

# Amani UK Newsletter

UK Charity No. 1073357

Spring 2022

## From the Coordinator

This newsletter will be published 2 weeks or so before our first visit to Kenya for almost 2½ years – a far cry from the 4 visits per year which had previously been possible. However, health and travel restrictions permitting, it will be an important step in re-establishing our close relationships with our many friends in Kenya, as well as enabling us to see for ourselves what Amani UK's support has achieved over the last couple of years. It wasn't possible to make the hoped-for visit in January as travel restrictions made it impractical and it may well not be possible to re-start larger team visits until the start of 2023. The imminent visit will be by trustees only and will very much be a "business" visit with lots of board, staff and school meetings.



*Peter Fish is International Coordinator of Amani UK*

In many ways this feels like a time of setting out again on the journey we started decades ago and for this reason we are dedicating a significant portion of this newsletter to tell you about Amani UK itself. This doesn't mean that not much has been happening in Kenya and we promise to give you more news direct from Kenya in the next newsletter.

Through the Upendo Foundation, our partner in Kenya, encouraging progress continues to be made but there's no doubt that things have not been easy in Kenya for the last 2-3 years. The pandemic has adversely affected almost every individual as well as the country as a whole. Added to that, the country is now facing serious food security challenges as there is a significant likelihood of a second successive poor harvest due to very late rains and crop infestations. This is devastating for the rural areas we support and food prices are already rising rapidly. We will continue to use our limited resources to help the poorest help themselves through this difficult time as it is especially at times like these that we and our partners in Kenya may be their only source of external assistance.

Below you will see the news about the newly created Community Based Organisation (CBO) and it's name reflects exactly what Amani UK tries to provide — Hope for the Future.

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## Welcome to Hope for the Future

On 1st January, Hope for the Future Integrated Project, otherwise known as HOFIP or just as "Hope" ("Tumaini" in Swahili), officially came into being and joins Kirongo under the Upendo Foundation umbrella. Hope has taken over responsibility for the community groups which left the Imani CBO in the summer of 2019 and which, in the meantime, were being overseen directly by Upendo as an interim measure.

Hope is responsible for 25 community groups in the Oyugis area and is planning to affiliate more groups in the next year or two. Phelix Odoyo has been appointed as the manager with Winnie Apondi, Priscilla Surtan and Eric Owuor (newly appointed) working as Hope's field staff.



*Two pictures of Hope's Par Maber group. Despite a difficult harvest (left) at the start of the year, the group earned enough money to reinvest in the purchase of livestock (right)*

## Amani UK— a bit more detail

In every newsletter issue I have on record, this corner of page 2 has a short background piece 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 re-shaping 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 3 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 Hope for the Future which is a Community Based Organisation (CBO) based in the Oyugis area and another CBO called Kirongo which is approx. 15km from Oyugis. Amani UK is a UK registered charity no. 1073357 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>) 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."*

At the recent Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic fundraising lunch, people appreciated hearing more detail about Amani UK and so, if you will bear with me, here are some important points about who we are and what we do.

### **What We Do**

Amani provides funding in 5 main resource areas: Food, water, education, housing and health and our principle way of doing this is to support the development of community groups, each comprising typically of about 15 family units, with perhaps 40 - 75 people per group. Although we fund support for individual orphans, our policy is to encourage funding of groups because the community groups provide the means of keeping orphans within their community and give a better foundation for young people, many of whom already are, or will become, the household leader. The groups also enable resources and training to be channelled effectively. Through the network of groups, Upendo and their partner projects support the wellbeing of around 4,000 people, many of whom are orphans, vulnerable children, widows and widowers. Many group members are HIV positive but make a positive contribution to the collective farming and income generating activities. We also support Upendo in its link with another UK charity called Trade Relief which gives local businesses access to low cost finance to create new business opportunities which will benefit the local economy and create employment opportunities.

