



Pictures of the beginnings of the first Girls Dorm at Madisi
Steve Vinton, September 8, 2007



Friday evening I watched Festo, our student council president here at our school at Madisi, organize a hundred students into two human chains to move hundreds of bricks into place next to the walls to help the builders as the race against time to get our first student dorm built here at Madisi.



Certainly I was thrilled with the work that they did so efficiently in such a short time! This is how we get classrooms and teacher houses and library buildings built quickly and for a fraction of the cost by involving the community and the

students themselves in all of our building programs.

And certainly I was thrilled as I looked at that building that is rising from nothing on that hillside and I feel within me the hope that soon we will have a dorm here at Madisi that will house 48 girls – almost all of whom are orphans and for whom having that dorm to live in will almost certainly increase tremendously the odds that they will finish school.



But what I was really thrilled about was watching Festo as he organized and led those students. As they ended their work and the sun set I got to speak to them, talk again about our conviction that every person should have the right to go to school, our dream that we have of starting schools in villages all across the country, and most of all the reality that we will need not just wonderful teachers to teach students but that we will need leaders -- capable, committed, qualified leaders who will be able to inspire people and organize them and get them involved in volunteering their time and energy to make bricks, and haul stones and sand and water. I watched Festo and it was a thrill to see in him the potential of

being one day one of those we send off to a village to build a new school.



And as he led them back up the hill, I stood

there amongst the bricks that they had carried, and all I could think of was what a horrible waste and tragedy it would have been if we had never built Madisi and Festo had never gotten the chance to go to school.

So my friends, enjoy the pictures of the beginnings of the first Girls Dorm at Madisi. And for those of you who have been giving money to buy the cement and the door frames and the metal roofing, accept our thanks, but also look beyond the building, look even beyond those 48 girls who are going to have a place to live, catch a glimpse that it is here in the building of this dorm that Festo is learning the skills he just might use one day to build a whole school in some little village in a whole other corner of this country.