

Amani UK Newsletter

UK Charity No. 1073357

November 2025

From the Coordinator

On 15th November we held our six-monthly trustees meeting where we reviewed how things have been progressing since our last meeting in May. As always, there are challenges, but in general the news is very encouraging. Financially we are slightly better than budget, the Ted Rayner Memorial Clinic held its second "Medical Camp" of the year where 278 patients received completely free treatment and Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS) has received a generous grant from the King Cullimore Charitable Trust enabling KaGiS to support over 4,000 girls for the next two years. Lastly and by no means least, our focus on funding the community groups, especially through the empowerment programme is going well.



Peter Fish is International Coordinator of Amani UK

All of the above areas of support and many others which haven't been mentioned are only possible because of the Upendo Foundation staff who we fund and who work not just for a low wage, even by Kenyan standards, but because they wish to help the people in their communities who are amongst the poorest in Kenya. The Upendo staff have not received a wage increase for three years during which time Kenyan inflation has been running at approx. 5% p.a. At our meeting we agreed that this should not continue and that we should fund a pay rise for the staff in January 2026. A pay-rise is a long term commitment for us and we will be sending out a letter to a number of supporters who give on an unrestricted basis asking if they would be prepared to help fund this wage increase. Of course, there are inflation pressures in all the other areas we support, including KaGiS and the Clinic and so I would ask you to consider being even more generous with your standing orders and / or one off donations.

Following the successful Expo event held in Hazlemere in February, we are planning a smaller event for our supporters in Derby. This will be held at St. Alkmund's Church in Derby on 18th January. Please keep an eye out for more details and come and join us if you can.

In June and July we had two very successful visits to Kenya: a young adult team from Hazlemere Church, led by Colin and Jane Knight and a team which I led soon afterwards. In many ways these visits are the bedrock of our support as they inspire team members, their friends and their families to contribute to our work. Visits also help give us all a fresh view of our own lives. This newsletter has a special focus on visits and there's inspiring feedback from team members. More visits are planned for 2026 so please get in touch if you are interested. Everyone is welcome.

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Martin's Musings about the July Visit



Martin with Janet, one of "his" orphans

In July I had the great pleasure of accompanying Peter Fish, Adrian Goode and Sue Smithin on a trip to Oyugis. This was my second visit, the first being back in 2012, where I visited not only the Amani UK projects but also a prison and a local hospital. I met many people in desperate situations but was especially touched by the plight of a family of orphans, and agreed to sponsor the eldest two through further education.

I had regular updates on their progress until they graduated but then for various reasons I lost touch. I had often wondered how they were getting on and last year I contacted Peter to see if there was any information about them. Peter contacted Leonard, manager of the Upendo Foundation and I was told that they were doing well and that I would be welcome to join one of the regular Amani UK visits to Kenya in order to reunite with the family and visit some of the many projects which are currently being supported.

I jumped at the chance and was once again enthused by the work of the projects. I had an emotional reunion with the orphans who are now in their 20s and 30s. Three are teachers and the other two are running their own small businesses. Leonard had not told me quite how well they were doing, he thought that I would enjoy finding out for myself. He was right and I felt humbled and proud that with a little help all those years ago, they had not only thrived as a family but were supporting their community in many ways too.



July team meeting members of the Jua Kali group

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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 funds resources and expertise.

Amani UK (Amani means "Peace" in Swahili) is linked with the Upendo Foundation which is our Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) partner in W. Kenya. Upendo works with 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 near Ringa 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.

Martin's Musings (cont.)

Even though our visit was only for a week, we managed to fit in many visits and heard numerous stories of how the generosity of Amani UK supporters is making a huge difference to people's lives. One of the most outstanding initiatives is the Economic Empowerment programme (EE). Many people, mainly women, have taken advantage of a small loans scheme in order to buy produce, which they can sell at a profit in local markets. The loans had mostly been paid back before their due date and the money is then available once again to people in the community group. We visited many groups using EE and all seemed genuinely supportive of each other and made us feel very welcome.