**Sustainability is key** – to ensure that this model is sustainable we assist the development of community groups, formed on the basis of a natural, mutual interest. We fund training of the staff in Kenya who look after the groups so that they are up to date with the latest best practices. The staff in Kenya provide groups with self-help and motivational training and general guidance, which enables them to become independent within a 5-10 year cycle. We fund the groups with the resources they need and the Kenya staff give practical training essential for sustainable development in the areas of food security, water, housing and health. Mature groups are encouraged to nurture, develop and provide for new groups, as part of a continuously growing federation of communities.

**Health is a foundation** - the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic is at the centre of local health care activity. The clinic, under the supervision of the District Hospital, is staffed by a doctor, 2 nurses and a lab technician who provide essential local health service support. The clinic also provides training and resources for the provision of Home Based Care through the network of the projects' Community Health Workers.



**Education builds the future - Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS)** provides over 3,000 girls with sanitary towels so that they do not miss school. Kagis also funds the Healthy Choices educational programme which teaches adolescent girls and boys about sex, relationships and staying free from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

**20 schools in Kenya are linked with schools in the UK.** This enables children in very different cultures to learn about one another. Although not a condition of any link, UK schools have often raised money to help their Kenyan linked school and there have also been reciprocal visits by teachers contributing further to the impact these links make and the benefits gained through them.

**Our organisation**—we have a fantastic team of trustees and advisers most of whom have specific responsibilities within our operations but I'll leave this detail until another newsletter. My role is to coordinate our operations in the UK and to work closely with our partners in Kenya, ensuring that the funding we receive is used as effectively as possible and achieves the objectives which you all support.



*Written by: Peter Fish*



## The Importance of Buy a Gift for Kenya (BaG)

Wiclife Ouma, Kirongo Field Staff writes: Gifts are so essential to lives of people not only because they encourage people to work hard or show appreciation of good work but because they also show we care for one another. Throughout the federation, the BaG programme has helped to develop a sharing culture between individual members within a community group and from group to group.

This is evidenced through the pass on, pass back system which was developed mostly through the BaG gifts (the animals) given to groups where the group members identify a care taker who will then pass on/pass back the offspring to the group and as a result the culture of sharing is guaranteed in our community groups. Early this year, we received several items from BaG amongst them were animals which we distributed to groups on the basis that they form part of the pass on/pass back programme. We also received tree seedlings which are essential to our environment and the school items we received have ensured education for our orphans and vulnerable children in our community. We are so grateful to receive these gifts.

With the current famine affecting almost half the total population of Kenya, we don't know where we would have been had it not been for the farm resources gifts given through BaG and which have enabled our community members to earn income by selling some of their produce. This enables them to put a meal on the table and pay for school fees and other expenses in their respective families. We are grateful to Almighty Lord, our beloved friends in Amani UK, our able managers and to the community groups who have worked closely with us to ensure that this programme is successful. Our prayer is that Almighty Lord may continue to bless the pockets of our friends in Amani UK who have spiritually and financially supported BaG.



*Orphans receiving a BaG solar lamp which will help them to do their homework in the evening*

## Beekeeping is still Buzzing

Despite the recent study which showed that the insect population in many warmer climates has virtually halved due to intensive farming and climate change, bee-keeping at both Kirongo and Hope continues to grow and flourish. Together with increased tree planting, we are playing a small part to help in the environmental battle at a time when the Kenyan six monthly rainy seasons are becoming less and less predictable.



If we can continue to fund hives for the community groups, the bees will do most of the work. The honey is harvested and refined using a portable centrifuge, producing a high quality, valuable product.

You are probably already aware that bees don't just produce honey but did you know that wax, propolis, bee bread and royal jelly can also be responsibly harvested from the hives?

## The Orphan Support Puzzle

As mentioned on page 2, Amani UK has realised that investing available funding in community groups will benefit the maximum number of people in the long term. However, this does not mean that our orphan support programme has ceased and we are fully committed to ensuring that the programme, overseen by our trustee Suzy Browne, will continue as long as necessary.

We continue to receive many heart warming stories of how orphans' lives have been changed dramatically because of the support they have received. One such example is Benter Adidi whose family of total orphans (known as the Beulah orphans) has been supported by a team of UK visitors since 2009. Her older brother graduated from university and is now working for the government as well as supporting his younger brothers. Benter is about to qualify as a quantity surveyor and recently gave a motivational talk at this year's orphans' camp.



