

AFRICAN VILLAGE SUPPORT (CIO) 1164318

NEWSLETTER

LATEST UPDATE FROM TWO OF OUR UK TRUSTEES

As with most trips made by UK Trustees our agenda was going to be pretty busy since the last visit made in February by Marie. The weather was also very different with plenty of rain. We had a number of key programmes which we

had to follow up as a priority; Our Education and Irrigation Programmes were top of the list as

well as our programme for the most vulnerable of people and families. We also have a new director on board, Agnes Mukoya whose background has been with the Red Cross. She has worked with AVS since its earliest days and comes with a vast amount of experience and knowledge of the local area.



Since our last newsletter our new Chairman, Paul Gudoi has done a fantastic job in bringing together the team in Uganda whilst working alongside our director to run the AVS programmes.

There is a sense of pride in

the way in which the charity is being run with a high degree of

professionalism.

Looking around the area of Muyembe there are plenty of beans being dried in the morning sunshine which are then rapidly brought in as the rain arrives in the afternoon. We are told that the crops further in land have not been that successful, and with the rains many of the crops were washed away.

WHATS INSIDE...

- Update on our Education Programme with some familiar faces.
- Four new promising students looking for sponsors.
- Read about what's been going on at our Community Centre.
- Update on the Hostel refurbishment phase 2, Irrigation Project & Women's Groups
- AVS house building for some of the most vulnerable.
- Fund raising update.
- Introducing Bungwanyi School to our Education Programme.
- New focus for our Youth Programme.
- AVS coming of age.
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EDUCATION UPDATE

With help from our sponsors in the UK we are putting 52 students through education, most are in senior school. The breakdown is as follows:

Education Level	No. of Students
Primary	6
Secondary	32
University	5
Vocational	9

Senior 4 is effectively the equivalent of GCSE in the UK and we have 17 students at this level, of which seven are secured with sponsorship to go on to 'A' Levels. It's at S.4 that we take a review and assess what each student would benefit from i.e. 'A' Level or on to vocational studies such as nursing, agricultural studies, business administration etc. If you would like to sponsor one of our seventeen S.4 students please contact info@africanvillagesupport.org for more details.

We have also identified four new students for whom we would like to find sponsors. More

details can be found on page 6.

We are so proud of those students who are in University or Vocational College. These students really do come in to their own at this level and work incredibly hard to get the best results. We have two students who will graduate this year from nursing college; Nabulai John and Mutonyi Betty. We are wishing them every success in their final exams. Thank you to Trish Lewis and Elizabeth Webster for sponsoring John and Betty respectively through their education years. Here are some other familiar faces;

Emmanuel Alindi



Felicitas Jane



Nanjele Paul and his daughter



Mutonyi Betty



We have quite a few letters for our sponsors from our students which will be sent out shortly.

Helping the most vulnerable

Exciting news that AVS Uganda has been selected as the district organisation responsible for reporting on Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases throughout the district of Bulambuli and Agnes our Programme Director has been trained to do the reporting. We hope that we don't have much need to report however it is extremely important that those who have been violated or assaulted do know that AVS is a safe place to report the crime.

AVS build new houses

Three new houses for three vulnerable families are under construction by AVS and we are able to report that they will bring shelter and security to the most vulnerable of people.

The assessment criteria for choosing whose needs are most include;

- Health of the individuals in the family
- Shelter (the house)
- Hygiene and sanitation
- Food availability
- Availability of basic necessities like saucepans, plates and beddings etc.
- Clothes
- Evidence of income or any external support



These are some of the houses we are looking to replace.



One of the new structures next to the house that has

been water damaged and will likely collapse with the next heavy rainfall. These small huts would typically support two adults and three or more children and cost £500 each to build.

If you would like more information on how we are helping the most vulnerable please contact

amina@africanvillagesupport.org

Community Centre Activities

For those who have been supporting AVS for some time you will be aware of how proud we are of the Community Centre we have built in the centre of Muyembe. Our main objective was to make this the base for the delivery of many of our projects and the home of our small headquarter's team of staff and volunteers. This centre has gone from strength to strength with a fully kitted out internet café including desktop PC's, Wi-Fi connection, printer and photocopier (when the electricity is available). And whilst you are searching the web or researching your homework you can order a soda from the café or something more substantial like breakfast or lunch.

We have also become the place to go when you need to hire a hall for conferences, training and gatherings. Whilst we were there we hosted a two day event for 200+ teachers from the Bulambuli District. Besides hall hire charges we also provided the catering facilities which are all good income generators for the Community Centre with the aim of becoming self sufficient and providing more facilities for the students and most vulnerable. As you will see from the photo when we are preparing for large events we have to resort to cooking on outside fire pits once more.



