

Spring 2004

FOAG Newsletter

FOAG Newsletter- Spring 2004 (Issue 33)

"We received a very warm welcome wherever we went. All the projects visited were extremely appreciative of the help FOAG give. Our philosophy of giving and not dictating how money is spent or seeking to control, seems to be a good one. Also, the closeness of their relationship with us and the speed with which we react when the need arises." *FOAG committee member John Cowie returning from a private visit to Uganda in April.*

John and his daughter Amy were able to visit several FOAG projects one of which was the **New Hope Children's Home**, Luwero, four miles from Kiwoko Hospital. FOAG purchased a forge which is now housed in a workshop in which fabricated frames for water towers and ploughs are produced. They were also able to meet Mulu whom FOAG is funding as a replacement agricultural manager and they found him to be an impressive man with a positive attitude, enthusiasm and commitment for the home.

Kiwoko Nurse Training at Kiwoko Hospital

The total number of nurse trainees at Kiwoko is 34 of which 12 are FOAG sponsored. These nurse trainees are asked to work two to three years at Kiwoko after completing their training. John was able to meet Beatrice and Victoria, Principal Nurse Tutors and Immaculate (currently training to be a Nurse Tutor courtesy of FOAG) and Sarah, Annette and Georgina who are clinical instructors. John reports that there was a good and friendly atmosphere and that the nurse trainees were working well under the capable leadership of Victoria.

Guludenne Home for the mentally retarded children run, by Patti Squire currently has 42 children attending the school in Mengo and 20 boarding at Guludenne. Demand is such that Patti would like to put a second storey on the present school building at Mengo. This would house a Children's Rehabilitation Clinic where an Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist would be based. FOAG is hoping to help her to obtain the services of a suitable local architect to look at the feasibility of this project.

Masindi Centre for the Handicapped

It is now nearly 20 years since FOAG first became involved with the Masindi Centre. When we first came across the Centre, it was a small school of about 20 children operating out of a rented council room. Through the hard work of staff and local people, the Centre has developed to become a highly regarded school for children with a variety of handicaps. There are now about 110 boarding pupils at the school and children are given an appropriate education according to their strengths. An important part of the school is the vocational department which aims to give all the pupils practical skills which they can take home; as the time approaches for pupils to leave the school and return home, visits are made to the home to help

with resettlement and to see how the child can contribute to the family's income. The School Management Committee are now discussing the future direction of the vocational department in the school and how it can be expanded to make a financial contribution to the school.

FOAG continues to support the wages of the support staff and provide some incentive payments to the main teaching staff. Water for cooking and hygiene has always been an issue and FOAG has helped construct water tanks to harvest the rainwater from the school roofs. There has still not been enough water and £15,000 was raised by Rotary District 1100 to construct two underground storage tanks; one 100 cu.m. tank has been constructed and the collecting gutters fitted in time for the rainy season; a second tank is under construction. Nearby Kinyara Sugar Works are carrying out the construction and the Rotary Club of Masindi are assisting with the administration.

A further Rotary involvement at Masindi is with the Stourbridge Club. It may seem ironical to some but computers are part of life in Uganda, and teaching some of the pupils computer skills would be giving them a valuable skill. The electricity which is now installed with Rotary, FOAG and other's help is enabling new ventures to be considered. Stourbridge Rotary have recently sent out 15 computers, with printers and spare parts, for the school. A technician will be going out to assist with setting them up and helping with their use in the school administration and vocational department.

We are hoping that Eseri Kaija and Monica Kunihiro, the Head and Deputy Head of the Centre will be able to come to England for a short time in the summer. Camilla Ford, the last VSO supported by FOAG at Masindi, worked closely with Eseri and Monica.

Butiru Cheshire Home

Sister Clare Kasedde is a regular correspondent with FOAG through her six monthly reports about the work at the home. This enables FOAG to help with specific requests and to know where FOAG funds are being used. For example since December, donated funds have been used for operations, wheelchairs, epilepsy drugs and the purchase of a welding machine which is needed in the workshop to make callipers, crutches, standing frames and C.P. chairs.

Sister writes. "We thank all donors, friends and well wishers for all the support they gave to the home during the period of six months and we continue appealing for your continuous support to enable us to help the needy children & physically disabled."

The work of the home is becoming well known in the region. The outreach workers have been able to move deep into the mountains to remote villages. "The attitude towards disabled people has changed positively and the majority of the parents and guardians of the physically disabled children are happy with the programme." How does it work?

The outreach workers have held 21 assessment clinics in the remote areas, the clients are then referred to the home for further assessment. Together with a further 25 assessment clinics held at Butiru a total of 486 clients were assessed out of which 324 clients were admitted and cared for. Just to give an example, 45 clients were operated upon at Kumi Hospital and Mbale Regional Hospital; of these 108 were fitted with appliances. Disabilities range from club feet, polio, cleft palates, visual impairment, epilepsy, burns, malnutrition, osteomyelitis, cerebral palsy and TB. The Sisters also organize follow up appointments, physiotherapy, schooling and vocational training for clients.

