

# Amani UK Newsletter

UK Charity No. 1073357

Autumn 2019

## From the Coordinator

The Amani UK trustees and advisers meet twice a year. Our meeting early in each summer is when we carry out the formal duties of running a charity such as the approval of the previous year's accounts. We then have the opportunity to discuss the many areas of work which we support in Western Kenya. On November 2nd we held the second meeting of the year and this was an opportunity to discuss matters in more depth and discuss longer term plans for Amani UK.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our trustees and advisers for their steadfast support and service to Amani UK and to the people of Kenya. If you would like to know who all these trustees and advisers are, please go to "Who We Are" on our re-launched website (address below).

One thing is virtually certain: whilst we do the essential planning for the future, we cannot predict what will happen in Kenya. In the last Spring newsletter I voiced my concern about the possibility of another crop failure due to the lack of rain. Thankfully, as soon as the newsletter was published the rains returned and persisted long enough to produce an excellent harvest. The current rainy season also started late but it has been raining so much that if it continues, the crops could suffer from too much rain!

There has been a significant unpredictable event affecting the organisation in Kenya since the last newsletter which is covered later. You may notice less content from Kenya in this issue but this is intentional as we update you on recent events and where we see Amani UK moving forward in the future. Our desire is to grow our support of the community groups, Keep a Girl in School, the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic, school links and last but by no means least, our support of local businesses and employment through our relationship with Trade Relief.

Website: [www.amaniuk.org.uk](http://www.amaniuk.org.uk)

Facebook: search for 'Amani UK'



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## Community Groups are our Focus

A real success story in 2019 has been the increase in the number of community groups Amani UK is supporting through our sister organisation in Kenya, the Upendo Foundation. In the last 12 months fourteen new groups have been affiliated into the development programme and we are now funding the support of 49 groups. The intention is to support each group for around 10 years during which time they will be equipped and trained to become self-sustaining and to be able to help meet one another's needs from within the group. This is a much more effective way for us to provide long term support for the poor and disadvantaged people in Kenya—better than if we were just providing aid.



This approach requires a degree of discipline on our part and on the part of teams who visit Kenya because our natural inclination is to want to provide support for the individuals we meet. However we only meet a tiny percentage of the people who need support and so in the long term it is much more effective to support a community group rather than an individual or a family. As an example, we could affiliate a new group consisting of over 50 people into the programme for the same cost as building a house for a family of 5 people. Our trustees and advisers have recognised this and we have issued a new Orphan and Family Support Policy (available on request) asking our supporters to adopt this longer term view.

**Grace Alande—a member of the Paipai (Paw Paw) group which was affiliated to Kirongo earlier this year—standing by the group's paw paw trees which were also planted earlier this year.**

## About Amani UK

The origins of Amani UK go back to 1986, when a project was established by Elizabeth Feilden to bring relief to the poor of rural Kenya. Through the late 1990s awareness of HIV/AIDS grew and the devastating impact on families and communities became a reality. By the year 2000 widows and orphans were forming into community groups to cope better with the consequences. Amani UK made itself part of this changing environment by reshaping the central project focus into one of guiding and directing the community groups into membership of Projects through which Amani UK is able to channel resources and expertise.

Amani UK funds the Upendo Foundation which is one of the 2 projects we are associated with in Kenya. Upendo is a Kenyan Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). Upendo delivers support in the area around the town of Oyugis, W. Kenya and funds are channelled through Upendo to Kirongo which is a community based organisation approx. 15km from Oyugis. Amani UK is a UK registered charity no. 1073357 and operates on a totally voluntary basis with the trustees meeting ALL expenses. Overheads are nil and 100% of money donated goes to help the people of Kenya.

