

# Amani UK Newsletter

UK Charity No. 1073357

Spring 2021

## From the Coordinator

Like most countries around the world, Kenya continues to deal with the effects of the pandemic. A few weeks ago, in the light of increasing case numbers, further control measures were imposed, limiting travel within the country and restricting social interaction. At the time of writing President Kenyatta has just announced the easing of these restrictions but Kenya is on the UK's red list and so the possibilities of resuming our trips to Oyugis during the course of this year seem remote. Our trips are an integral part of our relationship with the people we support in Kenya and so we will monitor the situation continually to ascertain when it is safe and sensible to travel.

In the meantime, with your support we are continuing to strengthen our financial position and maintain our focus on helping the community groups. Schools in the UK and Kenya have now returned and this is enabling the schools link programme to resume. The work of the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic and KaGiS continues to grow - to the credit of the dedicated fundraisers for these projects and, of course, the donors!

Despite the challenges, the work we support in Kenya continues to move forward in the right direction and I'd like to thank you for your ongoing support.



*Peter Fish is International Coordinator of Amani UK*

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## Joint Field Visits

Amani UK continues to provide support in two geographical areas in Western Kenya. The work in the Oyugis area is managed by the Upendo Foundation and 15km away the work in the Ringa area is managed by the Kirongo Christian Integrated Community Project. The Upendo Foundation also assists Kirongo with some central services, mainly in the



*Ligni Kimiyi group meeting*

financial controls area. However, it is important that the field staff located in both areas interact and learn from each other and as part of this aim, quarterly joint field visits take place where the managers and field staff from both areas visit each other's community groups. Daniel Ogongo and Wickliffe Ouma (Kirongo Field Officers) write:

We report on the quarterly joint field visit held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March. A team of five field staff with the two managers managed not only to educate the groups but also learnt a lot from them.

We found out that different groups with different activities also need to learn from each other. For instance, the Par Maber Women's group with their brick making activities can enlighten and encourage most groups who also have unutilised potential for brick making.

The Jule group with their poultry farming have a lot of knowledge and experience which can be shared with other groups.

The Ligni Kimiyi and Ngad Rieko groups are also doing well. The Ligni Kimiyi group are recruiting new members and the Ngad Rieko group's newly planted tissue culture banana crop is thriving.

The visit ended at the Kobange Women's group. Although it is a small group we were most impressed with their new table banking programme. They make their weekly savings and also issue loans to their members and together with their different individual activities such as pawpaw and banana farming, things look promising for this group.

Challenges remain as most group activities rely on rainwater (even brickmaking) and so hardship will occur during times of drought. We thank Amani UK for the support they are giving but with more resources, so much more could be done.



*Jule group poultry farming*

## 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.

## Group Expansion Programme

This is a programme that was started in January 2020 targeting all the 43 groups affiliated to Upendo Foundation with the aim of increasing their production capacity for food security and income through provision of technical and financial support. Groups were given the opportunity to prioritise the enterprises they want to expand on. Most groups picked on peanuts, maize and beans, beekeeping, tree nurseries and rearing of local goats.

Through the support of Amani UK the groups were jump-started to undertake their proposed activities and by the end of the year, during the annual general meeting, individual groups were testifying on the benefits and their reinvestment plans. After receiving support for two seasons, the Nguono Farmers Group was able to fund 1 acre of maize and beans on their own from the proceeds of their peanuts.



*Konyuka B installing their new hives*



*Wath Onger's sheep re-investment*

Konyuka B have increased the number of their hives and Wath Onger bought a sheep from the proceeds of their tree nursery. In other groups, the offspring of sheep and goats will be passed on to the next member of the group until every member has received an animal. Further offspring will be passed back to the group for reinvestment. Thanks to Amani UK for making it possible as we project by the end of 5 years these groups will be self-sustainable.

**Written by Priscila Oluoch – Upendo Field Officer**

## News in Brief

**The Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic** has recently been redecorated inside and out and is currently purchasing more equipment and drugs. The clinic is very much an integral part of the Kirongo community, more and more of whom now use it as their first choice for medical consultations & treatment. When appropriate, the clinic will refer patients to local hospitals.