Sue and I visited a few schools which have received help and others where help is needed. We were always warmly welcomed by the staff and after initial shyness we often got a smile from the children too. One thing I really enjoyed about the trip was that you never quite knew what was going to happen next. We were reaching the end of our visit to one school when some of the older pupils asked Sue and I for our names. They then made up a song featuring our names to welcome us and wish us well. We were then expected to join them dancing to it in front of the whole school. I don't know if you have ever heard 400 children burst into laughter at the same time. We have. Let's just say that 'Strictly' won't be knocking on my door anytime soon.

There were many moments which stopped me in my tracks but my introduction to the spring protection scheme was probably the most difficult to grasp at first. Clean water can be a huge challenge in some of the areas we visited and Amani UK have sponsored a number of projects to purify natural spring water. The original springs are usually muddy pools or streams, where local people have no choice but to collect and use the murky water. The protection process consists of building a concrete container to hold gravel which



Kabongo spring protection project

removes particles and pathogens from the water. The labour is provided by the local people and for a modest outlay hundreds of families have access to clean water. The first spring I visited had been in operation for almost 40 years, with only one change of gravel. It's truly amazing and helps to improve the health of thousands of people for many years.



Visiting a hot primary school classroom!

On one of our trips we happened to spot William, a retired staff member, by the side of the road and he remembered my name from thirteen years ago. He had told me off on my first trip, when I mentioned to him that although I was enjoying my visit, I thought that the money I had spent on the travel to Kenya, could have been better used supporting the projects. He told me not to think that way and that visits by people from the UK were of enormous value to the local people, because we had gone to a lot of trouble and expense to show that we cared. I hadn't thought about that but the warmth and kindness shown to us proved his point then and now. I was delighted to see William again and would happily have been told off again if I stepped out of line.

I can't finish without thanking Peter, Sue and Adrian for their company, insight and dedication. It was a privilege for me to be able to join them and to see that Amani UK is in such good hands. There were times of sadness but they were usually accompanied by hope. There was also a fair share of laughter and joy too, as friendships were renewed or made. Before we had reached the airport on the way back I'd already asked to be included in a trip back to Oyugis next year.

Eddie reflects on the Hazlemere Church Young Adults' Trip

I was fortunate enough to be a part of the young adults' trip to Kenya this summer, alongside such an amazing group of people. For several of us, this trip was something of a family rite; having had parents and/or siblings previously visit. Though I'd heard countless stories from my family's experiences, I still found myself in disbelief for the majority of the trip. Even now, reflecting on those few short weeks spent in Kenya, it feels so surreal and I'm unable to express just how grateful I am that this opportunity presented itself to myself & the rest of the team.

Through the sights and stories of the communities we visited, some joyous whilst others less so, I found myself earnestly humbled. Everyone I was honoured to meet, had an unbelievably admirable work ethic and strength that I'm consistently striving to replicate in my personal life. All of the outreach groups we were blessed to meet and speak with, work tirelessly towards an ultimate goal of economic self-sufficiency/stability. A passage that, to me, seemingly serves as their mantra for life is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances: for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (I'd like to emphasise how accurate "rejoice always" is in these groups, as more often than not we were greeted by the most perfect cacophony of singing and cheering!).

The entire trip is unforgettable, and there are more visits I frequently reflect on than I can count. However, a memory from my time in Kenya that has affected and changed me as a person in such a visceral way, comes from our time in Kakamega, more specifically, the rainforest.



In the week prior to visiting the rainforest, I was filled with a lot of questions for God that I didn't feel were being answered. I walked for a while by myself through the rainforest, admiring the intricacies of the flora around me when I suddenly felt something click in my mind. It was that nothing in our world is present without a painstaking level of detail from our creator. Everything, and everyone, is part of a greater plan and God is within every aspect of it. The peace this realisation filled me with was indescribable and though there were times in the trip thereafter that felt far from peaceful, I carried that feeling wherever we went from then on, hoping to share it through words of encouragement and love.

There's a Bible verse that was unanimous within our team that I resonated with even long before the trip, which is such a perfect representation of how universally connected we all are through our Heavenly Father. Matthew 11:28; "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." I'd heard from previous visitors that readjusting to Western life after the trip ended would be challenging, but I had no idea just how much until I experienced it for myself. Being part of such an extraordinary group of people, who shared in my experiences made it that little bit easier. Even months on from the trip, as several of us have been called to different places geographically for work/school etc; I feel that we're all so strongly connected, as we continually uplift and pray for each other and for those we met during our time in Kenya. To anyone reading that might be interested in visiting Kenya

on one of the trips Amani UK offers, I cannot recommend you enough to do so. This was an experience I will be thinking about for the rest of my life, and I solemnly hope that I get the chance to do it again when the time is right.

