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Uganda Update – Spring 2004

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CHANGE FOR GOOD

Partnering with the future of Others

Dear Friends,

We thought we would try and convey a morning in Kabubbu...

The sound of the bolts being pulled back on the metal door on the house next to ours wakes Geraldine who stretches out her hand in the dark to find the torch under the duvet cover to look at her watch. It's 5.45. Geoff is still fast asleep.

She needs to go to the toilet. That means going outside to the pit latrine and she's apprehensive in the dark because of the guard outside the house with his AK-47. Although we pay him to guard us he's probably fast asleep. We're never sure how he may respond if startled.

By now she's walked from the bedroom to the living room and found the matches to light the hurricane lamps and she gently pulls back the metal bolts on the door trying not to make a noise and wake the household. Stepping carefully into the darkness she watches every step for any creature that might be under foot.

Her companion in the toilet is a toad in the corner looking about as sleepy as she feels. Back in the house she goes through to the "bathroom" where she pours about three inches of water from the water carrier into a plastic bowl for her morning wash, remembering at the same time to use only the bottled water to clean her teeth.

By now it's 6.30 and getting light and time to organise breakfast.



But already two local people have arrived at the house. One wants money for medicine for a Granny who is sick and the other comes to bring a letter for a sponsor family in the U.K. These are always welcome – but better later in the day!



Our team of volunteers emerge from their bunk beds to greet the day. The milk, fresh last night, is now sour. The bread dried out. Just as well we bought a few cartons of sterilised milk from one of the three supermarkets recently opened in Kampala.

We chat about the day's work and Geoff's visit to the District Director of Health Services to attempt, again, to get the permit to open the Health Centre. Despite complying with the regulations

we have been unable to acquire this permit and maybe it's time to gently ask him how we should report this lack to the donors back home that have invested in the project. And it's not helping the health needs of Kabubbu either.

Andrew and his team begin discussing how to fix the lintels over the doors of the roundels and wonder if they have successfully communicated the building procedures to the Ugandans learning on the job. Some team members share their experiences of visiting families in the community. We eavesdrop on their conversations. We are reminded of our first vivid impressions of life here and the importance of retaining those impressions to continue telling the Kabubbu story.



It is 7am. The children have already arrived in the school grounds and are busy sweeping up the leaves with their brushes made of dried grasses. We wave to them. They wave and smile at us. It is now 8am. The school bell sounds. They run and stand in line for assembly. Soon the familiar sounds of their singing are heard. Like the bird of peace nesting above a crashing waterfall, their songs are full of hope and faith unaware of, or despite, their

daily circumstances. "Higher, higher, lift up Jesus higher" they sing.

Gill, a volunteer, steps forward to show them some visual aids she's prepared and to tell them a story. They are enraptured by her presentation.

We begin sweeping the house of the constant mud and dust that accumulates. It is time for Geoff to leave in the taxi bus as Joyce arrives to talk with Geraldine about the families they will visit. It is going to be a busy day.

Soon they too are off on a boda-boda (motor scooter) into the bush. It's not too hot yet and the vegetation is lush and fresh from the overnight downpour making the boda-boda ride slippery. They hang on tightly.

Ten minutes later they arrive at the ramshackle mud home of Beatrice, aged 40, and her five sons aged between 4 and 15. The sponsor that supports Beatrice's son Henry (9) has asked for a home study report. Henry is the only child in the family at school. Questions cover health, income, education, home possessions and so on. The walls of the house are collapsing. Beatrice is so poor she has been unable to pay to even have a pit latrine dug. Her only income since her husband died of malaria four years ago is 60 pence a week from selling surplus milk.



The factual questions completed, Geraldine asks the last question that usually brings a smile to the face as happy memories are recalled. "Beatrice, what was the happiest day of your life?" Without hesitation she replies, "There are no happy days ..." and even Geraldine is shocked by her reply.

Visiting Beatrice again in March 2004 we were able to tell her that a donor in the U.K. is providing money for a brick built house with two rooms. We will never forget the amazement on her face on this, possibly, the only happy day in her life.

Off on the boda-boda again, this time to help Stephen plan how he can support his family. Stephen wanted to train in electronics as he did casual work mending radios. He lacked the 'A' levels needed for the course and instead has chosen to learn how to be a boda-boda driver and will, when qualified, receive a boda-boda.

Training people for the future is less dramatic or visual than building buildings. It takes more time for the results to be evident. However it is the only way in which individuals can be empowered to provide for themselves and, in time, help to develop their community. They are eager to learn and to provide for themselves.

Then it's back on the boda-boda to buy samosas for lunch, a local 'convenience' food, as we haven't time to cook over a wood fire. And so our days continue....

