

Horace and Beth

Update from Uganda

Dear friends,

September 2024

Greetings from a sunny Uganda!

Our last newsletter included news about funding of £15,000 for a dormitory at the college. Hand in Hand then received a second grant for the same purpose which, together with donations from Hand in Hand's Christmas appeal gave a total of £26,438 towards college dormitories. Before starting building work Horace was informed about the sale of a property with 18 rooms, just 300m from the college. It included four rooms opening onto a road into the nearby village, designed for small businesses or shops. The property would be ideal as accommodation for students, and the front rooms have potential for training students e.g. in hairdressing/tailoring as well as in providing services to the local community, i.e. students would also gain experience in running a small business. We approached Hand in Hand about the possibility of using most of the funds to purchase the property. This was approved and JJ now owns a property which can comfortably accommodate over 60 students, as well as a warden, a short walk from the college site. The timing of the sale couldn't have been better; funding was available but not yet spent — Horace heard of the sale just a few days before we would otherwise have spent a lot on construction materials!

Photos of the front of the new property (with cassava drying outside) and the area inside.



The new property will be used for boys' accommodation, and we have started building a girls' dormitory on the college site using the balance of funds donated for dormitories. Unfortunately the foundation has taken a lot more than anticipated due to levelling requirements and very soft soil in one area. We had hoped that the balance would be enough to make one room habitable, but we will need further funding for the roof, windows and door — **needed asap!**

The purchase of the property nearby means that the piece of land recently on sale neighbouring the college is no longer a priority for dormitories, although securing the area by the college entrance is still important. Thus, having had no funding specifically for that purpose, we have completed the purchase partly on a personal basis. The college will retain/acquire the part near its' entrance, which includes the small mud house currently used as a staff room and for accommodation for a tutor who also acts as a matron/supervisor for boarding students.

More exciting developments at JJ:

◆ The library at the secondary school is now operational. The remaining part of the extension on the administration block (classrooms for A level) is incomplete, but the roof is on, and windows and doors are fixed, so it is also usable, albeit with an uneven, very dusty floor.

◆ The primary school received enough income from parents and guardians during term two to cover its basic running costs, including net salaries but excluding tax and social security requirements. However payroll costs were lower than usual due to the use of a few temporary staff. Recruiting (and retaining) qualified primary teachers is an increasing challenge in Uganda, especially in rural schools. This is partly as a result of new government criteria (degree qualified teachers by 2030) and a drop in newly qualified teachers, but also due to "dropouts" from the profession during the Covid pandemic — many found alternative ways of earning comparable income.



Left: College students levelling the land for the girls dorm and right, an electrical installation course practical assignment — wiring work in the offices.



◆ Student numbers at the college have grown to 137. Our target number to cover the running costs is 150, however many are failing to clear the fees due so we hope student numbers will continue to rise. As a result...more furniture is needed! We are trusting for provision for at least 50 sets of a stool and table at UGX 65,000 (around £14/\$18) each and 5 bunk beds (10 beds) at UGX 150,000/£33 each (wooden) or UGX 300,000/£66 (metal).

Other news:

◆ Gilbert, who has been partly dependent on us since secondary education after the death of his father, is now in China for further studies on a scholarship. After graduating with a degree in Chinese and Asian Studies from Makerere University in Kampala, he worked in logistics for a Chinese company in the oil sector for about a year, but was very keen to take up an opportunity offered to him recently (together with some of his university classmates) to study in China.

◆ The original, older part of our home in Bushenyi, (a mud and timber house), has been gradually destroyed by termites. Holes in the walls have been growing larger (and proved to be a great hiding place for rats!). One side (two rooms) had to be knocked down, and has been rebuilt, slightly larger, using bricks. Horace had gradually been accumulating some materials in preparation and the work started last month. There is one remaining "mud house" part which also needs replacing, as funds permit.



◆ Watoto Church celebrated 40 years in June with a large get-together of members from different church locations, including Gulu in Northern Uganda and Juba in South Sudan. We attend Watoto Kyengera, a few miles from home on the outskirts of Kampala, and a cell/fellowship group for members living nearby meets weekly in our home. Cell members met after the celebration service for a picnic lunch — finding a space was not easy, we sat behind a bus! The church has a large childcare ministry and one of our cell members joined its children's choir tour earlier this year as one of the group leaders. It was exciting to follow her progress and to hear how she met up with a former cell member, a current cell member and a temporary cell member while in the UK!

◆ **It rained!** We rely on water collected from our roof in Kampala (and fetch water from a protected spring/well in Bushenyi). It had been threatening to rain for some time, but we only received slight drizzle here and there, and our water tanks were almost empty. A few days ago we went to town leaving empty water tanks and about 60 litres of water in jerrycans. Thankfully prayers were answered and while we were away it rained...heavily!

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.

With love and thanks,

Psalm 136:1

Horace and Bethan



Secondary students: Making liquid soap in a chemistry practical, celebrating after winning a local football competition and studying in the new library.

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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.hiand.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.