

Support for the Poorest in the World

Background

In 2010, following discussion in the church about the number of organisations being supported for Gift Day, it was decided to support only one. Around the same time, Tearfund began its 'Connected Church' programme, to encourage churches to take more in-depth interest in projects being supported. Following that decision, the church was asked to vote for a project by putting a pound in one of 3 slots representing the possible projects. The Water and Sanitation Project in Choma, Zambia, won by a mile and the fund-raising began. Four members of the congregation visited the project in 2013 to audit it and ensure our money was being wisely used - they were blown away by the integrity of the staff and what was being achieved. Over the 7 years of our involvement, the local community joined the church in fund-raising events and about a third was raised during the church annual Gift Day and the rest was raised by the generosity of people giving time, ideas and running and participating in events. In all, £87,000 was raised. During a discussion with Tearfund, as we came to the end of our seven year commitment to Zambia, we heard that the longer term aim was for Zambia to become a self-supporting country and the suggestion was made that we support another project elsewhere. Following discussion, the PCC decided to support two projects in Uganda. Here are their stories (for regular updates, please see Parish News):

Treasures in Jars of Clay (TIJOC), part of New Hope, Uganda

Objectives :

1. To promote a biblical view of disability and suffering at both Kasana Children's Centre and in the surrounding communities which is that every person is of value to God and should be to us
2. To care for individuals with physical and /or learning difficulties, equipping them with life skills and enabling them to reach their God given potential.
3. To provide education and support for families affected by disability in the local community

Since 2009, New Hope Uganda has been ministering directly to children with disabilities in the area



around Kasana, near Kampala, supporting the families affected. Disability is difficult anywhere, but in Uganda there are virtually no services or infrastructure to serve those with physical or mental disabilities. In the Ugandan culture, many look at children with disabilities as a curse, but God values each life and has a purpose for every person, regardless of disability. No matter how broken or fragile their body, mind or spirit is, we believe God has a purpose for them. Treasures in Jars of Clay seeks to reveal the treasure and potential planted inside each individual. The "Treasures in Jars of Clay" (TIJOC) ministry

includes two special needs homes (Hassan's House and Stella's House) special needs school onsite, and a community outreach program to support, encourage and train parents with special need children. Today, (TIJOC) touches over 250 special needs children and parents in the community

Anna's Story

Anna, is a seventeen year old girl who enjoys food and sensory play. She has severe learning difficulties and is non-verbal, but she certainly knows how to make noise and enjoy life! However, this was not always the case. Anna was healthy at birth, but developed a fever, resulting in convulsions at 2 months old. This left her with brain damage. Anna's mother, who was widowed several years after Anna's birth struggled to get her to eat well and was pressured by her relatives to keep her hidden away in their mud hut so that she wouldn't bring shame on the family; in Uganda disability is assumed to be either as a result of demonic possession, witchcraft or a punishment for sin!

By the time Anna was eight years old, her mother was being told to leave her to die as the relatives saw her as a great burden. In her desperation, she walked for miles to bring her to one of the Treasures in



Jars of Clay (TIJOC, NHU's special needs ministry) community sessions to get help. Anna was brought to us on a scorching hot December day, hidden in a bundle of blankets. Her head was a normal size but the rest of her body was tiny and her bones were protruding. She weighed just 5.5 kg (12 lbs) and could not sit. As a team we decided that we should send Anna and her mother to the local hospital to be admitted into the nutrition ward. At this point, Anna was only drinking 500 ml (16 oz) of milk a day. She refused to eat or drink anything else and would only accept the milk if it was the right temperature (very hot!) During her admission in hospital, she gained a little weight and her mother received some nutritional advice. As Anna was from a very poor family of subsistence farmers who lived far from New Hope Uganda, we decided to bring Anna to stay on-site for a short period of time, to enable her to follow a strict, high calorie diet. In our care, with regular visits from her family, Anna began to sit and interact with people. Her crying and self-stimulation behavior reduced and she began smiling and even laughing. However, despite a high calorie diet of liquidized food, Anna did not gain as much weight as we had hoped

and continued to suffer from diarrhea and weakness. It was not until a doctor suggested we try and give her some TB medication that she began to get chubby and to gradually accept solid food! She began to

