

Amani UK Newsletter

UK Charity No. 1073357

Autumn 2022

From the Coordinator

On February 9th 1941 Winston Churchill appealed to President Roosevelt "Give us the tools and we will finish the job". On March 11th 1941 Roosevelt signed the Lend—Lease Bill and the rest, as they say, is history. Unfortunately, history has a habit of repeating itself and we are now hearing this same request for help during the current conflict in Europe which is having such a devastating effect on the prices of basic foodstuffs and supplies around the world, including Kenya.

Pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter cover a heart-warming story of how Amani UK, with its partners in Kenya, can achieve remarkable things if we too are given the tools we need for our work—funding! We wouldn't normally dedicate so much newsletter space to a single subject but the Kasimba Lwala Primary School has been transformed and the local community greatly encouraged by this project. It is the largest building project we have been involved in and it has all been possible through the generosity of a single donor whom we thank from the bottom of our hearts. Whilst the school building work has been in progress we have continued to seek out the "building materials" to equip the 50 community groups we support through our Kenyan NGO partner, the Upendo Foundation. Unfortunately these materials have rocketed in price. Fertiliser, for instance, has doubled in price. Many basic foodstuffs are at least 50% more expensive than a year ago and to make things worse, the GB£ has weakened by approx. 10% against the Kenyan Shilling.

There is no doubt that in the next few years it is going to be very challenging for us just to maintain our current level of support. I recognise that everyone is feeling the financial pinch but I am appealing to you all to consider if it is possible to increase the level of generosity which we already receive and appreciate so much.

Yes, there are difficult times ahead but we are a resilient charity and we will carry on the good works on your behalf. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter which has some very encouraging stories.

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Peter Fish is International Coordinator of Amani UK

Community Group Funding from The Shalom Trust

We would like to express our thanks to the Shalom Trust from whom we received a £5,000 grant just a few weeks ago.

Amani UK is now funding the support of 25 community groups in the Kirongo Community Based Organisation's (CBO) area and 25 in Hope for the Future's area. The time it takes for a group to "graduate" from the support programme is based on many factors and an annual assessment of all 50 groups is carried out by the staff each year. Each group is scored on its performance in the areas of food security, health, water & sanitation, shelter, education and re-investment. Until this last area of re-investment is operating effectively within a group, the group will never become self-sufficient because self-sufficiency requires the group to be able to generate cash from what they produce.



Beehives for Hope's Nguono Farmers group

The Shalom Trust funding will be used to boost support for 5 Kirongo and 5 Hope groups to develop income generating activities over a 3 year period. The groups should then be self-sufficient. The initial funding has already been distributed and has been invested in honey production, grain "banking" (to enable grain to be sold out of season at higher prices), agricultural expansion and table banking (a system where small loans are made to individuals throughout a group to generate income for a single family rather than for a group enterprise).



Grain "banking" at Kirongo's Imani group

After the 3 year period the group will be "graduated" from the support programme which means that they will remain part of Kirongo or Hope and will be eligible to receive advice from the staff but funding of the group will cease. New groups will then be able to join the Kirongo or Hope for the Future CBOs.

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 our Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) partner in W. Kenya. Upendo delivers support directly and via two community based organisations (CBO). These are Hope for the Future based in the area around the town of Oyugis and Kirongo which is located 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.

Help! Buy a Gift (BaG) this Christmas



The run up to Christmas is always an important time for the BaG programme. There are some new additions this year such as the energy efficient stove featured on the catalogue cover. Although there are some gifts which, like the stove, will help widows' families in their day to day lives, many of the gifts in the catalogue, such as farming items, are selected so that having equipped the individuals and community groups, they can use their own labour to realise the true value of the gift.

BaG is more important than ever this year due to the increased costs of basic items required by those who can least afford to pay for them. So, please BaG for someone this Christmas!

Are You Up for a Team Trip to Kenya?

It was wonderful to return to Kenya in May after a gap of over 2 years. Having made the trip every 6 months for the past few years, there was a sense of "newness" as well as it being fantastic to meet so many of our Kenyan friends once again.

The 6 days in Oyugis were very busy with board meetings, staff meetings, safeguarding training and visits to community groups and schools. We stayed for the first time at the Osika Gardens Hotel which has been built in the same compound as the Upendo offices. Our stay was very comfortable and we hope to use it, team size permitting, for future trips.

Our next trip will start in mid-Feb and we anticipate that team trips will be happening at least twice a year from now on: in Jan / Feb and Sept / Oct.

If you are interested in joining us or you'd like more information, please get in touch using the contact information on the front page.



Peter Fish

The Osika Gardens Hotel

News in Brief

Amani UK's **Instagram** account will start up during November. This will be in addition to our weekly **Facebook** posts, giving you more ways to keep in regular touch with what is going on.

Apologies but the **Ted's Clinic** website which you used to be able to access via the Amani UK website, is no longer operating. We are working to make it an integral part of the Amani UK website and expect this work to be completed before the end of the year.

Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS) continues to do amazing work raising the funds to keep over 3,000 girls in school through the provision of sanitary towels. The recent ladies' breakfast, the BBQ and the Coffee, Cakes and Cards day have raised precious funds which will be needed for the expected increase in numbers at supported schools next year. Also, don't forget your KaGiS coin jar!

