

Amani UK Newsletter

UK Charity No. 1073357

Spring 2020

From the Coordinator

It would be difficult not to mention the COVID-19 pandemic in this message or later on in the newsletter. At the time of writing in early May the pandemic is still having a devastating impact around the world. In the UK we are still in lockdown and hoping for a gradual easing of the restrictions during the course of the month. In Kenya they also have stringent travel restrictions and a night-time curfew. According to the statistics the Kenyans are doing an amazing job in controlling the spread of the virus but there is an ever-present fear that if it takes hold in the country, the poorest people—the people we support—would be the most badly affected.

Whilst we are concerned about the immediate and terrible effects of the virus, it is



Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic staff unpacking a COVID-19 PPE delivery

unlikely that any of us can accurately predict the economic consequences. We are bracing ourselves for a rough ride in the years ahead and Kenya will be no different because, like many other countries, Kenya has taken out international loans to help them get through the economic consequences of the measures they have had to take to mitigate the effects of the virus.

This is where you, our supporters, are key. Your continued, faithful support is amazing and all the trustees of Amani UK would like to thank you for this. Last year's accounts will not be officially approved until the trustees' "virtual" annual meeting on June 6th (which is followed immediately by one of our bi-annual trustees meetings where we discuss operational matters in more detail). However, because of a few extraordinarily generous donations at the end of the year, our financial situation changed from "concerning" to "satisfactory". Over the last few years the Amani UK team have been working hard to optimise our financial controls here in the UK and also to ensure that there is the best possible transparency and control of how the money we send to Kenya is spent. This optimisation exercise is virtually finished but, in order to support the work we do in the long term it is clear that we need to increase our regular income. So, please see below for details of the appeal we are launching.



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Amani UK Funding Appeal

Charities in general have rarely experienced the current funding pressures. As we have stated many times, we are blessed by the wonderful support we receive. Amani UK is now also much more active in seeking external funding and we have had a number of successes. This funding tends to be for specific projects and does not contribute to the main running costs of Upendo and Kirongo—the staff salaries.

It is difficult to express how vital the Kenyan staff are. They are the people with the expertise to train groups on what they need to do to become self-sustaining. It is the field staff who measure and monitor the progress of the groups as well as looking after many other areas we support such as KaGiS, the schools links and orphan / family support. The staff salaries are funded by a few supporters who give directly for this purpose but also by the Gift Aid we reclaim on your behalf and by a small levy we apply to gifts made for specific purposes, where the staff have to be used to deliver this specific support. Some salary support is also received from the work Upendo carries out on behalf of Trade Relief.

It should also be stated that the staff at the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic are supported directly by the funds raised by Jan Rayner. The Kenyan Health Authority also

requires a fully qualified nurse, who has now been working since the start of the year, to work alongside the nurse-aid and lab technician.

For the last few years Kenyan inflation has been running at a level of 5-10% and because the staff are not particularly well paid it has been important to maintain their salaries in line with inflation.

We have now reached a crossroads where we are asking you to consider:

- Are you willing and able to increase your level of giving by 10% to help us meet the staff costs?
- Do you have friends and family who might be willing to start making a monthly contribution to help Amani UK maintain and expand the work we support in Kenya?
- Would you consider leaving a legacy to Amani UK?

We appreciate that many people might think that this is the worst time to make this appeal but it is also a time when many of us have gained a new perspective on the frailty of our own lives—a situation experienced daily by the people we support.

Please give this some thought and contact us using the details above if you are able to help.

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) and delivers support in the area around the town of Oyugis, W. Kenya. 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,
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seeds, fertilizer for planting and top dressing, polythene tubes for tree seedlings and poultry.

At the beginning of March at the onset of the long rains the field staff mobilized the groups who ploughed on time and planted their seeds at the onset of the rains. Some 12 groups planted maize and beans, 4 groups planted assorted vegetables, 2 groups tree seedlings, 2 groups beekeeping and 5 groups planted ground nuts on a fairly large scale.

Community Group Expansions

The Upendo and Kirongo projects currently work with a total of 43 community groups, 14 of which were recruited in 2019 after graduating some of the mature groups which could stand on their own and are able to nurture the new upcoming groups. Over the years, groups are evaluated annually to ascertain their levels of sustainability and the ability to be independent. The group rating exercise assesses the groups in all the 5 sectors of health, education, food security, water and sanitation and shelter and a final analysis report shows the groups that are mature and able to walk on their own - hence the graduation. This then allows new aspiring groups to be recruited and to benefit from the projects.