See the front page for how to contact Amani UK by phone or email or alternatively write to us at:

Amani UK, 14 Maxwell Drive,  
Hazlemere, Bucks HP15 7BX, UK

## Managers, Staff & Resources are Key



When a charity mentions “running costs” or “overheads” people often picture the charity’s expensive UK offices, salaries, publicity etc. We have none of these because we ensure all our donations reach the people in Kenya. However, there are all sorts of running costs in Kenya which are essential in delivering the community support and providing the on-going support for orphans and families, Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS), the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic, school links etc. Upendo (and Kirongo) employ managers and staff to train and monitor the community groups as well as carrying out all the work associated with delivering the wide range of support we fund. This means that salaries need to be paid and because the groups are spread over a very wide area, motorbikes are needed to be able to access these remote areas. Groups need to be equipped in order to grow and although the Buy a Gift for Kenya scheme is fantastic in providing some of this support, it is not enough to support 49 groups. Funds therefore need to be found to provide basic farming equipment, seeds, fertiliser etc. Occasionally Amani UK has been successful in applying for grants to help with these costs but the costs are mostly met by using a small percentage of donations and any gift aid we can reclaim for donations.

Even so, meeting all these costs is a major challenge and we would ask everyone who would like to support Amani UK to consider giving to our general fund so that we can meet the ever growing but essential running costs in Kenya.

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**Wycliffe—a new member of the Kirongo field staff**

## Making hard decisions—stopping our support of Imani CDO

During the summer I attended a Charity Commission conference in London. The conference covered a number of subjects, one of which was the steps charities working in third world countries need to take in order to ensure that funds they donate are used properly. It was encouraging to know that Amani UK performs excellently in this area. We get regular reports from Kenya, pictures of projects which are being funded, letters from individuals who are benefitting from the help we give and we also make regular visits to Kenya to see the work which is being carried out. Strict financial controls are in place and we also make a special visit each year to check, amongst other things, that the accounts are in order.

The trusting relationship we have with the staff and project organisations is also very important and so it was very disappointing during the summer to discover that the Imani Community Development Organisation had taken a course of action completely contrary to their agreements with Amani UK and the Upendo Foundation. Imani were given the opportunity to turn back from the direction they had embarked on but they refused to do so and instead stated that they were not happy with their relationship with Amani UK and Upendo. I cannot go into further detail at this stage except to say that after consultation with other trustees I decided that under these circumstances Amani UK could no longer provide support for Imani. Therefore, with regret, after many years of working with them we stopped our support on July 4th.

Our main concern in this difficult situation was to ensure that the people and organisations previously supported through Imani should not suffer, not to mention the staff who were not involved in this situation. Consequently I am happy to report that all but two of the ex-Imani groups requested that we should carry on supporting them and we are now doing so directly through Upendo. All the Imani staff except the manager Kennedy Obongo have also transferred and are now working under Upendo’s direct control. Support of the schools through the school links and KaGiS programmes is continuing and I am happy to say that there is now a new positivity and enthusiasm amongst the staff.

**Peter Fish**

## Vegetables that bought goats for the Sikri Faith group



The Sikri Faith (Kogwang') women's group was formed in February 2018 as a community social welfare group with total household membership of 18, led by one man and 17 women. Sikri is the area where the group is located and they added "Faith" to their name because they really believe in their plans to grow as a group. The group later applied to join the Upendo Foundation in order to receive development help and was accepted. Three quarters of the ladies are old ladies but still strong, energetic and they are eager to work. They showed a positive response to working hand in hand with Upendo, they were then trained and later provided with vegetable seeds to start off during the second annual season of planting. One member donated a piece of land and they planted carrots, kales (spinach & sukuma wiki) and capsicum. Using the good agronomic practice training they had received from Upendo they



managed to work in the farm well and attained a good harvest. They sold the produce and raised 5000/= (£39), saving 4000/= and using 1000/= to buy more seeds to plant the same vegetable varieties they had before. From this second harvest they were able to raise 6000/= (£46), they saved 5000/= and yet again bought some seeds with the 1000/= . At this time, because the group had shown their commitment to "growing together", Upendo also provided them with more vegetable seeds and herbicides. This group worked tirelessly in the farm despite various challenges and they did not give up. After this latest harvest they were able to produce more and raised 7500/= (£58) which they saved and by August 2019 the group had raised a total of 16500/= (£127) and they used 15000/= to buy three goats for three members. The goats were officially presented to the members by the Amani UK coordinator during his October trip. This motivates the group to work smarter to raise more money out of vegetable produce for all of the members to have goats. The future plan for the group is to get more land to work to raise a large sum of money to buy a dairy cow to generate



