Day 8

Quote of the Day: Back to Work!

It has been a long workday for the team and the workers. Here is the status of all the work that is going on:

- The cesspit perimeter beam is poured, and lid this weekend,
- All the rooms are tiled, except the pantry,
- The ceiling celotex work is continuing,
- The sanitary line trench is nearly complete, and the plumbing continues,
- All the wire way is installed in the rooms where the tile was complete. There was a long meeting between Lib, Carl, Dr. Yoder, and both Dr. and Mrs. Tupin. They went through the entire five-year plan and prepped a bit for Monday’s board meeting, but it was a little difficult to do so without Abdul Kareem.

There were some issues with the electrical materials (what the hospital team bought and what our team bought), but that is sorted out. I think Ahmed will have to make another run to Bo for materials Monday...maybe.

There is a gasoline shortage throughout SL, and workers are filling up all the jerry cans they have for the generators. One of the cans was for diesel, so I hope they rinsed it out good first.

John put together a prioritized punch list of work to be completed. He prioritized it by - Complete before they leave, and Finish after they leave. The US team and SL team are reviewing and discussing the list based on past experience in SL.

Lib is cutting wire mold with Joe “helping”. Seems like he’s posing just for the picture! Hitting himself in the head??
The cesspit perimeter beam being poured. By the way, the space between the blocks are intentional to allow leakage. That’s how they work, if you don’t have a truck to pump out your septic tank regularly.

Digging the sanitary line trench closer to the cesspit.

West side of the toilet/bathrooms: closing up an old window and showing the new ventilation window installed.
And to wrap up the day, since it’s Friday, John treated all to a beverage at a local Mattru watering hole. Looks like soda cans to me. Way to go John!

That’s it for today. Stay tuned for another update tomorrow after our teleconference with the team.

Day 9
Quote of the Day: How hot is it!?!?!?

It is 90 degrees hotter than Allentown today, hitting 100 degrees a couple times this week. The team was very busy again today on the priority 1 task list items. Two of three bathroom walls are tiled. Plumbing work is making progress. This picture is the North (back) side of the toilet/bath rooms with the water supply and sanitary lines installed. A lot of work.
Cesspit blocks installed above the perimeter beam, last remaining section of celotex installed, skim coating on rough section of block:

The kitchen sink cement fabrication is in progress.
Soffits and siding are still working.

The wiring has been run for all the rooms where the tile was complete. Here is Sally installing the electrical switches for the rooms. She looks professional doesn’t she.
The local UBC Bishop (left) stopped by today to visit.

I also got a couple pictures of the people who the team sees every day. You have seen Patience before, she helps take of our group at the guest house. This time she strikes a pose for us.
And you saw Tamba last week with his new baby. Here he is with his wife and baby looking pretty happy.

Tomorrow is a planned call with the SL team and the US team to coordinate some task items and other needs. There is still a lot of work they want to get done before they leave so Ahmed can finish up. There
is only 6 more days of work for the team before they leave Mattru. Stay with us to see the progress before they leave. Thanks.

Day 10
Quote of the Day: Another Good Day

The team is even more focused now on their work, with looking at only 4 more days of on-site work before they leave Mattru Friday. Here is where there are today with the work.

The tiling of the walls and floors in the toilet/shower rooms was completed.

The underside of the Southwest corner soffit and open area of the house is finished, and the roofing zinc is being finished on the on-call bedroom roof.
The kitchen sinks are ready to be installed, and the sanitary piping from the kitchen sinks is complete. Sally did more wireway in the kitchen and bathroom area.

The cesspit lid and rebar are complete and was poured by the end of the day. The sanitary line route to the cesspit has been dug and all piping laid out.

The west side swale digging began, and the east side was planned out. The holes for the bollards are dug and ready for pouring.
The underroof ceiling on the SE corner was completed. Ahmed was to put PVC material Celotex but used tongue and groove wood planks instead. Why? John asked him about it and he said, “no bought this!” You never know what you’re gonna get sometimes...like Forrest Gump and his box of chocolates. It does look nice though.

Lib and Abdul linked up with Jim Butt on the Zoom conference system and went through the operation of it for Abdul and to help Jim finalize the operation manual for him.

One other item, which was in the plan but not mentioned as yet, is Tamba’s office. Here is the short story. We took Tamba’s office, which is now the 3 toilet/shower rooms, and traded them for making him an office within his existing storage building. That work is complete except for hanging a door and installing the window.

The team finished up their day with a Zoom call with the US team. We reviewed the priority work list to be completed before the team leaves, and the assessment review of our two previous toilet facility projects there. Our team is in good shape, staying hydrated in the heat, well feed, and doing well. They are certainly tired, and ready to come home. We’ll see them next Monday.

That’s all for today. Thanks for following along with me.
Day 11

Quote of the Day: Pressing on with the work.