This is not only dangerous but also subject to flooding from the rains, fortunately at this event the sun was out but boy was it hot and not helped by a power cut which meant we had to ferry water in. To provide a semi-permanent structure and to build proper safer fire pits and a system for harvesting the rain water we are looking to raise £2,000 which will include a concrete floor and enough pots, pans and crockery to save us from borrowing from our neighbours and staff. If you would like to make a

donation or fundraise for this project we would love to hear from you. Contact info@africanvillagesupport.org



Hostel refurbishment phase 2...

We are forging ahead with our hostel refurbishment and again we have been incredibly fortunate to have successfully raised £10,000 for the next stage which will include building a ceiling in the girls' dormitory. At the moment, the lack of a ceiling creates high temperatures in the dormitory making it almost impossible, if not only extremely uncomfortable, to live and sleep in. Then come the rains it's incredibly noisy and again difficult to live and sleep in. The floor has also begun to wear away creating a lot of dust and debris under foot so we will replace this with tiling. We have also agreed to build a new recreation room which will allow the girls to unwind after school, do homework sitting at a table or even watch a DVD or TV if we can get the equipment cheaply enough. The bathroom

cubicles are not the most hygienic of places so we will also tile these. This will also mean an improvement in drainage and damp and create a much better place to live in.



School visit

One of our long time supporters, Simon Carless, along with Church Stretton Secondary School in Shropshire have been fund raising again to help build a library at Buyaka Parents School. We went to take a look at the progress...



New initiative to our Education Programme...



Student of Bungwanyi Nursery and Primary School

We are delighted to welcome Bungwanyi Nursery and Primary School to join our Education Programme. This nursery already has several sponsors in the UK and with a more structured and formal relationship with AVS Uganda there will be benefits on both sides. We were very impressed with the ethos and overall running of the school by Chairman Rev: Nathan Mayeku and Director: Masela Tom. At school they encourage the children to embrace learning from an early age with emphasis on having supportive parents who believe education is the future. The school has many ambitions and we hope to twin them with a UK nursery and primary school and fund raise for items such as books, furniture, stationary,

construction of another class room etc.

Did you know that the construction of a new class room could be as little at £300 and the purchase of books and stationary £100 for the year? If you have a school that would like to twin and can help fund raise please contact amina@africanvillagesupport.org.



Primary class P.4

Irrigation project update...

We had feedback prior to our return that some of the Women's Groups had not had the best experience with using the foot pumps we had provided. However, when we investigated it was clearly those groups who were not near a local source of water that had had the most difficulty. This had already been predicted so we were not surprised. The groups we

were able to visit were all very positive about the irrigation project, and everyone is looking forward to being able to make use of them come the dry season. We were also able to put our own handy footwork to the test and demonstrated how easy the pumps were to use.

An update meeting with The Farmers Guide who provided the training is underway to explore how we can assist those groups who are not near a local water source and take those who are, to the next stage of their development. What we learned was that they had trained over 500 members and identified that 12 of the 20 groups would benefit from the pumps, being near a natural source of water. Not only did the women receive training on how to use the pumps but also on the quality of seeds, how best to plant, spacing, cultivation and how to grow and store food for their animals during the dry season. Importantly the groups were given training on the importance of rotating crops and the importance of soil quality. Eastern Uganda is very fertile and almost anything can be grown. Thank you to all who have helped with funding.

Searching for new student sponsors

Student details	Notes	Education costs per year	Hostel per year
Nelima Catherine Start date: Feb 2018 Senior 2	Father has died, comes from a family of 7 children, Catherine is bright and came 2/88 in her class and is in SN.1 at Muyembe High. As she is so bright we should consider putting her into our hostel to give her the best chance of continuing to do well as she is being pushed to look after the rest of the family. Without the father the mother can no longer afford fees.	£180 or £15 per month.	£107 or £9 per month.
Nanjele Eric Start date: Feb 2018 Senior 1	Enthusiastic and considerate young boy who despite not having any hands (burnt off by step-mother) he is learning well and could potentially be a good student if he can continue. Comes to the community centre most weeks to be around other people.	£120 or £10 per month.	
Wamimbi Francis Start date: Feb 2018 Senior 1	Francis is blind, his mother has died and he has gone to live in Kampala where his father is working. He is very bright and it would be good to bring him back to Muyembe for him to be closer with the rest of his family. Nearest blind school is Madela which we would need to visit and assess.	£435 or £37 per month.	Need to visit school
Shamida Wasagali Start date: Feb 2018 Senior 1	No father, lived with stepfather who assaulted a neighbour's daughter and is now in prison. The mother has mental issues. Shamida is very bright and was best in the district of Bulambuli and was highly recommended by her head teacher for sponsorship. We would need find sponsor for education and boarding as there are 6 children in the family and she would end up supporting the mother. Shamida will go in to SN.1 next year.	£120 or £10 per month.	£107 or £9 per month.

It is widely known the benefit of higher education accrues to individual students and their families. Average earnings increase measurably with higher levels of education. Over their working lives, typical college graduates earn about 73 percent more than typical high school graduates. More educated people are less likely to be unemployed and less likely to live in poverty. Contact amina@africanvillagesupport.org for more details on how you can help make a difference to a student.