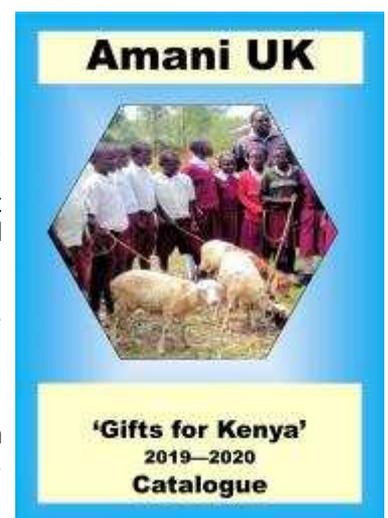
income for them since they have a ready market in the nearby technical training institute and private primary school which need to have a steady supply of what the group is able to produce. They also wish to establish a poultry farm once they are financially stable.

**Written by Winnie,  
Upendo staff**

## The 2019/20 BaG Catalogue—Out Now!

The new Buy a Gift (BaG) for Kenya catalogue has now been released and the BaG website which can be accessed via "www.amaniuk.org.uk" or direct via "www.amaniukgifts.org.uk" has been updated. There are new gifts this year and we have increased the number of the more affordable gifts so that there is a gift available for everyone to give. Please remember, if you request a thank you card we can send it to you or direct to the recipient of the gift.

As mentioned in the article on page 2 of this newsletter, many of the gifts in the catalogue are an essential resource for equipping the community groups and helping them become sustainable. The Sikri Faith story above is just one of many such stories of how a gift has a long-lasting impact. Other gifts will make a difference to the lives of individual widows and orphans or to the 20 Kenyan schools with which we have active links. So, please be generous this Christmas (and throughout the year!) and make a big difference in Kenya.



## Food Security

It is another good season for farmers and residents in the Oyugis area of Homabay County as they are experiencing good rains mainly in the afternoon and sunshine in the morning hours which is really good for crops and livestock feeds. Households are getting clean drinking water from roof catchment.

The food situation is generally good and there are plenty of green groceries in the market and a pack of 2kg of maize flour sells for Ksh 100-110 (£0.77-£0.85) which is affordable to the majority. There is also plenty of dried cassava chips and sorghum in the open market.



Multiplication of cassava (above picture) and sweet potatoes slowed down at the beginning of the year due to drought but now it's improved and, to improve food security, we expect the new groups that were affiliated to Upendo this year to receive planting materials next year during the 1<sup>st</sup> rainy season.

Food security continues to increase due to improved storage facilities, the previous bumper harvest, good agronomic practices and adequate rains .



Written by Priscila,  
Upendo staff

## Working Together for the Kinda Ber Water Project

A small team of people within Amani UK is always looking for sources of funds from charities and institutions which support charities like us which actually deliver support. In late Spring the team came across an opportunity to apply for one of Ecclesiastical's Movement for Good £1000 awards. One of the requirements of a successful application was for the charity's supporters to register their support on line.



Thanks to your amazing networking, especially via Facebook, in mid-June Ecclesiastical confirmed that we had been successful. The full story of the project is on Facebook but during the October visit the spring was in constant use supplying a good flow of clean water. The challenge now is to find funding for many more spring renovation projects and the digging of new wells.

## The Amani UK Website is Re-launched

The new Amani UK website was launched last month. The software used for the old website was obsolete and so the new website has been built using a completely different software platform. It now has a much more modern look and the content is simpler. The new website links to the BaG website and also to the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic website.

BT MyDonate, which was one of the ways supporters could donate to Amani UK, also stopped operating during the summer and so this has now been replaced with Give.net and incorporated in the website.



The websites also contain our giving and our privacy policies to ensure that all visitors are clear about how their donations and data are used.

Our next task is to redo the Upendo Foundation website as the existing one uses the same obsolete software which is struggling to function properly. Please keep up to date with what is going on via the Amani UK and Upendo websites and the Amani UK Facebook page.