

Amani UK Newsletter

UK Charity No. 1073357

Autumn 2020

From the Coordinator

It would be difficult to start this newsletter without an update about the COVID-19 situation in Kenya. At the time of writing, like many other countries in the world, Kenya is experiencing a second wave of infections and the official death toll is now approaching 1000. This compares favourably with other countries in Africa and is small compared to the UK but such comparisons must be treated carefully. The virus originally took hold in cities such as Nairobi and Mombasa but has spread throughout the country including the Oyugis area where just 25 cases have been reported and which is where we focus our support. However, the economic and social impact in the area has been severe.

In the last 6 months the Upendo staff in Kenya have worked magnificently, despite the challenges. In this newsletter you will see some of the remarkable progress which has been reported by the staff and which is only possible because of the unstinting commitment Amani UK has continued to receive from you, our supporters.

Our schools support has been disrupted because of the enforced shutdown of schools in both countries but now that UK schools have returned and Kenyan schools are slowly returning, we are seeing our school links re-establish themselves. The focuses of the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic, Keep a Girl in School and Orphan Support have had to be adjusted because of the virus but progress continues in all these areas of our work. Our core community group support has been increasing over the last few months through the Group Expansion Programme and coupled with more predictable weather patterns, we have seen significant development in many of the groups. We are hoping that 2021 will prove less challenging and that we will be able to resume our visits to Kenya in the second half of the year.

Website: www.amaniuk.org.uk

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Benefitting from Helping Environmental Conservation

The Kolanda women's group is a self-help group in Kojwach and it consists of widows, orphans, and vulnerable members of society. The Kirongo Project started partnering with the group in 2018. With the onset of COVID-19, menial jobs that the self-help group members used to rely on for their daily survival disappeared. Therefore, they saw it wiser to adapt very fast to the existing conditions and started a tree nursery. They raise seedlings of a variety of trees and sell them upon maturity.

Their work has been commendable and the project has done well. They have been able to sell some of the matured seedlings and they have used some of the income to purchase goats, sheep and hens. They have also used their income to satisfy their basic needs and help themselves within their group. They have distributed seedlings within the group, which each member has taken the responsibility of planting within their localities and taking good care of them. Apart from providing income to the group members, the trees are envisioned to improve water and soil conservation, moderate the local climate by providing shade, help regulate temperature extremes and improve the land's capacity to adapt to climate change. Also, they plan to reinvest some of the returns into the tree nursery programme to ensure that the project can sustain itself.



The Kirongo Tree Nursery

Members of the local community are indeed grateful and appreciative of the excellent work that the Kolanda women's group has done to improve the area's ecosystem and help some of them acquire basic needs during this COVID-19 pandemic. The group thanks the Kirongo Project and Amani UK for the constant help offered to them. There is a massive demand for trees in the area and the Kirongo project has now started its own tree nursery within the Kirongo compound where the teachers from the Kirongo Rainbow School, which has not yet been able to re-start, have been looking after seedlings, rather than children and generating income for the Kirongo project!

Written by Bernard—Kirongo Manager

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.

Small Scale Poultry Farming

Local poultry production is one of Western Kenyan's high viability agribusinesses. Farmers sell the birds and their eggs to generate income and the meat and eggs are also a valuable food source for farmers' families. Farmers have confirmed that chicken products have a ready market and income from sales can enable them to meet their daily challenges.

As a pilot project, the Upendo Foundation identified members of various groups and purchased for them a number of chickens. This was made possible through the group expansion programme supported by Amani UK. The groups were first trained on poultry management then supplied with cross breed chickens. The field staff have been making regular visits to the respective farms to ensure the groups are carrying out proper management practices. It is really uplifting that the chickens are doing well and some of the chickens have hatched quality chicks which is an encouragement to farmers.