Each of the responsible staff held meetings with the new groups to discuss what their activities were and set a roadmap for working with the projects. Each group presented their plans and what they needed the projects to support them with in order to develop. An AGM meeting was then held of all the Upendo groups who presented their 2020 proposals with guidance from the field

staff. They came up with several ideas so that the field staff could set priorities with each group. Kirongo had already carried out a similar exercise towards the end of 2019 and by the end of the year Amani UK had funded the supply of farm inputs. At the beginning of 2020 Amani UK set aside additional funds to jumpstart the expansions of some of the Upendo group activities with the aim of improving the food security situation among the groups and individual households. This will subsequently increase their income levels for reinvestment and future sustainability.

Among the activities identified by the groups were poultry, beekeeping, cereals, horticulture and tree planting. The funds received from Amani UK were used to purchase the inputs e.g. maize, groundnuts, beans, vegetable & amaranth



Written by Leonard Odongo – Program Manager.

News in brief

The 2019 **Buy a Gift** donations exceeded the previous year for the first time in a long time. Thank you to all our generous donors.

In March this year the **Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic** looked forward to welcoming its first medical elective students. The two final year medical students planned to spend a month in Malawi followed by a month at Kirongo but unfortunately, when in Malawi, had to return to the UK due to COVID-19.

As you will understand, all **trips to Kenya** have been suspended indefinitely. We will resume them as soon as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice allows us to do so and we deem it safe. Hopefully trips will resume some time during 2021.

Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS) moves from strength to strength. More girls in existing schools are being supported and new schools will be taken on. Support will re-start once the schools in Kenya are allowed to resume.

The **COVID-19 restrictions** in Kenya have had many consequences for the people we support. Orphans, who would normally have received meals at schools have been going hungry because the schools are closed. We have therefore supplied some food aid for them. Also, many poor families cannot afford soap even for the basic measures to minimise the spread of the virus. We have now distributed soap for those most in need and the field staff have communicated how hands need to be washed thoroughly.

Janie Hopwood — Back to Oyugis at last..after 12¹/₂ years!

I was last in Oyugis in July 2007 as a novice leader on Pastor Derek's team of 22 wonderful and boisterous young people. It was my first visit to Oyugis so I was a novice to the project in every respect. Overwhelming would be a mild description of the experience! Every day was filled with challenging, deeply impacting and frequently terribly distressing situations – so many people with literally nothing to sustain them, no food, no livelihood, no viable home, little or no family, and no prospects of anything changing or improving their circumstances. To us, change seemed unreachable; there was so much to be done!



A typical home, still needing its final external rendering

and hear the girls' grateful thanks for all that KAGIS has been able to do to change the lives of so many, enabling them to attend and succeed at school, restoring their self-esteem, giving them confidence, and opening to them the chance of fulfilling their dreams and aspirations—humbling and rewarding.



No textbooks?....Improvise!

But every day was also amazingly filled with equally challenging and deeply impacting testimony to the very real presence of God in the lives of those precious people we met. The outreach team working with such love and care seemed to have no doubts that with God of course change is possible; and even the poorest and most vulnerable out in the community believed so joyfully and faithfully in God's love and ability to answer prayers that when we were asked to pray, we found boldness rising up, and began to believe in the reality of what God could do to spread hope and healing in and around Oyugis.

So, all these years later.... How incredibly exciting to return and to see what God has done and how he has used all the fundraising, and especially the fabulous and gifted Upendo teams. So much has changed! So many orphans and widows provided for; so many initiatives and projects functioning successfully; so many community groups working well together, sharing resources and beginning to experience fruitfulness to their efforts; so many girls doing so well in school; several schools better equipped; and a fabulous medical clinic at Kirongo!

Particularly for me, it was such a privilege to speak at several schools, with Winnie and Seline,



One of the school assemblies we addressed the Upendo teams.

I was overwhelmed during this visit too - there is so much wonderful evidence of the unrelenting hard work and sacrificial generosity of

Also, so much evidence of the incredibly generous giving - money, time and talents - of all those who have supported all aspects of AmaniUK whether just once or over many years. There's still so much work to do, but such an encouragement to us all to keep supporting and keep praying! As Seline said to me, "We praise God in advance!"

