



Africa Greater Life Mission UK Newsletter

Spring 2024

Trustees Visit to Uganda in February



After a break of four years there was a trustees' visit to Wakiso in February of this year. Chris, Jessie and Gill (trustees) were joined by Tim, Toby and Jacqui. The one trustee not to visit was Andy. It was a very productive trip and it was great to catch up with everyone. Read on to find out more and, if you can, attend our open evening on 20th April. *Pictured left to right: Gill, Chris, Jacqui, Toby, Barry and Jessie.*

Inset: Tim (photographer for main picture).

Talking to the Children and Young People by Toby

Meeting all the youngsters is important but also immensely rewarding. It is our chance to review their progress at school or further education, listen to any problems or concerns and to distribute any letters or gifts from their sponsors, as well as enabling them to write a letter back. Barry and Joseline (our Ugandan partners) were on hand to help with translation where necessary and to discuss and develop plans where decisions were needed. We saw most of the students at our hotel sitting outside under a gazebo enjoying the weather but not getting burnt. We did also however pay a visit to Freedom High School where six of the students are studying. It is in a glorious position atop a hill with a wonderful all-round vista. The downside is that it can be cold at night and we were able to distribute warm hand knitted jumpers and sweatshirts which had been donated for this very purpose. We ensured that we could provide several items of clothing to all the students which they are so grateful to receive. Raincoats were also welcomed as the seasons are less predictable and when the rain comes it is unmistakably heavy. The young people (girls and boys) were hankering for football boots which we have previously been able to distribute but unfortunately, we didn't have space to carry this time.



We took some spectacles kindly provided in association with a Llandrindod optician and undertook eye checks on the students. We were relieved that there was only one in need of glasses which we duly kitted him out with.

Girl Power by Gill

During our visit to Wakiso, we met up with all of the children and young people we support. We also had many visits from young people who have previously been supported by AGLMUK. Some of these are now parents themselves and we enjoyed meeting various babies and children they brought along.

Providing education for girls in countries such as Uganda delays the age of birth of their first baby, reduces the overall number of children they have as well as empowering them to make decisions about their future with improved health outcomes for their own children. Being able to at least read and write means that these women are at an advantage to those who never went to school. Some of the mums supported by AGLM have continued their education or vocational training after having a baby.

During this trip we distributed 40 packs of AFRIPads (washable reusable sanitary pads) and 30 pairs of their underwear - plus more we brought with us. We took the girls aside when we met up with them, and ensured they knew how to wash them, provided buckets where necessary and answered any questions. We were impressed that even the primary girls had been taught the biology of the menstrual cycle at school.

AFRIPads was established in 2010 with an aim to overcome challenges that women and girls face whilst on their period. We collected our AFRIPads from their main office in Kampala and later four of us were able to visit the factory in Masaka. The company is impressive with their high quality products being shipped across Africa and beyond (Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Cambodia and Malaysia). The factory was very efficient in its use of resources, used sustainable building methods and provides employment for over 80 local women who also received a meal during their working day with plans to set up childcare on site in the near future. Purchasing a pack of AFRIPads for a year's use will now appear on our list of Alternative Gifts.



Primary Age Children by Tim

This year marked four years since we last visited Wakiso and the children whose education is supported by AGLMUK. Needless to say there were many changes, not least in the children themselves who have grown and moved on in their lives. We were staying in the Tim Tom Annexe Hotel which is about a half hour walk away from the centre of Wakiso – albeit a hot and dusty one. We saw most of the seventeen primary age children over the Tuesday and Wednesday of the first week we were there. The children either walked or were transported by 'Boda-Boda' bikes.

A big change this time, because we were no longer in Bulabakulu village, was that we were able to talk to the children without major interruptions. The hotel was very accommodating and we were able to erect a large tent/gazebo in which to meet the children.



Each child was given the opportunity to talk about how they are getting on in school. We listened as they spoke about their families, their learning, the conditions in their school. They told us about the things they enjoyed in school and the things they were less keen on. They talked about what they enjoy doing – there was a lot of talk of singing and dancing...and football! The children were given the letters/gifts which had been sent by their sponsors and then they were given time to compose letters for us to bring back to the UK.

We also provided all the children with some toiletries and kept them fed and watered while they were with us. Each class in **Crossgates Primary School** had written letters and kindly given books for us to take out to the children. We shared these books and letters with groups of the children. We read each of the books together and then they were able to read them for themselves. The children were then able to respond with their own letters in reply to the



children in Wales. We did some singing with the children to keep them entertained but they then completely outperformed us with their impromptu a cappella hymn-singing! When it

was time for them to return to school we accompanied them on the walk. The children chatted along the way and some of us played 'Eye Spy' as we walked along.

We were also able to visit **Wakiso Town Primary School (WATOPS)** where the primary age children are boarders. The school has changed in the last four years. Uganda had one of the longest school closure periods due to the Covid pandemic and many schools have struggled following that. The school is physically smaller – a lease on some of their buildings was not renewed – and there are fewer children. It is fortunate that we can rely on the wisdom and experience of Joseline in Wakiso to make the best decisions regarding the way forward for the primary age children.

Dealing with Health Issues by Jessie



Following the changes at Bulabakulu, Harriet, the nurse, has had to change how she works. She now has a medicine cupboard at WATOPS and cares for the younger primary age children there or at her home if they are poorly.

For the older children a small office/clinic has been rented near Harriet's house. In this space there are the three clinic beds and the clinic equipment. If any of the older students are unwell they can stay here for treatment. Also in this space there is another cupboard

for medicines – this was made for Harriet by Anthony a joiner who was one of our sponsored young people. He now has a workshop in Wakiso making furniture. Barry uses the office space to meet with the secondary students and to organise and distribute their

'requirements' during the year. All that is needed now is a desk for him to work at and Anthony has been commissioned to make this for him. While we were there we were able to help Harriet restock the medicine cabinets from a local pharmacy.

We also went with Harriet to re-establish links with the government health centre in Wakiso and will encourage Harriet to use this facility for advice when needed.



A Message from Joseline

Joseline has been a key part of AGLM since we first became involved. She was the headteacher of the former primary school and now is key person in looking after the younger students within the programme. She is also running a small school for children in her local area (with no support from AGLMUK) and is very much part of the team (with husband Jude) that leads Praise Arena Church. They have two girls of their own. Following the trip Joseline wrote “It was really great to have the UK team after a period of four years. We really thank God because the trip was very successful and we managed to see almost every child and visited some homes and projects made by our children. We enjoyed every day with them and the children were also very happy.”



The Future of AGLMUK

It was a key part of the message to our Ugandan partners and those being supported that AGLMUK is winding down and that not everyone currently being supported will necessarily be financed right through to the highest level that they might be able to achieve. There are 75 children and young people still in the programme with the youngest being half way through primary school. There will be no more children recruited and the priority will be to get everyone through to O’levels (equivalent to GCSEs). There are already quite a few waiting their turn for college or vocational training and we will take as many as we can through this route. A combination of reduced income in the UK and very much increased costs in Uganda means that difficult choices are likely to be forced upon us. We are still keen to recruit sponsors or receive donations in order to do as good a job as we can.

Feed-Back Evening

7pm Saturday 20th April
Holy Trinity Church, Llandrindod



Registered with Charity Commission for England and Wales

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