Partnering with the future of the Orphans

Facts on Africa and its children include:

- Africa has 37 of the world's poorest 49 countries
- Life expectancy in Uganda is 40 and half the people live on 60p (\$1) a day
- 1,100,000 Ugandan children are orphans, usually as a result of AIDS
- Malaria claims almost double the number of lives each year as AIDS
- Kabubbu Community Primary School opened March 2002 with 60 pupils



- Now 275 orphaned or destitute children are being educated there
- 226 of 275 children are sponsored
- Sponsors come from 6 countries
- 17 sponsors have more than one child in the school
- A London family sponsors 6 children!
- An Eastbourne church sponsors 3 children
- Generous sponsors sent out 210 kg of gifts at Christmas
- 210 kg is 3 large suitcases and 11 large canvas holdalls!
- Your family photo is often the only picture on the wall of their house
- The children now have a health service and medicine available to them

Can underprivileged orphans in dysfunctional families have a future? Dr Pierre Rentchnick of Geneva wrote a feature in a medical journal in November 1975 entitled "Orphans Lead The World". Following research on the lives of leaders who influenced world history he was amazed that 300 of them were orphaned of one or both parents between birth and 18 years of age. The list contained Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Louis XIV, George Washington, Golda Meir, Lenin, Queen Victoria and Eva Peron. We wait to see what the orphans of Kabubbu will become because of your care for them.

Partnering with the future of Social Needs



Five generous sponsors have each kindly donated funds to build a two-room brick house for the families of the children they support. These replace the derelict mud houses they have been living in because they were unable to afford to repair or rebuild their homes. Six more sponsors have each provided around £700 to build other houses. Three sponsors are financing guardians to be trained in work initiatives to support their extended families.

Three sponsors have written the child they support into their Will to ensure the child's education continues in the event of their death. Three donors asked that the money that would have been spent for flowers for the funeral services of a loved one be, instead, used for a project in Kabubbu. The donors chose that their gifts be used for training personnel for the tourism project, for medical equipment, for the provision of a new house for the orphaned child they sponsor and for livestock.

Construction of the Library and Adult Education Centre initiated by a volunteer, Victoria Vassie of British Airways, should be completed in May. She recently received an award of £3,000 from BA for services to the community. The Library of 1,700 books in English and Lugandan will be extended in the new building. The Education Centre includes adult literacy, tailoring and agricultural development as requested by the community. 200 people attend classes every week.

We thank you for your creative ideas, generous donations and welcome other ideas you may have. We can do so little without your generous support.

Partnering with the future of Tourism

10 sponsors have, to date, visited their sponsored child. Their impressions of Kabubbu include: *"I didn't realise how green the countryside is"* and *"They made me feel so welcome and yet they had nothing"* or *"What can I do to help, looking at their home and lifestyle I feel overwhelmed and don't know where to start"*. A Newsletter cannot begin to convey the experience.



A team from Halcyon of Heathfield and some local men built the first roundel to roof height at Christmas. The local men completed the second roundel and the foundations of the other three before we returned in March. Then work began on training in roofing and plumbing and the work will continue in our absence.

The project was introduced to the community in March. This allows time for people to practice their skills in singing, dancing, housekeeping, as tour guides and catering. Later on a practical interview will select some of the guardians for this project as they demonstrate their skills to us. The community still has much personal development work and skills to be learned before visitors arrive. But they are eager to learn.



Partnering with the future of Kabubbu School

"Partnering" is a two way process. One of the joys of this is inspiring and encouraging young people in the U.K. to be involved in understanding the needs of the developing world. In our interactive presentations we often tell the story of the feeding of the 5,000 to illustrate the amazing provision of God for the people in Kabubbu in only four years. This story sometimes has unexpected results

Geraldine was asked to make an interactive presentation on life in Kabubbu to two groups of 25 boys in a senior school. The aim was to inspire and develop the communicating skills of the 50 boys as later they retold the story to the remaining 200 students in their year group. A week later Geraldine returned to meet the 50 boys who gave feedback on fundraising initiatives from the other 200 students.

The school was in a deprived area with six murders in town last year and a known drug problem. 5% of the boys had literacy problems. Local incomes were low.



The boys chose their own fundraising event running and cycling the 4,000 miles from the U.K. to Kabubbu ~ but around the school track! They hoped to raise £200 to provide an additional clean water supply in Kabubbu.

The day after the event a teacher contacted Geraldine, amazed by the response. The total raised maybe £600. A day later, at the final assembly of the 250 students, the total had risen beyond our imagination!