It's expected that the beneficiary members of these groups, such as the Kinda Ber group (shown in the picture) will pass on the chicks to other members in order to expand the poultry project among all the members of the groups. As usual there are challenges that farmers still face. These include disease outbreaks which are common during a chicken's life. Farmers also find it difficult to acquire vaccines since chickens should be vaccinated regularly during their development but Upendo will continue to train the farmers and assist them in carrying out vaccinations. The construction of good quality poultry units to house chickens safely is also a challenge. As the groups expand, more training will be conducted with the new and upcoming groups in order to upscale poultry production among the groups for increased income, reinvestment into other income generating activities and better nutrition.

We appreciate Amani UK for providing funds for the expansion of groups and initiation of this poultry project among our groups. **Written by Wycliffe Arundo—Kirongo staff**

News in Brief

Schools have slowly been returning in Kenya but due to the COVID-19 situation they must meet strict governmental requirements before being allowed to re-start

Due to COVID-19, the **2019-20 BaG catalogue** has been extended and will apply until October 31st 2021. Please look out for the revised order form insert where 4 prices have been revised. The BaG website has also been revised and some new products added.

Many **orphans and orphan families** suffered greatly at the start of the pandemic because the children were not receiving meals at school. Amani UK provided emergency food support for the most needy cases.

The **Upendo website** has been completely re-designed. Please have a look at www.upendopartnership.org.

The Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic continues to expand. A fully qualified nurse, a nurse-aid and a lab technician now work there full time, supervised by Dr. Mado who is on site 1 day a week. This staffing meets Kenyan government requirements but Jan Rayner is looking for 12 people to commit to donating £10 per month so that long term staffing costs can be covered by regular giving. One off donation are also much appreciated, especially as additional PPE has had to be provided because of COVID-19. The clinic recently benefitted from a significant donation of medical supplies from US AID.

If you are interested in joining us on a **visit to Kenya**, please contact us via the contact details on the front page. We hope to re-start our visits in the 2nd half of 2021 and can promise an unforgettable experience.

In the Spring newsletter we mentioned that we expected to be able to report to the trustees in June that the **2019 Amani UK finances** were in a satisfactory state. This was indeed the case and despite the hardships being experienced by many charities because of the difficulty in holding fundraising events during these challenging times, our finances are looking solid for the 2020 financial year as well. Fundraising by the clinic, KaGiS and via the schools links has definitely been affected but core funding has remained solid. **THANK YOU!**

Re-introducing the Farming of Groundnuts



Peanut butter production is a viable agribusiness in Western Kenya especially along the Lake Victoria region. Over the past years, peanut production was very common and a staple food commodity among the Luo community which mostly planted two indigenous varieties known as Homabay Local which is medium seeded and Homa Bay Giant which is big seeded. However, for the last 2 decades its production has declined steadily due to Groundnut Rosette Disease (GRD) and farmers not being aware of Good Agronomic Practices (GAP). This was resulting in yields of 2-3 shelled 90kg bags per acre instead of the optimum potential of 8 bags per acre.

The Upendo Foundation, under the group expansion programme through the support of Amani UK, supported 3 community groups in the 1st planting season as a pilot peanut production project. The three groups were given improved seed variety (CG7) red

large seeded variety which is high yielding and tolerant to GRD. Interested Upendo affiliated groups were visited regularly and trained by the Upendo field staff on GAP. The result was amazing with the pilot groups getting optimum yields of an average of 14bags of 90kg unshelled bags per acre. In the 2nd season, two more groups were added and we are seeing more groups gaining interest.

The Nguono farmers group was given 36 kilograms of peanut seed and they harvested 17 bags of 90 kgs unshelled peanuts. The farmers are very happy with the project because most of the farms in the region are infested with the maize striga weed that has severely affected maize production, leading to hunger and poverty. Peanuts, being a leguminous crop, will increase soil fertility and therefore rotating maize and peanuts will produce food and income for the farmers.

There is still the need to train farmers on peanut value addition (downstream processing etc.) and marketing strategies for maximum profits. There are also challenges to be met such as the high cost of certified seeds and the lack of post harvesting facilities such as shellers and other processing equipment but we would like to thank the Upendo Foundation and Amani UK for supporting this important initiative.



