



Africa Greater Life Mission UK Newsletter

Spring 2021

A New Newsletter Layout to Reflect a New Season for AGLMUK



As we had reported several years ago, the trustees had already given notice to AGLM (our Ugandan partners) that we would be gradually withdrawing our direct support for Bulabakulu and Wakiso Children's School of Hope and concentrating on the individuals already within the support programme. Our aim is to see as many of them as possible through to full independence.

As you will know from the last two newsletters, this intention to withdraw was accelerated due to the decision to, at least temporarily, close Wakiso Children's School of Hope. This was not our decision, or choice, but it is where we are and we are now fully in the season of supporting those children and young people already in the AGLMUK programme. Our team of Barry, Joseline (right) and Harriet (left) are doing a great job – as you will learn as you read on!

The Impact of Covid-19 on Education Establishments in Uganda

Schools, colleges and universities have been hugely impacted by the decisions of the Ugandan Government in response to Covid-19. Some learning for universities in particular has been switched to "on-line" but most students are lucky if they have an appropriate smart 'phone let alone a laptop – and then there is the cost of buying "data". We are pleased to report that educational establishments are now starting to get back to work. The schools schedule appears quite complicated at first sight, with different year groups going for a set period before being replaced by another. It might appear complex but it does seem to make sense. Schools in Uganda are almost always incredibly crowded places – especially the boarding schools and so a schedule that only has a proportion of the children there at any one time seems sensible.



A simplified version: The P6, P7, S3, S4, S5 and S6 are now all back and some of the colleges and universities. Primary 4 and 5 start on 6 April. Primary 1,2 and 3 on 7 June. S1 on 12 April and S2 on 31st May.

AGLMUK Trustees Visiting Uganda

You will recall that the trustees had already made the decision not to visit Uganda at the usual time of year in 2021. This was initially because of the possible violence and disruption predicted by many to be associated with the presidential elections in Uganda. As it turned out, of course, we would have been unable to go because of the pandemic (see later note about elections).

There are no firm plans to visit at the time of writing and we will be relying on our trusted colleagues in Uganda to keep everything on an even keel. Chris is in very frequent contact with both Barry and Joseline (as well as many of the older young people) and there are no particular concerns over the inability to visit personally.

Food Distribution and Hardship Fund



As was reported in the Autumn Newsletter Joseline and Barry facilitated parcels of food and soap to many households that are associated with AGLM and/or Bulabakulu in June and September – with the June delivery paid from a grant by the Welsh Government (Wales Africa Programme). The pandemic has made it really difficult for very many people to earn money so, unless they have land of their own, getting enough to eat has been a major issue.

Thanks to an extra burst of generosity from AGLMUK supporters there was a bumper Christmas food distribution. It was really appreciated by recipients, particularly as it contained more than just the basic commodities of the earlier

parcels. It was a really nice surprise and was greeted as such. AGLMUK also provided Barry with a fund from which he could make hardship payments up to a maximum amount. This put quite a bit of responsibility on Barry to make difficult judgments – but we have confidence that he is up to it. We also use the totally trustworthy Joseline to help with any tricky situations.

We received an anonymous donation of £400 recently and this will be added to the hardship fund. Thank you to whoever delivered this through the door at Cefn Prys gau. We would always prefer to be able to thank people more personally and discuss the particular use of such a large donation – and so we just hope that you are reading this and are happy with the way that your money has been used!



Nurse's report

Harriet, who was originally the school nurse, but now is retained to look out for all of the children and young people in the AGLMUK programme, supplies monthly reports. It is usually about who was ill, what treatment they received and where it took place etc. We thought that you might enjoy an extract from her December 2020 report and so here it is; "In the whole year no-one died on our side. The year was not good due to the pandemic period of covid-19 and we feel so touched and sad about it in your country but I request that you stay strong because the Almighty is with us all in this critical situation". She went on to thank us for the Christmas food delivery. From a western perspective we might think it strange to start a health report for a group of children and young people with "no-one died". It is not at all surprising that a health worker from sub-Saharan Africa would start from this position and it is a real testimony to Harriet, AGLM and AGLMUK (and that includes every one of you) that we can say "no-one died" for every one of the 15 or so years that the charity has been operating.



Ugandan Presidential Elections

The original reason for our decision not to visit Uganda in 2021 was the predicted civil unrest in and around the time of the presidential elections. They are held every five years and each time gets a little more fraught. President Museveni is one of the longest-serving presidents in Africa. He and his National Resistance Movement came to power in 1986 at the end of a five-year war, and have led Uganda ever since – he is now 76. His main opponent this time was a young, musical star known popularly as Bobby Wine. He has great support in Kampala and particularly amongst young people. There was violence in the run up to the election and quite a number of protestors were killed by the police but things appear to be relatively stable now – although accusations of voting fraud continue.