At the end of her report Sister Kasedde wrote these words to all FOAG supporters. "Many thanks for your untiring support and may the good Lord reward you a hundred fold. Wishing you God's Blessings".

Budaka Cheshire Home

For the first three months of this year, Sr. Leah reports that 28 children had operations in Kumi or Mbale, 14 received appliances and 40 have been staying at the Home for treatment. They have supplied 3 schools with 50 sweaters each, still using the machine they already had. Two more knitting machines should reach them in June. The farm is doing well with two pigs producing 15 piglets each. They also have 12 turkeys and 8 chickens now. 30 wooden beds with rexim covered mattresses have been purchased and 15 old beds repaired with the money raised by Elmbridge PCC for this purpose. They are most grateful for this and all other help received, including the new tyres for the motorcycle used for the outreach project. The next project will be putting up water tanks and guttering to save as much rain water as possible to augment the inadequate borehole.

Kumi Hospital

Kumi Hospital has recently completed the installation of solar lighting in 3 wards with help from FOAG and Nailsea Rotary Club. This facilitates work with children and maternity cases together with emergency operations at times when no other power is available.

£6,700 was raised towards further work with the essential water supply in last years appeal

This money has been transferred to the hospital to carry on with enhancing the conservation of fresh and safe water.

Nurse training is continuing with the help of Kiwoko Hospital and essential work to support refugees who have been made homeless continues through the Nutrition Unit.

The manufacture of limbs in the workshops together with the care of leprosy patients and the support of orphans in the Children's Village is an ongoing part of the hospital's work.

Support for patient carers is an essential part of the responsibility and places a difficult burden on the hygiene of the wards.

This hospital which carries great responsibility for the welfare of a large population in the province of Teso needs much help and encouragement for its outstanding humanitarian work for the needy and deprived of this poor region of the world.

Namalu Agricultural Extension Project, Eastern Uganda

Giuliano Consoli continues with this outstanding agro-forestry work in the region of Karamoja which is in the North East of Uganda near to the Kenya border.

These people are traditionally nomadic herdsmen who live on the edge of hunger and poverty.

The scheme approaches the welfare of the area in helping to promote the cultivation of the land and the growing of crops. This work is carried out with the help of local farmers who are used as co-ordinators and promote the work by example and workshops on their own holdings.

The work is ongoing and is enthusiastically supported by FOAG, with the purchase of tools, seeds, and teaching facilities for the group.

Teso Oxen Re-stocking Programme (TORP)

In June of last year peace in Teso was shattered by attacks from the Lords Resistance Army, a longstanding rebel movement who had previously confined their activities to the north and west of Gulu.

All the villages supported by TORP - Orungo, Otuboi/Amoru, Olwelai, Katine, Apapai and Aparisa were directly affected and on two occasions we have since visited some of the villagers who have been living in Displaced Persons camps close to Soroti.

Around 70% of the oxen/ploughs supplied had been repaid for before the troubles started. Obviously this has come to a halt and merely surviving has become the only issue for most people in the area. Sadly, many families have suffered loss.

Nevertheless John Echeru is determined that the Scheme will continue. We share his belief, together with Leo Dijkman (auditor) and Simon Otim (book-keeper) that evil will not prevail and have agreed to forward 2000 to start a new scheme in the village of Awoja, just south of Soroti as an interim measure. At the earliest opportunity we shall review the situation in the affected villages.

MTCEA (Multi-Purpose Training and Community Empowerment Association), Iganga

This project teaches literacy through agricultural improvement in four sub-counties of Iganga District. It reaches a large number of villagers who form their own groups, each with a chairman. The co-ordinator Peter Owor has his salary paid by FOAG. The project has set up demonstration plots with improved crop varieties which are also available through MTCEA to the members.

Abwobwotoi Women's Group

FOAG is in regular contact with Cornelia Okwi who is a primary teacher trainer by profession but who helped to found the Abwobwotoi Woman's Group for widows like herself who wanted to give their children secondary education which has to be paid for - primary education is free in Uganda. The Group raises chickens to produce eggs which are then sold for cash. At present Cornelia has 230 ten-week old chickens. FOAG has been able to support this enterprising group of women through the purchase of chickens and recent funds have enabled them to re-roof the house in which the chickens are housed in Bukedea.

Margaret Tarran

With the death of Margaret Tarran FOAG has lost one its most active associate members. She and her husband Rob joined us in the early days whilst they were still farming just outside Worcester. Always present at fundraising events she allowed us, on several occasions, to benefit from her gifted artistic talents. Her funeral service at Upton Snodsbury Parish Church was a moving experience and FOAG was privileged to be there. She will be sadly missed and we send our sympathy to Rob and his family.