Tiling: The pantry is complete. The toilet/bathrooms were complete yesterday, so the toilets and sinks were set in two bathrooms today. Notice that the standard method of attachment is to hammer two pipes in the wall and set the sinks on them. I think they bend heavy wire or nails through holes in the sinks and around the pipes. This was done also in the two previous projects here. Makes repairing and replacing easy...they say.

Sally’s Electrical: Another productive day of wiring in the Staff House. All the rough wiring is in, and about 3/4 of the outlets and switches are wired. They located the lighting and outlet fixtures for Tamba’s new office. That wiring will be done later in the week.
Work on the kitchen sink continues. Remember it is a poured concrete sink; two basins and a work area each side. Another African method. It’s not going anywhere.

The 4” waste line to the cesspit is installed, and the trench is filled. They tested the water flow to the cesspit, and it "flows lovely" according to John.

The PVC ceiling of the study room was installed, and the plywood subfloor in the on-call room was installed. This picture was to show Tom his calculations on the seam landing on a joist is correct!
Good training session with the hospital team on the Zoom system in preparation for Wednesday kick off of the information exchange session. It will be mostly an education on medical services in Sierra Leone to orient the Lehigh Valley Hospital Residents.

Also today, we held a Zoom interview session with a DeSales Capstone program team here in the Lehigh Valley and with Karim Abdul, Ahmed, and CHO (Community Health Officer) Mohamed at the Mattru hospital. The Capstone group is helping us improve our social media outreach. One comment from Abdul is the hospital staff is very proud of the remodeling work in the old international house into a new staff house. It has the best-looking roof in Mattru, has PVC ceilings, and very nice bathrooms. Several staff have expressed interest in moving in there already. Those comments directly address what the outcome of this project is supposed to be, and they also make us feel good about what we are doing there.

That’s today’s summary. Thanks for following our progress.

Day 12

Quote of the Day: Looking Good!
Everyone on the team is doing well still and was hard at work today. Carl and John were tallying costs with Tom late this afternoon, so as to be prepared for payment day Thursday. Mrs. Yoder took Lib over to the mental health clinic this morning, not because Lib was going crazy being over there, but actually to do a couple of physicals. Sally went on rounds with Dr. Toupin and the visiting Dr. from Nigeria. Sally also visited the mental health clinic in the afternoon -- she was going crazy! Not really. She handed out some of the stethoscopes they brought to the nurses today, who were very happy to receive them.

The electrical work in the staff housing building is complete, except for the on-call room where work is still ongoing.

The bathroom tiling is complete, and all fixtures installed. The shower is in the corner next to the toilet, but the shower head is not installed yet. Can you believe they actually used white tile this time? You can tell it needs some cleaning. And take a look at the bedroom tile work. It’s not grouted yet, but that’s really beautiful. The other picture is the hallway tile you saw a few days ago. All skirting was installed, and grout put down in.
Work has begun on the west stairwell to the on-call room with the installing the Onduline siding. There will be mosquito screen venting at the top. The blocks for rebuilding the stairs were molded Monday.

And the west side open kitchen stair rebuild started.
All the roof gutters are installed and tested for flow! And speaking of roofs, while John and Ahmed were inspecting the roofing work today, they found a flashing challenge that needed some combo US-African engineering to solve. Can’t say it’s solved just yet, but it’s working.

While all this work was going on, Carl had a nesting instinct urge and began to organize the EWB storeroom where we keep our tools and left-over supplies for the next project. Somebody has got to do it!

That’s it for today. I hope you can see the progress the teams have made here and are getting excited to see the finish pictures. If so, come to our Annual Auction April 5th, 4:00 PM at the DeSales University Center to see it all. Visit EWB-LVP.org

Day 13

Coming down the home stretch, John provided this Quote of the Day:

  Goombajingo, goombajingo, rah rah rah! We’re all a bit goombajingo right now.

I don’t know what Goombajingo means, so let your imagination run with it. Besides the quote, John sent lots of pictures. Here we go.

Plumbing is complete on both the bathrooms and the kitchen sink. The kitchen sink is tiled and is nearly finished. Notice the tile used...seen it before? Check yesterday’s update. Nothing goes to waste here. This is not even close to your custom home kitchen sink, right?!?
The on-call PVC ceiling is installed, and the two on-call window frames are in. The big job of building the west stairs is nearing completion, and a landing at the bottom needs to be built. All of the Onduline is installed on the outside of the on-call room (see yesterday’s picture) and Onduline (since we have some extra) will be installed on the inside to cover up exposed roof zinc. This is the best picture so far of the ceiling PVC installed. Looks nice.
All the electrical in the SH building first floor is complete. The second floor on-call room may be done tomorrow. Also, the grout was installed in all three bathrooms and it looks great. The back wall of the toilets, where holes were made for the plumbing goes through was sealed up with mortar.

The swale for rainwater run off on the west side is nearly complete. This runs all the way and under the stairs coming off the open kitchen area in the back of the picture where the workers are standing.
Tombas office is complete! Remember the staff housing 3 toilets were his office area. John asked him if he was happy with it, and he enthusiastically said Yes! Thanks be to God! He has a fan now.

