

Horace and Beth Update from Uganda

March 2024

Dear friends,

We are well into another academic year, a good time to give some feedback on exam results and enrolment:

| 2023 National Exam Results Summary | | |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Level | No of candidates | Top Scores (<i>Best/Worst possible score - for primary and O level exams a low score is best, but it is vice versa for A level</i>) |
| Primary Leaving Exam | 26 (all passed) | Top Score: 11 (4/36) 1 achieved Division 1, 18 achieved Division 2 |
| Certificate of Education (Senior 4/O level) | 89 (all passed) | Top Score: 18 (8/72) 5 achieved Division 1, 23 achieved Division 2 |
| Advanced Certificate of Education (Senior 6/A Level) | 14 (all passed) | Top score: 15 (1 B and 2 Cs) (20/0) 10 achieved 3 principal passes, 4 achieved 2 principal passes i.e. ALL qualify to enrol for university degree courses |

To achieve Division 1 at Senior 4 a candidate must score between 8 and 32 in total in their 8 best subjects (subjects are graded from 1 to 9). Two of those in Division One scored below 20, which is the first time this has happened at JJ. Staff are disappointed that these two boys have been "poached" by other schools for A Level. It is fairly common practice to offer either free or reduced places and other enticements to gifted students in order to improve a school's exam results and attract more students; education is very much a business for many in Uganda!

The beneficiary at university is a (multi-skilled!) secondary graduate. He lives and works at the school as a volunteer stores supervisor and builder (having initially taken up similar responsibilities while still a secondary student). He cycles almost 10km (one way) to attend lectures for a degree in education (a secondary teaching qualification).

Building developments

Last Friday we travelled to Bushenyi and were glad to see the progress on the extension at the secondary administration block. Thanks to some recent donations, it now has a roof! The extension joins the admin block to the classroom block on its right, making an L shaped building. The smaller room in the extension will soon be used as a library or book storeroom, and the larger room (which in time can be partitioned into 2 rooms) will be used by A Level students. We have received (free) textbooks from the government aligned with the new secondary curriculum — a secure but accessible place is needed in which to keep them!

Progress has also been made at the secondary boys dormitory with the floor now completed in the third room (currently used as a classroom). The room was already in use, but the dust from the unfinished floor meant it was not a particularly conducive learning environment!

| Current Enrolment | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Primary | 358 |
| Secondary | 416 |
| College | 110 |
| University | 1 |
| Total | 885 |



Left: Admin block in 2019 and the extension a few days ago. Above: Its verandah (to be!).

Stop Press! We have just received exciting news from Hand in Hand that they have received £15,000 for a dormitory at the college. Thank you Lord!

College land

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, there is a piece of land for sale immediately neighbouring the entrance to JJ's vocational/technical college. It includes a small temporary building which the school currently rents for use as a small classroom, staff room, and accommodation for a duty officer/matron. We continue to pray for provision for funding to purchase this (approximately £8,700). The sellers are keen to sell to JJ and have given us more time to secure funding. We are also prayerfully considering whether we should buy half of it on a personal basis, using some of Horace's social security benefits from his employment, some of which can be accessed before the retirement age of 55 (note our President is 80 this year!). It has mains water and electricity sources nearby unlike our home a few kilometres away, by the schools. It is difficult to make the most of our time in Bushenyi with much of our work needing a computer/laptop.

Year One Welcome Party

The college recently organised a special day to welcome new students. It included career guidance from former students and tutors, sports competitions (staff & alumni beat the current students!) and some interesting competitions including matooke peeling, eating sugar cane race (see photo), miming to a song, and threading a needle at speed!



And at home... Two weekends ago we visited Yvonne (Horace's niece, on the right of the photo below) who started secondary school (in boarding accommodation) this year. Gilbert (Horace's cousin) took the photo. He was home for a few days in between work duties at a remote oil field, mixing logistics work with some Chinese translation duties(!). Penlope, our house help, a recent S4 graduate at JJ and a second-cousin ish(!) to Gilbert is also in the photo together with David, Cari and Daniel.

David (5 years old) and Daniel (2 ½) came with us to Bushenyi recently, as well as a new friend from the US who is working in Kampala for 2 years. She wanted to visit JJ and was keen for a photo at the equator(!). David has been with us since November 2023 and Daniel since January this year. Both are extended family members who were in need of a home. Cari (4 in June and daughter to Sandrine, our fostered daughter) is still living with us too and attends a local kindergarten with the two boys. A minibus comes for them at about 7:30am and brings them back home around 4:30pm (after a sleep during the day if needed) which gives me time to get on with JJ work without interruptions! Sandrine is engaged to get married and we are learning more about Buganda wedding traditions (her husband to be is from the Buganda tribe, of central Uganda). We are expected to host an "introduction" ceremony in Bushenyi, after a smaller function in Namagoma for close family and friends. Soon after that the groom's side will host the wedding.



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Happy Easter! Hoping you enjoy this weekend as we remember Jesus' death and celebrate his resurrection.

With love and thanks,

Horace and Bethan

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Working in Uganda with:

JJ Community Transformation (U),
Uganda NGO no: INDR1057118NB, www.jjctuganda.org

In partnership with: Hand in Hand,
UK Charity no: 1069976, www.hihand.org

For personal support: We receive no pay/personal income from JJ but rely on personal support and Horace's employment income. Bethan is a registered recipient with Stewardship, who have set up a support fund for our ministry. You can support us by making a gift to Stewardship for our fund. Please ask for a form, or visit www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20135200.