future operations in Tanzania.



(Left) MAF TZ pilots Roshan and Peter welcome pilot Andrew Parker (right) as he arrives in Dodoma with BIL.

(Right) The airstrip development team getting the roller ready to flatten an airstrip

Licence progress

Good progress has been made towards getting Becki's Tanzanian pilot's license. Since our last letter, she has passed her theory exam, to much relief. She went flying with colleague Mark Liprini, to become familiar with the terrain and rules of flying around Arusha and then did a general flight test with an examiner. The rules require it to be done on an aircraft that you've flown within the last 6 months so MAF Tanzania rented a Cessna Caravan from another Tanzanian operator for the flight. The avionics system in this aircraft was different to the one that MAF uses and some procedures were different to those that the examiner was used to. So Becki was given a hard time by the examiner who thought she didn't know what she was doing. Thankfully, Mark was at the airport to accompany her so he was able to confirm that she was following MAF's regulations. It was a challenging flight test but she successfully passed. Everything was submitted to the Tanzanian CAA but in the last few days they added a requirement for her to do another flight test to prove she is capable of instrument flying (even though MAF TZ's aircraft don't have this capability). She will do this in Zanzibar next week, after which her license should finally be issued.

Having Becki certified to fly the Caravan will be very useful when that aircraft comes into service but initially, Becki will focus on flying the Cessna 206. It is likely that she will have to go back to Dar-es-Salaam to sit another exam to add this aircraft to her license but thankfully, the material for this exam is nothing like as extensive as the general theory exam she sat in October.

When her Tanzanian pilot's licence is granted, she will be able to apply for a work permit (which takes about a month to receive) and then a residence permit, which will then allow us to receive our belongings. Our main focus during these last few months was to study Swahili. We have a private tutor who visits our house three times a week and we do self-study in between lessons. MAF have allowed us all to study full-time at the University of Zanzibar for 2 weeks in December, living with a host family. We hope that having intensive tuition and more opportunity to practice with Swahili speakers will be a boost to our efforts to learn the language.



(Left) Swahili lesson with our tutor, Joseph. (Right) Becki after passing her flight test.

A new role for Matt

Last month we all visited a charity called Heshima, that works with local Maasai women to produce fabric products to sell. The women receive training which gives them a skill to earn a living. Heshima also provide schooling to the young children of these women, during the week. On a Saturday they run classes to prepare local children who are about to start secondary school. Schooling switches from Swahili to English at this age so Heshima provide English lessons to help the children adapt to this change.

In the last few years, Heshima have wanted to expand to provide an opportunity for Maasai men too. The idea was to teach carpentry skills and this year they built a workshop on the site. However, the project has not progressed very quickly as there was no-one to get it up and running. Last month, Matt and two directors of Heshima, visited another project in Arusha that has recently set up a carpentry workshop for deaf people, to get some ideas. From January Matt will working with Heshima, starting up the carpentry project, helping to improve the facilities and raising their profile in Tanzania and overseas. For more details about Heshima, see their website:
<https://heshima.org.uk/>



(left) Main building at Heshima, which has a textiles workshop and shop

(right) building which will become the carpentry workshop

Praise

- Becki passed her theory and practical exams.
- Our visas have been renewed to allow us to stay in Tanzania until February, by which time our residence permit should be issued.
- We are making good progress in learning Swahili and we have the opportunity to improve further by studying in Zanzibar this month.
- Matt had productive meetings with the founder and visiting secretary of Heshima and is excited about the opportunity of starting up a carpentry workshop for them.

Prayer

- Becki's license will be issued without too much delay. The final step of adding the Cessna-206 to her license will be straightforward.
- Resident permits will be issued to allow us all to stay in Tanzania.
- We will have a productive and enjoyable time learning Swahili in Zanzibar. Pray that the children's teacher will make their tuition enjoyable and that staying with our host family will be a good experience.
- Pray for the work of MAF and their partners in Tanzania, Chad and around the world. We pray for even more opportunities to bring help, hope and healing to isolated communities.

Bethan's Blog

Habari za leo rafiki? Lots of my friends speak Swahili fluently and I am learning it gradually. I have a lesson once a week after school to help me catch up with the others. Luke and I don't really want to spend 2 weeks having Swahili lessons during our Christmas holiday. Dad has found a place where I can go horse riding in the sea while we're in Zanzibar so I'm looking forward to that. I am enjoying school, especially maths, French and performance even though it takes up a lot of my free time. I've started doing

horse riding lessons every Wednesday. My horse kept bolting back to the stable because he's lazy but he is better behaved now.

A Letter from Luke

The rains have started here, at last. They were supposed to start weeks ago. The plants will be happy and I don't have to water them every day now. I have my own patch in the garden, but I haven't decided what to grow yet. I am enjoying school, I even like swimming now which was the worst thing about school at the beginning. All the children in Primary did a performance of Madagascar this week. I was a monkey and I had to sing and dance. All the parents came to watch last night and our neighbour Jemima, who is 5, came too.