A cheque for £1,703 was presented. Many students spoke to Geraldine about travelling to Uganda or life in Kabubbu. The teacher said one parent arrived at school saying he had never known his son to be so articulate and excited by any project or fundraising opportunity.

Because of the effect on his son he wanted to donate £100.



Thank you, teachers Gavin Ellenger and Simon Caseborn, and the students of William Parker School, Hastings for your amazing efforts. As a postscript, we have just received an e-mail asking Geraldine to visit again as yet more money had been raised!

This is the final year for six pupils in Kabubbu's primary school. We have decided to provide each child with a bicycle to travel the 10km to Grace High School. The next year group of 30 children will need to have secondary education nearer Kabubbu, funds permitting.



Over 40 children recently competed in a local regional athletics event in Gayaza between 10 local schools. They travelled there in an open truck competing for places in the next round of a national schools championship. Six won places to the next round. To get

there they had to walk five miles to compete – and five miles back home. This was the first time our school had taken part and we came third out of the ten schools.

Partnering with the future of the Church

There was great excitement on Sunday 14th March at Kabubbu Church when it held the first baptisms in the new baptistery built through gifts from Frenchgate

Christian Fellowship. More than 220 people from several churches across a wide area were baptised – followed by a traditional feast!

The baptisms followed meetings held in January when some of the guardians chose to become Christians.

We also work with other churches in the area. At Pastor Deborah's church we have been able to donate Bible Study and Sunday School materials.



Partnering with the future of Primary Healthcare

We were relieved, after months of delay, in obtaining the Health Centre permit. It opened on December 1st. A great cheer went up. The news spread quickly and patients arrived. By the second day there were three patients outside the Health Centre before it opened at 9 am and it was busy all day.

Reports on the first month's activities showed that 428 patients attended (about 14 a day). By the second month the numbers had risen to 966 (about 32 a day) and are now in the region of 60 a day. Because all children were being treated free and adults only paying US\$ 1,000 (30p ~ 50¢) they were travelling a great distance to the Health Centre and paying boda-boda fares of US\$ 2,000 (60p ~ \$1) or more to get there! For this reason we are now making a charge of 30p for children and 60p for adults. But all Kabubbu children are treated at no cost.



Unlike the school that is funded through orphan sponsorship, the Health Centre is reliant on a few concerned people in the UK helping us to meet some of the £10,000 running costs each year. We employ four staff. We are hoping that individuals or groups in the U.K. will sponsor a nurses' weekly wage of £20. Sponsors could build relationships with them, encouraging them through writing letters or visiting Kabubbu.

The Nurse-in-Charge is Rose, aged 58, a Registered Midwife and Enrolled Nurse (above). Judith (right) is an Enrolled Midwife in her early 20's and moved south because of the unrest in



north Uganda. Edward is an Enrolled Nurse and AIDS counsellor who is trained in prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Innocent is a newly qualified Registered Nurse who has just been appointed and begins in April.

We have experienced some delays in getting maternity care equipment but this is now on site and we now wait for news of the first arrival!

Dr Mukisa, the District Director of Health Services, is now providing vital support. We have been provided with a gas fridge and selected to be an immunisation centre. This will bring a radical improvement in local healthcare and it establishes a strong partnering with the future of the community.



Jacqueline, who has been mentioned in a previous Newsletter, was badly scarred in a house fire that killed all her family. She is now to have an operation on one of her eyes that she has been unable to close properly since the accident. Later in the summer she will have a second operation on one of her arms as part of the skin of her arm was fused to the skin of her body.

During our stay in March, three children had confirmed cases of typhoid from contaminated water. There were also cases of chicken pox and mumps and three children died of malaria.

Peter, one of the children sponsored in the school, didn't respond to treatment provided at the Health Centre. He was referred to the nearest large clinic for laboratory tests. Grandmother was unable to pay the boda-boda fare or the lab test costs – around £3 (\$5) – and he died of cerebral malaria. His Grandmother was distraught because, for her, Peter provided company and hope in her old age. Laboratory equipment or an ambulance in Kabubbu may have saved his life.



The 48-hour non-stop 'Bike Ride for Uganda' takes place in Hailsham from 9am July 23 – 9am July 25. In 3 years this annual event has raised over £50,000. In 2004 we start our secondary education fund. Can you raise a sponsored team of 4 to cycle on 4 exercise bikes for an hour? We have 48 team slots to fill! If you can sit on a bike and turn the pedals you can make a difference.

Please phone Chris Williams on 07884 050 688 about taking part – Please contact him now!

Without your support all that you read about in this Newsletter could never have happened. You make the difference to so many lives – by giving hope for the future. Thank you.

Geoff & Geraldine Booker © Quicken Trust 2004