**BaG** (Buy a Gift for Kenya) donations in 2020 were at their highest level for many years. Perhaps one reason (a silver lining?) was due to the COVID restrictions in the UK where the popularity of on-line gifts grew significantly. Whatever the reason, thank you for your generosity and please keep up the good work!

The much loved **Kirongo Community Day** was held on 25th February. Unfortunately, this year there was no

entertainment and no visitors from the UK but the groups shared their experiences during this last year and the usual pass on and pass back (of animals) presentations were made. The Kirongo board and staff encouraged the groups to work hard in the year ahead.

The field staff are looking to introduce **Figure Millet** to the groups. It has a growing cycle of 3-4 months which means it can be harvested before the worst of the dry season. It sells at 4 times the price of a bag of maize and is relatively low maintenance when growing and in storage. It is known to be beneficial to the heart and for those susceptible to diabetes and is used to make porridge and ugali.

If you're buying items on line, please register with **Easyfundraising**, naming Amani UK as your charity. You can

then access your favourite retailers via Easyfundraising who then pay Amani UK a % of your purchase price. You can do the same sort of thing for Amazon purchases if you make your purchases via **Amazon Smile**.

**Amani UK's 2020 accounts** are being checked by our independent examiner and will be presented for approval on June 5th at our annual meeting (followed by a trustees meeting). The draft accounts show an encouraging performance in 2020 despite these challenging times. Each year we submit a report to the Charity Commission and these reports are available to view via the Charity Commission website.

Our work supporting **Orphans** continues. Some orphans have now left education and are able to support themselves. Thank you to all our orphan sponsors for your long term support.



## KEEP A GIRL IN SCHOOL (KaGiS) - 10th Anniversary

**“Empower a girl and you empower a nation”** (Student, St Joseph’s school)

Incredibly it is 10 years since Rhoda and Peggy returned from Kenya determined to help girls who were missing school regularly because they could not afford sanitary protection. Many of you picked up on their passion and **KaGiS** was born.

Ten years on and we are supporting more than 2600 girls in 19 schools. Both teachers and girls tell us about the positive impact this has had on education and future chances in life.

- more girls are in school and finishing their education
- they are achieving better exam results
- they are healthier and safer
- they have much improved self esteem and confidence
- they are able to find better paid work and support themselves
- they are not a burden on their communities
- they can make independent, good and responsible choices for their lives

This is what the girls say:



*“We all come from humble backgrounds where our parents struggle to afford a meal leave alone school fees. The sanitary towels you have been providing us have enabled us to live a better and safer life.”*

*“When the offer had not been given, we had to have ‘sponsors’ who would provide us with sanitary towels, but in turn they asked for sex, which would lead to many consequences like adolescent pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and psychological disturbances. The offer has led us to better lifestyle and we do not have to suffer or do sex.. We feel free, safe and happy than ever.”*

*“Sanitary towels have promoted our hygiene; before, some girls would have used cloths which could lead to cervical cancer. Free sanitary towels have boosted girl child education. It has made girls to have self-esteem. Girls now are confident and can easily approach and mix with others freely!”*

We also hope to reintroduce the Healthy Choices programme for both girls and boys. Through workshops and discussions the young people are better able to understand good practice in hygiene and relationships. The original programme was welcomed by all those involved and there have been requests for further input.

We believe that the best way to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary is to continue to expand this work, so we are launching a special anniversary appeal.

We would love you to get involved – remember: **£10 supports 2 girls for a whole year or a monthly standing order of £10 could keep 24 girls in school.**

For more information and details about how to donate, please see Amani UK’s Facebook page or the new KaGiS page on the Amani UK website (click “About us / What we do” and the link is in the “Education” section.

**THANK YOU!**

### JCO Amuti

It is with sadness that we are informing you about the death on 10<sup>th</sup> February of JCO Amuti. Derek Hopwood writes: “I have had the great privilege to lead both youth and adult teams to Oyugis for the last 20 years. For myself and fellow leaders, JCO will be a very memorable project worker and a real ‘favourite’ with teenagers visiting from the UK. He was a very gifted and charismatic gentleman in relating to both young people and community members. The projects benefited hugely from his knowledge and field experience. I was blessed to visit his beautiful retirement home on the hills overlooking his beloved Oyugis. Asante sana rafiki.”