The Vital Role of the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic

Apart from being ready to look after patients affected by the Corona virus, the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic has been expanding its role in supporting the health of Kirongo's local community. **Bernard Ouma, Kirongo Manager** writes:

On 11th February 2020 the clinic partnered with the Kenyan charity God Will Provide to hold a medical camp that was attended by a team of 85 doctors, nurses, dentists, physiotherapists, pharmacists and other medical personnel from the USA. There were also ordained leaders providing spiritual guidance and counselling as well as members of the local community providing language translation.

The whole day was organised with precision from 8.30 am when the medical staff arrived until late in the evening. A total of 528 patients were treated of which 128 used the clinic laboratory services and 35 patients were referred to other hospitals for advanced treatments. 100 patients received free one-year National Healthcare Insurance Fund cover and every patient was given a packet of maize flour.

The medical camp enabled the less privileged and vulnerable people to receive medical attention. It allowed the community to realise that most people are not just sick as a result of infections but also due to hunger. Patients also received spiritual nourishment which showed that God is the provider of everything. Thus the community should embrace prayer. The number of patients visiting the clinic has significantly increased since the medical camp and clients' trust in the staff and the clinic's services has been enhanced. The staff are now following up community members with various illnesses.

Kachieng' Secondary School Kitchen Project

Leonard Odongo, Programme Manager writes: Kachieng' Secondary School was established 15 years ago by the local community and is now a state-run school. Facilities have been improved over the years and numbers have steadily increased. The introduction of the policy that all primary school children can now transfer to secondary school has increased numbers drastically and put added pressure on the limited facilities.

The school kitchen has consisted of a roof on top of a dilapidated mud-walled house and students have had to take their meals sheltering under. At the beginning of this year the school raised an appeal for the construction of a fairly modern kitchen with a dining hall section for the students.

Beaconsfield High School which is linked to Kachieng' gave the first donation to start the foundation which has been now been completed. The school also raised some funds locally to start the wall and currently the work has stopped because all the available funds have been exhausted. Beaconsfield have indicated their willingness to provide further support to help complete the structure and Kachieng' school are also seeking for donations from the community to fund this project.

Over the last few years Beaconsfield have been able to support Kachieng' with the construction of a security house, girls' and boys' games kits, playing equipment, laboratory equipment, tablets for e learning etc. This has greatly enhanced education at Kachieng' and has put Kachieng' a notch higher in terms of resources and facilities than some of the local secondary schools around Oyugis.

Thank You Beaconsfield.



This Year's Buy a Gift for Kenya Report

Buy a Gift (BaG) is an occasional support where the Amani UK fraternity, having the Kenyan community at heart, fundraise gifts in aid of bringing light in the life of the rural community. BaG operates during the whole year although most giving happens in November and December.

Most of the distribution program is therefore implemented in the early months of the New Year. This is a good way to start the year for those fortunate to benefit. There are many groups and we try to distribute the gifts as fairly as possible depending on the donations and the needs. This program has been seen as life transforming in many community groups as it has provided solutions to various community problems in different ways.



This year new lower cost items were introduced in the catalogue and this made it easy for so many donors to contribute. Communities benefited from different gifts such as ploughs and accessories, poultry, assorted seeds, beehives, dairy cows, school uniforms, bags of maize, fruit tree seedlings and many more. This also motivates groups a lot.

Also this year eight groups were lucky to benefit from a single donation of eight ploughs and accessories - four groups from Upendo and four from Kirongo. This will make it easy for the community groups to plough their farms early enough in preparation for planting to catch up with the rains, especially if groups with ploughs work together with those which have ploughing bulls. They will be able to cultivate a high proportion of their land for good quality yield and to become food secure.



The groups which received local dairy cows will benefit from milk for improved nutritional value for the young children and the remaining amount can be sold to generate income for the maintenance of the cattle. The groups will also benefit from pass on of the calf produced by the cow so that with time each member will own their own cow. Poultry will produce eggs for sale, nutritional value and some hatchlings for more birds for members. Other groups were economically empowered by the beehives that will enhance production of honey that has a high demand even within the locality. The honey will improve nutritional health and, if properly managed, generate income so that more hives can be bought.

All in all BaG empowers the community in a holistic approach for a better tomorrow. Community groups work together with the Upendo team to ensure sustainability of the items they benefit from.

Community beneficiaries are happy with the gifts and appreciate them greatly. We thank the Amani UK team for this program and pray that God blesses you more as you continue with this support.

Written by field staff members Winnie Ouma and Daniel Ogongo