

Horace and Beth Update from Uganda

March 2021

Greetings!

Schools update The candidate classes started back for Term 2 of their academic year in October 2020 (rather than May), and returned to school in January 2021 for their final term. Senior Four (O Level) students are already sitting their final exams. Primary Leaving Exams and A Level exams will be held later this month or in April.

The government has released a timetable for children in other year groups to return to school, starting with the "sub-candidate" classes (Senior 5, the first year of A Level; Senior 3, and Primary 6) which returned to school on 1st March. Other classes will join in a "phased manner", after S4, S6 and P7 complete their exams. There will be at most half of a school enrolled at any given time between now and the end of the academic year in July. Colleges and universities opened on 1st March too, but with Standard Operating Procedures to follow, including using online learning where necessary.

Boys dormitory Towards the end of 2020 JJ received more funding towards the boys dormitory at the secondary school. Once the school closed before Christmas, students from JJ Excel College continued the construction work together with their tutor and a few other labourers. Two large rooms and the Warden's area are now finished, solar lighting has been installed, and last month S4 and S6 boys moved



into the dormitory together with their Warden. About £4300 is still needed to add to funds "in hand" to construct a third large room and a bathroom, and to purchase a water tank, construct its base and fix gutters to collect rainwater from the roof.

The building team also undertook some repair work at the primary school: Re-surfacing some of the classroom floors and worn parts of verandas as well as repairing a stone wall.

SACCO Since around the end of 2019 I (Beth) have been helping at a small sacco (savings and credit cooperative) operating in the same area as JJ. It began a few years ago after a few of JJ's parents requested Horace to help them set up such an institution. The sacco serves many of the same families as JJ, providing easily accessible banking services and small loans to many who would struggle to access the same at larger institutions. I was requested to get involved after changes in staffing left some gaps, and have enjoyed the challenge of learning as quickly as possible about their financial management and some loan related reports. Understandably, the Covid pandemic has had a significant negative impact, with many clients struggling to make their loan and loan interest repayments, and even expected income from the school fees deposits (30p per deposit) dropping to nought for over half of the year. Thankfully, things are starting to improve again now, and it is exciting to consider the possibilities for further development and its potential to help more families within the local area. I spent the last week of February in Bushenyi mainly based at the Sacco - time at its office is essential and useful, but, as for JJ work, much of it can also be completed from home by laptop (and internet!).

Wells In the last newsletter we mentioned the construction of wells/protected springs in villages which didn't have good access to water. A generous donation towards these activities enabled Horace to coordinate the construction of three additional protected springs towards the end of 2020 and early 2021, with the local communities also providing some input. The result—three very modest projects which had a significant impact on the families in the three villages.



Home The three young people who have been at home with us since schools closed a year ago have all returned to studying. Rita travelled to Bushenyi towards the end of February with Horace and I, and is now back studying in Senior 3 at JJ's secondary school. She was in boarding accommodation, but due to pressure on space due to new distancing requirements, for now she is sleeping at our home, together with Olivia, also in S3, and Olivia's older sister, JJ's Assistant Cook.

Gilbert, has started studying for a degree in Chinese & Asian Studies at Makerere University. He has shown interest & aptitude for learning new languages (his first choice on the application form was for Swahili teaching) and amuses us with some funny sounds he has been practising when at home in the evenings! He is one of about 20 students in only the second intake at the university to study for the degree. There is a noticeable growth in investment by the Chinese in Uganda and from comments by the lecturers it seems there will be various employment opportunities for him. We are very grateful for some continued sponsorship from a friend which is covering all the course fees, and also the recent purchase of a compulsory laptop.

Sandrine, like Gilbert, completed her A Level exams at the end of 2019. At the beginning of this month she began a 3 month course in hairdressing, and has already secured two customers from amongst our neighbours. She acknowledges making mistakes including in choosing her friendship groups during her secondary education, and became pregnant before finishing her A levels. Her lovely daughter is now 8 months old—she keeps me company at home during weekdays!

Yvonne came to live with us early in January. She is a niece to Horace, but her whereabouts had been unknown until recently due to the separation of her parents. She grew up with a guardian not too far from Kampala, and Horace, together with a sister to Yvonne's father managed to get back in contact with her a few years ago. Last year, due to ill health, it became a struggle for her guardian to care for her adequately. Thus, after making short visits to other family members, she came to live with us early in January. Like Rita, Yvonne turned 18 earlier this year. However she is still in Primary 5, due to brain damage as a baby. She attends a special school and will return to school, together with all Primary 4 and 5 pupils in April.

Hazel "got stuck" in Uganda when airports were closed in March 2020, despite plans to visit UK in April 2020, and then Israel later in the year. In early January she went to visit a friend from New Zealand who works in Kitgum, Northern Uganda, returning to live next door to us towards the end of February.

After having a relatively stationary time at home over the past few months, there is now a lot more travelling again, for us and for others. In the past week we hosted three visitors overnight when they visited Kampala for job applications and to sit an exam.

& finally... The current teaching series at church is entitled "Jesus is Coming Soon". A curious thought crossed my mind recently, maybe after having trouble with opening a rather stiff drawer in my desk at home, and having used a few rather cramped office spaces recently: "Maybe I will have a posh desk in heaven!!". I don't tend to contemplate what heaven will be like at all - knowing all will be well and good is enough!

Thank you for your interest and support,
With love, *Horace and Bethan*

Horace and Bethan Muhabuzi; muhabuzihb@gmail.com

UK contact: Mrs J.A. Nutting, Maesnant, Aberhafesp, Newtown, Powys, SY16 3HU. +44 1686 650321

Working in Uganda with:

JJ Community Transformation (U);
Uganda NGO no: INDR1057118NB; www.jjtuganda.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. We are registered recipients 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. Where applicable the value of your gift may be increased by use of Gift Aid (worth 25% if you are a UK taxpayer). Please ask for a form, or see www.give.net/20135200.