



Africa Greater Life Mission UK Newsletter

Autumn 2022

Gathering Together Again - At Last

After the long periods when schools were closed, either in total, or in part (because of Covid-19), Joseline and Barry were finally able to arrange a gathering of most of the students “under the wing” of AGLMUK. It happened at Wakiso Town Primary School (WaToPS) and our thanks to the management of the school for facilitating this. The event was over two days and was a mixture of celebration, teaching, and encouragement from some of the AGLMUK “graduates”.



Pictured here is Drake (formally Jude) giving the children some advice that is informed by his long years within the AGLMUK programme. Drake is a gifted musician and works in churches – he has even founded a “mission” organisation which has huge ambitions. See the Spring newsletter for more on Drake.

AGLMUK Trustees at the Next Gathering?

It was March 2020 when the trustees last visited Uganda. It wasn't planned that way, of course, but it turns out that this was just about the last few weeks that were possible prior to lock-downs and travel embargoes. The time now seems right to plan another visit to Wakiso and it is very much hoped that this can coincide with the next "gathering" of the AGLMUK students in late January 2023. With the programme as it now is, with no "village" to visit and maintain, the trustees have decided that this will be very much a "business" trip.

How is the "Wind-down" Going?

As was explained in the Spring newsletter, the intention now is to try to finish what (or perhaps who) we've started. This means that the youngest person on the AGLMUK programme will be progressively older and far fewer children will be taken into the programme than exit it to independence.

At the moment there are 91 young people in the AGLMUK programme, 28 of whom are in primary school. By the end of next year it is anticipated that the number in primary education will have dropped to 23 and the total in the programme reduced to around 80. The total will not have dropped because people have been abandoned or "thrown out" but because they have reached the point of independence (hence the uncertainty in the figure given).

This does not mean, unfortunately, that the costs will reduce proportionally. Primary school fees have approximately doubled over the last year – see later report on the cost of living etc.

Huge Increases in Costs



We are all aware that the cost of living has risen very quickly in the UK through a combination of factors. Although Uganda doesn't use much natural gas (methane) for heating, it has been impacted by the world oil prices. Food prices have suffered a double blow from drought in the Horn of Africa (see last newsletter) and the war in Ukraine. Food represents a hugely high proportion of the expenditure of the average Ugandan family – or even boarding school! WaToPS closed two weeks early last term because there was simply no money left with which to buy food for the children! Food prices have rocketed over recent months and these increases are on top of already high prices. Because the cost of food has risen so much, so, inevitably has wage inflation. So the two biggest costs for a boarding school, teacher salaries and food, have soared – and it was thus inevitable that the school fees would jump too. The impact on AGLMUK is worrying, particularly when our supporters are also being hit with higher costs themselves, but the impact on many Ugandan

families is as stark as the withdrawal of children from school.

In our case the rising costs in Uganda have to be coupled with the drop in value of the pound – your Pounds do not buy as many Ugandan Shillings as they did a few weeks or months ago. Some supporters have asked for the up-to-date costs of primary and secondary education. This will be assessed at the end of the first full year back (after the Covid shut-down) and we'll communicate the figures.



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Trustees:

Jessie Bergstrom

Andy Bull – secretary

Chris Bull – treasurer

Gill Tattersall - chair

Preparing for Christmas



As the retail trade gears itself up to what appears to be an ever lengthening preparation for Christmas – and, of course getting the message out that we can't possibly enjoy ourselves without buying their products in abundance, it may be nice to spend a little time reflecting on how those supported by AGLMUK in Uganda might celebrate. It has been possible over recent years to send extra money to Barry and Joseline so that they can buy something "extra" for those associated with the AGLMUK programme. We are, of course, not talking about turkey, roasties, brussel sprouts with all the trimmings but something that might be better described as "something other than, poshu, beans, rice or matoke" (i.e. the diet for the rest of the year). It is going to be harder this year because of the increased costs but AGLMUK would very much like to be able to do something similar. If you would like to contribute then please get in touch by the end of November. As, in previous years, you are able to purchase "alternative gifts" – a gift for someone in your circle that you think would prefer to see a child in Uganda blessed than receive an object that they don't really want/need. Here is the link to the web site.

https://www.aglmuk.org/?page_id=469

Preparing for January

The children and young people within the programme love to hear from their sponsors. They want to know a bit about you, your family, your church or school, and which Premier League football team you support. The team will take your letters in their hold luggage on the plane and will hand them over personally. It is the intention that as many children and young people as possible will be spoken with individually during the 10 days or so that the team is in Wakiso. Chris will be contacting sponsors with further advice – and a deadline. She will also talk about the opportunity to send pocket money and a very small gift. There is a lot to pack and so it is important that the deadlines are met. Please don't assume that the real deadline is five minutes before the team sets off for the airport!

Other than the things already with the trustees there will be no clothing taken to Uganda on this trip.



Looking Forward to March

It is hoped that the trustees' visit will be during late January and early February 2023. We know that there has never been a feed-back evening after the last trip (because Covid-19 got in the way). It is anticipated that there will be feed-back from the next trip within a few weeks of return. This will probably be in March and held at Holy Trinity Church, Llandrindod. We'll let you know of the date in good time so that you can hopefully keep it free. We will, as always, produce a newsletter in the Spring of 2023 and so there will be lots of catch-up news in there too.