Written by Priscilla — Upendo staff

Harvesting peanuts at the Nguono farmers group

The Kirongo Rainbow School benefits from another UK Charity

For many years Amani UK has worked with other UK and international charities, applying for funds to carry out projects in the Oyugis and Ringa areas. These charities often have specific interests such as education, environmental conservation, water etc., etc. As you can imagine, applying for these grants is a very competitive business and we have an Amani UK team searching for grant opportunities. We also work with the Upendo Foundation who pass on funding opportunities which they also find.



In May we received a grant from the Kitchen Table Charities Trust (KTCT) who provided the majority of the funding to build 2 new classrooms at the Kirongo Rainbow School. With additional funding from Amani UK and significant donations from the local community, these classrooms were built in double quick time and will be a big asset in meeting social distancing requirements when the school is able to re-open. A big THANK YOU to KTCT.

KaGiS Special Activity 2020

At the beginning of the pandemic Amani UK and staff from Upendo expressed their concern for the welfare of young people during the time that all learning institutions in Kenya were closed indefinitely. Instead of receiving practical and pastoral support via their schools, young people were often being left to fend for themselves. This was highlighted when some Upendo field staff, who were on their normal duties, came across a group of girls who narrated their desperate but unsuccessful attempts to look for casual labour and how some girls were being enticed into unprotected sex, all because they lacked personal effects which included feminine hygiene products. The Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS) programme supplies girls with sanitary towels (STs) when they are attending school but this source of supply had been cut off because of the school closures.



As a result of the pandemic, parents were struggling to provide enough food for their families and additional “luxuries” were out of the question. Also, there was a great lack of understanding about the need for face masks and hand sanitising in order to try and avoid catching COVID-19.

Because of this, the KaGiS Special Activity 2020 was born. With the support of local leaders, the staff set up numerous small gatherings of young people in the Upendo and Kirongo areas. This started with reaching out to over 2000 girls on a monthly basis, providing them with face masks, soap, STs and a life skills leaflet, as well as using the opportunity to communicate and discuss these life skills and the dangers of casual sex and other bad practices. The girls and community at large were very happy for the provision of this initiative.

Boys narrated how they were able to find some casual labour but it was only enough to buy them one meal a day and when they went for this meal at a local café they were often being approached by their peers who tried to lure them into bad behaviour. The programme was therefore extended to reach over 1000 boys, provide them with face masks, soap and a life skills leaflet and like the girls, to spend time discussing these life skills and the dangers they faced. The boys said how the community always ignores the boys at the expense of girls, leaving them to think for themselves and they put in overwhelming requests to be reconsidered again for this sort of pastoral input.

Now that schools have largely returned, the special activity has been wound down but we have learnt how important it is to re-start the KaGiS Healthy Choices programme as soon as we are able.

Written by Seline — Upendo staff



Promoting Beekeeping



We all know that bees play an important role in agriculture, not only by contributing to cross pollination, but also by increasing the yield of seeds and the size and quality of crops being cultivated close to the hives. Beekeeping does not require much land like other agricultural enterprises hence this year through Amani UK's support, under Upendo Foundation's group expansion programme, 20 beehives were donated to three different community groups. Beekeeping is an income generating activity and this programme promotes the modern method of beekeeping as opposed to traditional low yield methods. This has resulted in a general positive interest in beekeeping and the Upendo staff are promoting this and carrying out training within the interested groups.

The honey production per harvest of one hive is about 8kg -10kg and 1kg of honey in a Kenyan local market will fetch about KES500 (£4). There is a high demand for honey as most diabetic

people are advised to substitute sugar with honey. Our biggest challenges are now to continue supplying hives, providing enough honey harvesting kits (PPE etc.) and finding suitable honey processing locations to refine the harvested honey. By 2023 we envisage that most of the groups will have hives and will be benefitting greatly from this important source of income.

Written by Phelix— Upendo staff