

Turning Leaves Uganda

Newsletter 22, November 2022

Dear friends and family,

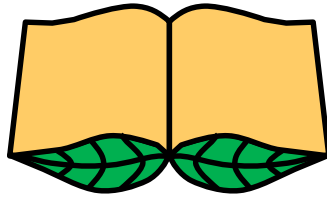
Greetings from Mbale! I trust you are all well and am looking forward to seeing many of you when I visit the UK next month. Apologies that it has been so long since I last wrote a newsletter. I had to take some time off work because of health challenges, and then the last couple of months have been really busy. Here in Uganda, as in the UK and many parts of the world, the rising costs of living are presenting huge challenges to many people. As is always the case in these situations, it is the poor who come out worst off and suffer the most. As many people here are subsistence farmers, and climate change is affecting the way people farm, those in rural areas are struggling to survive. Currently there is also an outbreak of Ebola in the west of the country (with some cases also in Kampala and a few other districts) but it seems to be contained reasonably well. So far, it is not affecting life in Mbale, apart from being more careful about hand washing, etc. We pray it comes to an end soon. On the upside, we are continuing to visit three schools/childcare centres, as well as to run our education outreach in Namabasa on a weekly basis. This is all going very well, and we already have a plan for next year. More detail to follow below! Last month, we were also able to visit the school we have a connection with in Soroti, and have agreed to run a small workshop with them at the beginning of next year, as well as to provide them with the necessary resources. They are keen to use our programmes.

Musoto Christian School, Musoto

This is our first seed school and the teachers and children are doing well, with positive feedback from the parents. There has been particular success in using phonics as a tool for teaching reading and writing, and the teachers and children in all three classes have made very good progress in this area. More creative and diverse teaching methods are being used, and lessons are generally much better structured. Next year, we would like to focus on making sure the programmes are fully implemented in all three classes, to ensure that the class teachers are well supported, as well as to iron out some managerial challenges. We would also like to find a creative solution to the expectation that children are given homework, as organising this wastes a lot of valuable teaching time. Together with the teachers, we have come up with a plan. Irene and I are meeting the Headteacher on Friday to discuss the way forward next year. Maggie and I very much look forward to continuing our work with this school next year.

Overcomers Special Needs School, Kamonkoli

Overcomers was set up specifically to help children with spina bifida and hydrocephalus receive an education, but now also takes children with a range of special needs, including children with complex learning difficulties. Maggie and I have been working with the nursery class, which is made up of four classes: Baby, Middle and Top classes, as well as Golden Class, for a group of children with severe learning difficulties, of various ages. Teacher Esther does a fantastic job at meeting the needs of all the children in her class, providing them with a good foundation. As with Musoto, the use of phonics is helping the children learn how to read and write well, and all the children, particularly those in the three regular classes, are working at a very good standard. Because of the composite nature of the class, however, it has been a challenge to fully implement our programmes. I am, therefore, working on a special programme designed to meet the needs of the particular learners in this school. We hope to use this next year.



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Nabuyonga Primary School, Mbale City

Although, because of time, we have not yet started working on a weekly basis with Nabuyonga Primary School, their nursery teachers attended our workshop and have already started using our programmes. Thanks to your donations, we have also been able to provide them with all the necessary resources. We very much look forward to working with this school next year.

Loved Children's Centre, Namatala

Loved Children's Centre provides a strong beginning (often life-saving) for vulnerable children from 0-3 years of age, as well as some older children with severe learning difficulties. We have been working particularly with two groups of children: the 2-year-old group and the 3-year-old group. For the younger group, I wrote a special programme designed to introduce the children to sounds and numbers in a playful way. The older group are using our Baby Class programme. This year, we have been getting to know the teachers and children, as well as their daily routines. The teachers of the older group are doing well at implementing our programme and using a range of conceptual tools to teach the children introductory literacy skills. Although we may not be able to visit Loved on a weekly basis next year, they run through the school holidays, so there will be plenty of time to continue our work with them.

Education Outreach, Namabasa

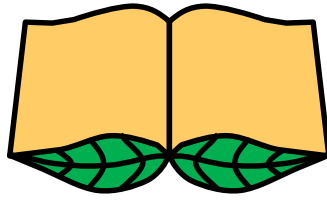
This is going extremely well and we are very excited about the progress the children have made! Thank you so much to everyone who made this possible. We have been working with around 30 girls (divided into 2 groups, roughly according to age) on a weekly basis. The older group, in particular, has made excellent progress and Maggie and I very much enjoy teaching them. The children are now able to identify numbers and sounds, and to understand and speak some English. Four girls are also able to read and write some words, and we have started to give them more challenging tasks. Next year, we hope to continue the outreach with three groups of children: Group 1 will be taken by Maggie for two hours and will be a new group of 15 girls, and Group 2 will also be taken by Maggie for two hours and will be our current younger group. I will take Group 3 (a group of 6 older girls who have made excellent progress) for the whole morning, with the aim of getting them to a point where they can enter Primary 1 without having to go through nursery. Thank you so much for your donations. As well as providing a simple education for these children, we have also been able to give them porridge and a snack (usually a samosa) each week.

Shammah Junior School, Soroti

Irene, Maggie and I visited this small school and met with the headteacher, who is very keen to continue her partnership with us. They have looked after the programmes very well and now only need some resources. I have agreed to run a shortened version of the week-long workshop when I get back to Uganda in January, and to support them to implement the programmes by visiting 1-2 times per month. It is a 3-hour bus journey north so no doubt Maggie and I will be having some very early starts! We look forward to beginning our work with this school afresh next year.

Model School, Namabasa

Our plans for the model school are coming together slowly. Joseph is working with the local authorities to register the land, and we have a plan for how we would like to develop and build the land. We hope to open in 2024, so hopefully the building projects can begin next year. It will be great to be able to model how the programmes can be used, providing a tangible picture of a different kind of learning journey, as well as offering a service to the local community. Maggie is doing such a great job in the schools we are working with, and we are looking at getting her the relevant qualifications so she can help to head up the



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nursery school. We think it may be possible to do a one-year post-graduate diploma at a local university on a part-time basis (at weekends and in holidays).

Christmas Fundraising, Namabasa

We would really like to provide some Christmas food (meat and rice) to the families in our education outreach, as well as some other particularly vulnerable families in the immediate community. If you would like to contribute towards this, please get in touch with Dad or myself for more information. Any donation, however small, would be gratefully received.

Conclusion

Dad is visiting in a few weeks, which I am very much looking forward to. I will then be travelling back with him to the UK on December 7th, landing in Edinburgh on the 8th. I will be in the UK until January 18th. This has been an interesting and busy year, and I look forward to continuing with the work we have been doing next year. Many thanks, as always, for all your support.

With love and best wishes,
Emma



Outreach



Outreach snack time



Loved



Overcomers Top Class