The **Healthy Choices** programme, which reaches out to both boys and girls, provides fun-filled personal development education to reduce the spread of AIDS and other STIs, as well as helping young people develop respect for one another so that "their dreams can be realised". At the time of publishing, outreach events are taking place, gathering young people together via netball and football events and using the time together for health checks and 1:1 counselling.



The **School Links** programme continues to move forward. Its primary purpose remains the exchange of culture between UK and Kenyan pupils but, amongst others, schools such as St. Marys Amersham, Widmer End Combined, Buckingham Park C of E, St. Giles C of E Horsted Keynes and Curzon C of E Penn Street have all raised funds for their Kenyan links.

If you haven't done so already, please sign up to **Amazon Smile** and **Easyfundraising**, nominating Amani UK as your chosen charity. It costs you nothing but we are now receiving precious extra funding from the small percentages these organisations give us each time you make a purchase.

We would like to pass on our thanks to all **our friends in Kenya** who faithfully serve Upendo, Kirongo and Hope for the Future. We're looking forward to seeing you again next year!

Generosity & Hope Combine - (The Kasimba Lwala Primary School Story)

It very rarely happens that I get a phone call like the one I received earlier this year: "Hello Peter. I am interested in making a donation to benefit young people in Kenya, probably school related. It will be in memory of my grandchild who died shortly after birth. I was wondering if you could help?"

How does one react to this? Enormous sadness that this offer is made because of such a tragedy but, despite this, enormous gratitude for the amazingly generous offer from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. Apart from giving the rather obvious answer of "yes", we talked further and it was apparent that the donation could make an enormous difference if invested at the appropriate school. I recited tales of some of the schools our teams visited 20 or so years ago and how they had been transformed by donations from charities such as Jersey Aid and from other individuals. Having discussed the nature of the project we decided to look for a school in the geographical area covered by our community based organisation (CBO) partner - Hope for the Future - and so I agreed that I would make some enquiries via Upendo's Programme Manager (Leonard Odongo) and get back to the donor asap. The donor explained that the funds weren't available yet but should be at some time in the late summer.

I spoke to Leonard and he agreed to have a think about which school might benefit most from the available funds. Very soon he came back with a name which I had never heard of before - Kasimba Lwala Primary School. He used the word "pathetic" to describe it: not a reflection on the staff and pupils there but because of the woeful lack of investment at the school whose pupil numbers were continuing to grow even though the amenities to meet basic pupil and teacher requirements were absolutely "pathetic". This feedback occurred just before our first visit to Kenya in over two years and so Sue Smithin (trustee) and I spent half a day at the school during our visit in May and Leonard's description was borne out by what we saw.



Sue walks past the school "kitchen"



On the right: the school's only classroom block serving over 200 pupils. The teacher's office is on the left



Madam Linet, the Headteacher, giving a presentation about the school in the "office" serving all the teachers



The school's toilet block serving all the boy and girl pupils as well as the teachers



ECD years share a classroom divided by a screen

The school was founded by the local community in 2014 and is now run by the Kenyan Department of Education (D of E) who built the only classroom block. From starting with just a few pupils who formed an Early Childhood Development (ECD) class and who 8 years later were preparing for their secondary school entry exams when we visited, the number of pupils has increased steadily at each annual intake but without the corresponding infrastructure investment by the D of E. For instance, basic hygiene facilities were non-existent because there wasn't a water supply on site. Water needed to prepare meals for the children had to be hand carried from a source half an hour's walk away.

(cont. on page 4)

(cont. from page 3) After Sue and I had visited the school and talked to the teachers, it was self evident that the school would benefit enormously from the funding which we still hoped would be available later in the year. In the meantime Leonard worked with the school to identify the priorities and to draw up a project plan and budget. The priorities were: a) 3 new classrooms b) Water supply c) Finish the mud-built teachers' office and adjacent year 7/8 classroom d) Toilets for the pupils and teachers e) Kitchen f) Handwashing facilities.

Prices were rising rapidly and it was agreed that these priorities would be completed first but that more work would be done and further resources purchased with any remaining funds. At the end of June we received the good news that the funding was available and once the local community heard this, they immediately started the initial work to add a second coat of mud to the traditionally built teacher / classroom block, even before the funds reached Kenya. Here's a pictorial account of what happened in the two month period from mid-July onwards.



Local community members get a head start



July 18: builders get access to the new water supply



July 19: the new classroom block footings are completed in 1 day



The classroom block is completed in just 63 days



The kitchen is completed in 5 weeks



The boys' toilets are completed



New gates & fencing are installed with remaining funds



RHS: The new teachers' / girls' toilets with handwashing station (also provided for the boys)

The above pictures tell some, but not all of the story. The school had also managed to get funding to build a single classroom from the Department of Education and the new 3 classroom block was built exactly one classroom's width away from the D of E funded classroom. This gave the option to build a fourth classroom in between the two blocks once the gable end walls were erected. To their credit, the teachers agreed to forego much of the renovation of their office so that the funds could be used to build the extra classroom. There was still enough funding left to pay for gates and perimeter security fencing, desks, tables, chairs, kitchen equipment and teaching resources.

On 27th September the Upendo management board visited the school and joined the teaching staff, education department officials, local elders and community members for the opening ceremony. My personal thanks go to Leonard Odongo for his excellent management of the project. It is quite amazing to see how generosity can bring hope to a whole community.

Peter Fish