Not that Ahmed didn’t have enough to do, he also replaced the Admin Toilet (2017 project), sink faucet and installed a new drainpipe.
Carl did the CSS assessment and met with Principal Sengai and maintenance man Ben. And the walkway between the SH house and the storage building was installed.

Sally actually observed a surgery today, and Lib did more IT training. Sally and Lib have talked medical talk all week, according to John, and it was entirely over his and Carl’s heads... anyone surprised about that!

They started a site wide cleanup, which will continue into tomorrow morning, in preparation for the celebration and arrival of the Bo Rotary. The Bo Rotary was in charge of the Rotary grant money we received from Rotary International in conjunction with and support from the Allentown West Rotary Club. Sally mounted the Rotary plaque by the new training room in the Maternity Ward. Remember, that the inaugural Mattru to Lehigh Valley information exchange took place today. I hope to have something in the update tomorrow.
And finally, John takes a break at the end of their day. Apparently, smoking a cigar here is quite the spectacle. John has one left and promised it to Tamba!

That’s a wrap for today. The team has one more big day tomorrow to finish off their list, which appears to be well in hand now. They will pack up tomorrow night and head out Friday to Freetown. They have done a great job!

Thanks for following along. Check back tomorrow, and don’t forget our auction on April 5th at DeSales University.

www.ewb-lvp.org

Day 14

Quote of the Day: New Life!

Sally was observing in the hospital again and watched an emergency C-section. We’re happy to report that mother and baby are well! That is Dr. Toupin’s wife in the picture with the baby.
Well, this was the last day of Team 2’s work in Mattru. Tomorrow they head back to Freetown, will do some shopping for our Auction in April on Saturday, and fly out on Sunday. Lib is our chief negotiator with the local shop merchants and is charge of the buying. She has a reputation with some of the shops from her trip last year. They may close up when they see her coming!

Today was the official turnover day for the house, so the first two hours were spent cleaning up the site, making piles of trash, and disposing of garbage the African way; either piling or burning. The stairs on the west side were finished. The swale on the west side was finished and filled with lava rock from the cesspit excavation. Looks pretty good. They also used some of the lava rock to make a nice rock area on the north west side (a back corner) next to the stairs to disperse water. Carl looks a little puzzled by the rocks; maybe trying to figure out why the lava rocks aren’t black?
They were so into using up the lava rocks they also dug out the existing concrete ground gutter on the east side and used lava rock all the way to the north east corner (the other back corner). The reddish-brown rock makes pretty good decorative stone.
During the morning break, John had a local lady bring some Mattru donuts for the workers. These are not the US style round with a hole in the middle. They are more like Dunkin Donut Munchkins, but more dense. The workers loved them and broke out some music and started dancing.

The old kitchen soak pit was filled in, and the access cover for the cesspit lid was fabricated and installed, and the area around the cesspit filled in. The staff house is behind us in the picture.
The electrical work was completed for the on-call room, and shower curtains were hung in the toilet/shower rooms. The wall portion above the tile will be painted, as will the rest of the house inside and out. The concrete blocks only have a whitewash coat put on prior to final painting. We’re not sure what the wash coat is, but that’s what they do.

The team had a brief celebration at the end of the day which was attended by the construction workers and hospital staff. Though the Bo Rotary Club didn’t make it, they all had a good time. Carl gave a short speech thanking all the Rotary clubs for their grant, and the hospital staff for their cooperation and support. Abdul received the keys from Carl, and after thanking EWB for all our help, he promised to take good care of the house and wants us to come back to do more projects.
And to close out the trip updates, the first information exchange between the Mattru staff and the US side was a success yesterday. The US side have representatives from Lehigh Valley hospital, Cedar Crest College Nursing school, and several of our EWB Chapter members. The information exchange was primarily an orientation to the Mattru hospital, their capabilities, and their medical practices. There is much more to be shared here over the next few years.
Thank you for following along and please remember about our Auction April 5th, DeSales University Center, 4:00 PM. You will hear and see more about this project, and our Dominican Project. Register at http://ewb-lvp.org

Cheers

Day 15

Quote of the Day: Here we go!

Well, you can’t close out a Sierra Leone trip update without commenting on how the trip goes back to Freetown. Yep my friends, they are batting 1000! They made it yesterday and are shopping today in Freetown. But the journey was this.

First Sullay’s car lost brakes because of a brake fluid leak.
Now Joe’s car has brake problem. They left Joe in the shop with his car, they all got in Sullay’s car and finished the trip to Freetown.
The team is shopping today and supposed to have dinner with someone tonight. I didn’t get any pictures of joyous celebration at dinner, but I did get one picture of Sally dress shopping. I don’t think she is bringing that back for the auction!

Tomorrow the team will leave Sierra Leone likely with mixed feelings but will be happy to see their family and friends on Monday when they get home. Thank you again for following along with me and I hope to see you at our annual Auction April 5th.

Clyde