New focus for our Youth Programme...

Our youth programme has stalled over the past six months due to the fact that there is plenty on offer for male youths but less so for females. With the Executive Board in Uganda we had a brainstorming session to look at how we can change this and improve what we have on offer to all genders. One of the ideas we explored was holding weekend workshops that could include learning skills such as hairdressing, carpentry, catering/cooking classes, tailoring, craft making etc. We will look to hire a tutor who could put together a syllabus for us that we could run over several weekends and engage with local tradespeople to volunteer their time. We would also include an opportunity to learn more about health, hygiene, personal safety, the importance of protecting against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and more.

AVS Uganda comes of age

We have been working with the Ugandan Ministry of Internal Affairs on matters of what type of organisation we are. Currently we are registered as a Community Based Organisation (CBO) however as AVS Uganda receives income and support from an overseas organisation we need to change our status to become an NGO or specifically International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO): An INGO having its original incorporation in and partially or wholly controlled by citizens of one or more countries other than the Partner States forming the east African Community, but operating in Uganda under a certificate of registration. We hope this is more of a

registration process rather than a long drawn out time consuming admin nightmare.

Women's Groups

We are pleased to say some of our groups go from strength to strength. One of the groups have just purchased their 9th cow which they rear for milk and have had a good crop so far of cabbages, tomatoes, maize and beans in one acre of land. Any excess is sold on, adding funds to their savings. Their goal is to provide a cow for each member, of which there are 30, with five new babies born in the last 12 months and many members with 3-6 children already there certainly are plenty of mouths to feed!

We are planning to have a newsletter dedicated to our Women's Groups and our Vulnerable Programme in the new year. Both these programmes are significant enough to warrant some detailed news as we now have 20 Women's Groups and have identified up to 50 vulnerable families that need our support. What we are increasingly seeing is that these groups are now taking responsibility for some of the vulnerable people and families within their direct community and will share some maize to help feed them and also notify AVS if there is anyone in particular immediate danger through malnutrition or illness.



FUND RAISING UPDATE

It has been a good year for fundraising which was started by an approach from Holy Trinity Church in Prestwood, Buckinghamshire who have nominated AVS as their focused charity to support. Already we have had various opportunities to work with members of the congregation to fund raise for our Irrigation Project and Mama Bag contents and distribution. We have also made great use of the church and the excellent facilities to hold our annual fund raising BBQ there. During our visit we were able to get an update on both projects and delivery baby clothes for over 120 expectant mothers.

Besides the clothes we took out, Holy Trinity Church collected so many baby clothes that they held an auction at their Harvest Festival service held at Wren Davis Farm which raised cash for transportation, which will be on its way by the time you read this. Thank you Lucy Fenton for organising this.



St Peter and St Paul's Church of Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire also joined our campaign to raise funds for the Irrigation Project and again we had an amazing contribution which allowed us to buy essential pumps, hoses and tools for a number of the Women's groups.

We also had two UK supporters enter the Ugandan Marathon, Rob Green one of our Trustees and Louise How. Between them and with Giff Aid we hope to exceed donations of £4,000. This was also

an opportunity for Rob to visit Muyembe with his wife Jennifer to meet the team and visit some of our projects.

Christmas will soon be upon us and we hope you will give the people of Muyembe. If you are

looking for an unusual and sustainable gift for your friends or family then we may just have the answer. Visit our Just Giving page for more details.

Message from Marie...

What a year for AVS! What a lot has been achieved by your efforts!

As Amina has written, we are being ably assisted in this by the renewed vigour and focus of the new leaders of the team in Uganda whose familiarity with phones, internet and spreadsheets aids our ability to communicate much more easily. Who would have imagined twenty years ago, with the nearest landline phone to Muyembe situated over twenty kms away that the day would come when we would sit in our living rooms and talk to the team via Skype!?

I would just like to mention two special people in this note.

First, our great friend in Muyembe, Jesca, who has been with us every step of the way since I first walked onto her compound in 1999.

In the past two years she has lost another son and daughter as well as two grandchildren of 15 and 18 years, but though 84 and now dependent on remaining family members, she stays concerned for the people who don't have such support and like us, is committed to our desire to continue to help make things better for them.

Second, Amina who has moved into the driving seat and has taken on the major work load of running AVS. It hasn't been an easy task for her as she's having to extricate from my head loads of information about our supporters and our beneficiaries but she is getting there very quickly and has become a much respected and valued visitor to the villages.

I'm sure that you will continue to give your generous support to Amina and to all of the trustees as we carry on with our work of helping these most vulnerable people in eastern Uganda.

When the people in Uganda say to me, 'Please don't get tired', they are offering their prayers to the whole of the AVS community.

So, I pass it on, please don't get tired and remember what a difference you are making.

Thank you!