*Left hand picture: Benter with her brothers in 2009.*

*Right hand picture: talking at the orphans' camp in April*

## Healthy Choices for a Better Future

Seline Ndinya (Upendo) writes: The Healthy Choices programme came about as an offshoot of Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS) - a girl only affair, where sanitary pads are provided to girls in 2 primary and 17 secondary schools across the Upendo federation every school calendar month in order to ensure that girls have an equal opportunity to attend school. However, to give every child the best opportunity to attend school, it was realised that boys also needed to be mentored and so way back in 2017 Upendo Foundation together with Amani UK initiated Healthy Choices for A Better Future - a programme developed with the Ministry of Health and Education for adolescent boys and girls to support their mental health and social / relational development.



The original programme has now been developed into Healthy Choice for A Better Future Version 2 (HC2) which commenced in 2020. It was clear that pupils'/students' school life and health were jeopardised if their education was narrowed down to class work alone. Many pupils failed to finish their education for reasons such as girls exposed to early/unwanted pregnancies, early marriages, contracting STIs etc. and boys suffering drug addiction, becoming young fathers and also contracting STIs. HIV transmission through sexual relations is also still a major problem in our area.

Due to these factors, Upendo condensed the Healthy Choice Manual with other related resources into specific modules (*Making Healthy Choices, Know Who You Are, Say No to Sex, Negotiation and Refusal Skills*). Each module is then presented at an

after school Healthy Choices club together with life skills discussions, a video and some homework exercises with the current focus being on the 19 Kagis supported schools. These school clubs of about 30 pupils act as pioneer groups who eventually will be the peer groups for the schools and each pupil is given a lanyard tag saying "Healthy Choices for a Better Future – Make a Difference" Teachers from each school are involved in every session and are responsible for monitoring HC2's effectiveness. At the moment Upendo staff are involved in running the sessions but the intention is for teaching staff to take on this task with Upendo continuing to maintain an oversight.

HC2 is an on-going exercise and will require continuous financing. Thanks to Amani UK and the Souter Charitable Trust for funding the start of this incredible exercise. We hope that further financial support can be found to enable us to continue this vital education for our young people.



### News in Brief

**The Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic** fundraising lunch had to be postponed from its original November date to April 2nd. The event was fully booked and almost £2,000 raised for the clinic.

**Amani UK's 2021 accounts** have passed their independent examination and will be presented for approval at our May 21st annual meeting (followed by a trustees meeting). The draft accounts continue to show an encouraging performance with income increasing by about 2.5%, despite the challenging times. Our accounts will be accessible on the Charity Commission website.

**Reserves policies:** Although we have no legal obligation to have such policies, we have put in place reserves policies to ensure that in the event of unforeseen circumstances, Upendo and clinic staff salaries are covered for a period of 3 months and that sanitary

towels can be supplied by KaGiS to the currently supported 3000+ girls for 12 months.

**Safeguarding policies:** Amani UK's policy has been approved by the trustees and safeguarding will be on every trustees meeting agenda. Additionally, Sue Smithin (our trustee with responsibility for policies and procedures) has worked with Upendo to develop their own policy. This too has now been accepted by the Upendo board and we shall be carrying out staff safeguarding training during the May visit.

**Trips to Kenya.** If you are interested in joining us on one of our trips in 2023 to witness the work which is going on and to see Kenya in general, please get in contact using the details on page 1. At present Covid PCR tests are not required to enter Kenya as long as valid vaccinations certificates can be uploaded.

**School Links** continue to move forward under the supervision of Pauline Prince, an Amani UK adviser. Written communications from UK schools will be taken out to Kenya during this year's May visit and schools in Kenya have been alerted to prepare their replies! We should have much more to report in our next newsletter.

**Costs in Kenya** are rising rapidly due to worldwide price increases (e.g. the cost of fuel in Oyugis is almost the same as in the UK, if you can find a fuel station with any fuel) and also the very poor harvest situation. There are challenging times ahead.

**The Kenya General Election** takes place on August 9th. Let's hope and pray that this election will be peaceful and that the new government will not forget the poorest people whom we support.