Some Messages from Uganda

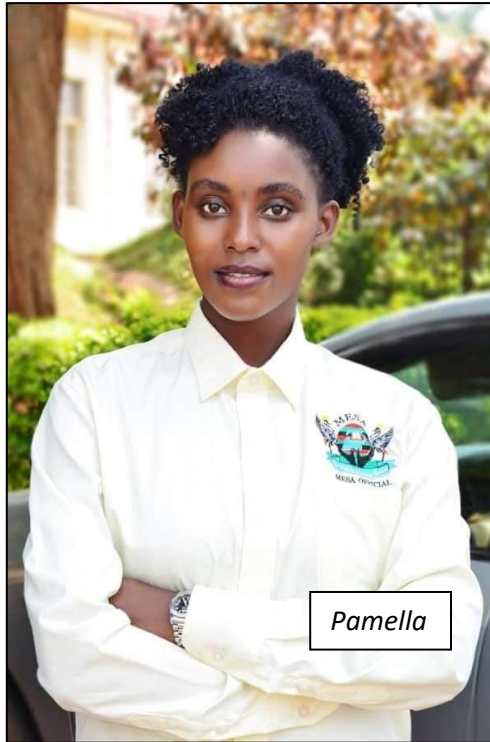


Fatumah

Fatumah – “I am so excited that I am going back to school. When I see most of the people around us, their children have become pregnant – others have become drug addicts and others have become thieves.”

Pamella – “I cannot forget to thank you and pray for you for protection, blessings, provision and life. I have been receiving your financial support all the time for example during lockdown,

Christmas period and also I received rent for this semester studying very hard to succeed and make you proud. I continue with developing my political career and surely now I’m a great leader and politician, my fellow students and lecturers believe in me. And they always continue encourage me to continue speaking for the voiceless.”



Pamella



Queenie with her brothers Benji and Shadrach

Queenie (Elizabeth) –
 “Me and my family – we thank you for all you have done for us. I pray for you in this disease”



Emma

Emma – “I am writing this letter to thank you for everything you have done for me. Always put me in your prayers. I want God to give me wisdom”.

Ruth – “Thank you for standing with me and my family, even in this year of Covid 19. Thank you for the love you have shown me. I will do the same for others when I grow up”.



Joshua



Ruth

Joshua - “ Thank you so much for your support and sponsorship. I am now looking forward to becoming a professional teacher for economics. I can’t wait to start that profession”.



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Joseline Doing What Joseline Does! ❤️



When schools closed there was little choice but to send the supported primary school children back to their families – in some cases this was extended family and not mum and/or dad. It became clear after a while that this was not working for everyone and indeed some had returned to “the street”. Joseline had to use all of her compassion and skill to track down all of the “missing” students and this was an achievement in itself. But then what? We don’t have access to dormitories at Bulabakulu any more and so where were these children going to



stay? Despite only having a very small three roomed house, and two children of their own, Joseline and Jude took two children in, until they could find a room for AGLMUK to rent nearby. When the Government announced that nursery school classes would not be opening anytime soon, Joseline didn’t just grumble about this – she decided that she would organise something in her home for this age group.

Fatuma’s House

Lots of our lovely supporters responded to the article in the Autumn newsletter and we were able to send enough money to Barry to allow him to commission builders to replace the dilapidated house previously occupied by Fatuma’s family. Here is the new one!



and the old one.

Virtual Open Evening

It has been our practice over recent years for those that visited Uganda in late winter to get together at Holy Trinity Church, Llandrindod in the Spring to present their experiences to anyone that turns up. For reasons around the pandemic, this didn’t happen in 2020 but this only became obvious later in year. We were all hoping, if not assuming, that the open evening would be delayed rather than cancelled. When it did become clear that lots of people meeting up anytime soon was not going to happen, Tim volunteered to put together a video of our combined contributions. Here is a link to the film:

https://www.aglmuk.org/?page_id=720

New High School Students



As has been the case in the UK, school exams and the awarding of qualifications has been hugely restructured in Uganda. There will still be students moving from Primary 7 to Senior 1 (S1) – but not at the usual time of year. We know that there are 6 students in the AGLMUK programme that could be eligible (and academically strong enough) to move to secondary school soon. Secondary School is much more expensive than primary and so we can only commit to sending young people to S1 if we have a sponsor or combination of sponsors. If you would be interested in helping please get in touch.