*JCO with donated guitar*

### Growth of Beekeeping

As mentioned in our last newsletter, the importance of beekeeping continues to grow. Phelix Odoyo (Upendo Field Officer) writes: “Beekeeping is a perfect model for environmental conservation and food security and is capable of providing 20% of a farmer’s income. Honey is in high demand in Kenya.”

At first there was a lot of resistance amongst the groups to the concept of beekeeping but the field staff have now made the groups aware of the benefits and a significant number of groups have committed to the idea. Using Buy a Gift donations and general funds, Amani UK is continuing to fund Langstroth beehives for groups in both the Upendo and Kirongo areas.



## Kachieng' Secondary School Kitchen Project.

The link between Kachieng' Secondary School and the Beaconsfield High School has made it possible for a modern kitchen facility to be constructed at Kachieng' school. Since the establishment of the school, the kitchen was only a small iron sheet makeshift structure with three stone stoves to cook meals for the students and teachers. This exposed the cooks and other workers to the dangers of respiratory infections due to the smoke and the intense heat that they had to endure to prepare meals for the students and teachers. In 2020, The Principal of Kachieng', requested Beaconsfield school to help them fundraise for this project and Mrs Rachel Smith, the Headteacher Beaconsfield High mobilised the students and the parents who responded positively and promptly to this request and the first batch of funds they raised was transferred through Amani UK and was used to start the foundations.



Kachieng' school also mobilized resources from the community which they used to construct the walls and the roof. Due to insufficient funds, the project stalled for some time and Beaconsfield raised additional funds for completion i.e., for plastering, tiling, construction of handwashing facilities, plumbing, installation of energy saving stove and for painting.

The kitchen was completed and commissioned by the Board of Directors in February. This work coincided with the corona virus pandemic and it came in handy to ensure the school kept the protocols for the prevention and containment of the virus. The kitchen has made the environment very conducive, clean and

hygienic for the students and the teachers. There's continuous water supply to the kitchen and the students now use the handwashing facility to maintain hygiene in the school.

On behalf of Kachieng' school and the community, I take this opportunity to thank Beaconsfield for their initiative to help Kachieng' get the kitchen facility which was their dream. This is a project alongside the many others that Beaconsfield have been able to support and we feel very encouraged for the kind gesture from Beaconsfield fraternity. Thank you!



**Written by Leonard Odongo – Upendo Programme Manager**

## Investment at Kirongo

In the Autumn newsletter we reported the fantastic grant from the Kitchen Table Charities Trust which was used to build 2 new classrooms for the Kirongo Rainbow School which is situated in the Kirongo compound. Although the classrooms were usable it was apparent that finishing touches such as tiling the classroom floors were still required.

In order for the school to re-open in January, unfunded COVID control measures had to be provided such as the provision of a room with beds for sick children, improved sanitary facilities and PPE as well as additional desks to improve social distancing.



We would like to thank **The James Barney Foundation** for responding at short notice to our request for funds which cover all the above items plus the repair of Kirongo's well pump so that the school, the clinic and the whole community

will benefit from the constant availability of fresh water.

## Communication, Communication, Communication!

The Amani UK trustees are constantly reviewing how best we can keep our supporters informed about the work we fund. We also want to bring new supporters "on board" as quickly as possible. At the moment we publish short stories / updates at least once a week on Facebook and newsletters are published twice a year, in the Spring and Autumn. Past newsletters can also be viewed on our website. [www.amaniuk.org.uk](http://www.amaniuk.org.uk) where a new KaGis page has recently been added.

We are well aware of how inundated people are with information and consequently, not everyone will want to be monitoring our Facebook posts constantly. On the other hand if supporters only receive updates via the newsletters they may well miss out on important news or even an urgent appeal.

At the June trustees meeting we are aiming to finalise plans to create an email database to communicate on a monthly basis with our supporters. GDPR requirements will, of course, be observed. If you have any opinions you would like to share about this or you would like to be included in the monthly communications, please email us at [contactus@amaniuk.org.uk](mailto:contactus@amaniuk.org.uk).