Working with Young People in the UK and in Kenya

It is sometimes said that children are the future, which is true, but they are also very much the present and we need to do as much as possible to assist them to develop and maximise their potential. Ultimately this will help secure the future for everyone.

For this reason Amani UK runs the School Links programme which helps students in both the UK and Kenya to understand a culture very different to their own. As well as Keep a Girl in School (KaGiS), we also run a Healthy Choices programme, funded last year through the Mercury Phoenix Trust. We are half way through the current programme which is aimed at helping young people with their personal development as well as training young teachers to run Healthy Choices within their own schools. We continue to source capital funding to invest in school infrastructure and of course, we aim to run young adult trips to Kenya on an annual basis. Let's continue investing now in the generations of the future!



Becca also Reflects on June's Young Adults' Trip



The Young Adult team & staff visit a group

This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to join the Young Adults' trip to Kenya. I'd heard so many stories from family and friends about how beautiful and inspiring Kenya is, but nothing could have prepared me for how truly life-changing it would be. Even with all the photos and stories, I didn't really know what to expect until I was there.

During our time in Kenya, we visited several community groups whose dedication, compassion and heart for helping others moved me. Many of these groups were made up of strong, determined women supported by Upendo to build independence and economic stability. What stood out to me the most was their thankfulness and faith in Jesus. Despite having so little, their joy and hope were incredible - a powerful reminder that true strength doesn't come from our circumstances but from God.

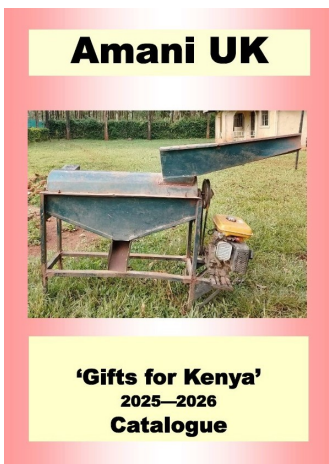


One visit I'll never forget was to a women's group that welcomed us with joyful singing and dancing (see the picture!). The energy, warmth and genuine happiness in that moment were unforgettable. Later, as we listened to their stories and visited their homes, I was struck again by how deeply they relied on Christ for their strength. The verse that stayed with me throughout the trip was: *"The joy of the Lord is my strength."* - Nehemiah 8:10. Seeing this verse come alive in the lives of people who had so little yet radiated so much joy has stayed with me.

Coming home was harder than I expected - a real shift in culture and perspective. When I spoke to some of the women in Kenya, I often asked, "How can we help when we go back to England?" Their answer was always simple but so powerful: to raise awareness and pray for us. That response has stayed with me, reminding me that even from being so far away, we can stand with them in faith and prayer.

News in Brief

The new **BaG catalogue** has been published. Prices are the same as last year so please start shopping using the order form in the catalogue, by accessing the BaG website via our main website www.amaniuk.org.uk or by going direct to our BaG website at www.amaniukgifts.org.uk



faithful support. If the orphan you support has now graduated, we shall be contacting you and asking if you are able to continue your donations which will be used to build up the community groups.

Congratulations to **Pastor Vitalice**, who was the chairman of Upendo for many years, on his forthcoming appointment as the Redeemed Gospel Church's Bishop responsible for the Nyanza South region.

A few years ago we reported that we would not be taking on further direct support of individual **Orphans**. This was a difficult decision but the long term nature of the support required from sponsors and the amount of resources required to run the programme convinced us about the necessity to concentrate on the community groups who would then be able to support their own orphans. We are now seeing this starting to happen even as we continue to wind down the orphan programme. In the last year we have seen a number of orphans graduating from college and university and we would like to congratulate them on their success and to thank their sponsors for their



Since the last newsletter, five more **Spring Protection** projects have been completely successfully. These are Ligusi, Kabongo, Kagno, Nyaido and Ojwando-Riwa and they will provide reliable, clean and safe water supplies to thousands of people for many years to come.