shuffle along on her bottom and would grab food or drinks belonging to other children and staff! In time, Anna grew stronger and stronger. She learned to feed herself and began standing and walking with a special frame. In the past few months, Anna has taken her first, independent steps which she is very happy about! As well as the miracle we have witnessed in Anna herself, we can also testify to the miracle that happened in the attitudes of her relatives. At our community sessions, we are constantly sharing with the parents and caregivers, what we believe the Bible teaches about ALL people being unconditionally loved by God and ALL being precious and valuable to him. We are so thankful that Anna is now loved and accepted in her family. When she goes home for the school holidays she is well cared for and allowed to play outside with the rest of the family. In the tribe Anna is from, when a woman's husband dies, she then becomes the wife of the brother-in-law and this is what has happened with Anna's mother. She has since had 2 more children, one of whom also has severe learning disabilities following a traumatic birth. Vincent is now 6 years-old and is also a student in our Treasures Class. Both Vincent and Anna are both boarders during the school terms. We are thankful that Vincent has also been accepted by the family. Vincent was very poorly in his early years, but is now healthy and very active. Although he, like his sister, has autistic tendencies and sensory processing disorder, he has learned to eat solid food, feed himself, and enjoys interacting with others. Two months ago there was lots of excitement in TIJOC when Anna took her first few steps without holding onto anyone or anything. A night later she walked to the front of church as together we praised God for what he had been doing in her life, thanking him for those who have patiently and consistently worked with Anna over several years, and thanking him for the strength and courage he is giving her.



Kigezi Water and Sanitation Project

overseen by the international charity Tearfund



A perilous trek for water and ignorance of the dangers of waterborne disease is crippling communities in Uganda. Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Project (KDWSP) is here to help.

WHY WE ARE WORKING THERE

783 million people in the world do not have access to clean water. That problem can be seen starkly in south-west Uganda, a land of hills and valleys. Most villages are on top of the hills, whilst the water sources are at the bottom. Traditionally the children collect water, usually the girls; but the journey is fraught with danger. Doreen and Jouvlet knew those dangers intimately. They live in the village of Rwanyana and twice a day, every day they were forced to complete a two-hour round trip down the mountain to collect 20 litres of water. Without it their family would have had no water to drink, prepare food or wash with.

The pathway up the mountain is secluded so the girls are vulnerable to attack from young boys herding cattle on the mountain. It's a problem in the whole area, and many girls are at risk of being raped. The journey is also incredibly tiring and takes a long time. Doreen and Jouvlet often missed school, or arrived late because they had been collecting water. This had a big impact on their education and their hopes for the future. In this area of Uganda, there is also a lack of knowledge about the dangers of unclean water and bad hygiene practices. People don't know that not washing your hands before preparing food or after going to the toilet spreads disease. As a result there are high rates of water borne diseases like diarrhoea, particularly amongst children.

Climate change has also led to unpredictable seasons and events like landslides, floods, and soil erosion. For a well-off community these would be difficult challenges, but for the rural poor of Uganda, they are catastrophic.

THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme - or Kigezi for short - works with rural communities in the south west of Uganda to change this story. They want to see communities of people being able to collect water close to their homes. They want to see them using that water well, implementing hygiene practices that keep people safe, and adapting to climate change. Kigezi succeeds in this life-transforming mission by working through the local church, uniting the whole community around a common goal. They teach everyone about the importance of hygiene, and challenge practices that have led to disease and illness. They work with communities to help them identify the resources they have and what they are able to do. Their aim is always to leave communities more united.



KDWSP provides practical help to enable people to access safe water. Simple harvesting tanks store rainwater that gathers on roofs and gutters. These have the advantage of being constructed close to people's homes, removing the need to travel to collect safe water. In order to bring such tanks to communities, KDWSP provides the materials needed and trains people in constructing tanks. This means that they have not only

been empowered to change their own situation but they also have developed skills that impact the rest of the community. As others see the benefits of tanks demand for them grows, creating paid work for the trained group.

KDWSP also helps protect existing water springs and installs gravity flow schemes. Gravity flow schemes are spring-fed pipelines that bring water to communal tapstands. Communal tapstands serve several households from a central location where people can collect water. These are used rather than boreholes in Kigezi region, where the terrain makes drilling difficult.

Doreen and Jouvillet know what a difference this makes. Thanks to a rainwater harvesting tank built near their home, they no longer have to make the long trek up and down the mountain. Now they have clean water close to their home, and they concentrate on their education.



PROJECT IMPACT

This project will directly benefit 18,591 people living in rural communities in Uganda by providing them with clean water, and teaching them the importance of good hygiene practices.