

waterforkids

Uganda Field Trip– June 2009

A brief report of what Water for Kids and the visiting party did in Iganga, Uganda in June 2009.

Arriving in Uganda again accompanied by several WfK Members, the party looked forward to protecting more water sources, repairing boreholes and developing the water harvesting projects that WfK had been supporting over the last 12 months. We had carried out the following by the end of our visit:-

- Protected 4 more water sources
- Repaired 2 Boreholes
- Completed Namunsaala Clinic Water Harvesting Project
- Fitted basins to wards and improved the lab at Iganga Muslim Clinic
- Health Education from the Ladies Drama Group
- Started a new Water Harvesting project at Naigobya
- Water sampling
- Planned to provide water for the first time to displaced refugees living near Mukono
- More repairs to Iganga Hospital Plumbing

WfK's first full water harvesting project. was completed at the **Namunsaala Health Centre** near Iganga. The new health centre was built by our partners Daventry Friends of Iganga. (DFOI) had been an opportunity Working with the plumber who had supervised the project, we were able to provide a divert to remove the dirty water from the 1st few minutes of rain and witness a downpour that was so strong it burst some of the seals. There was time to get it fixed and receive the thanks of the staff and locals living nearby who are thrilled to have the new source of water, let's hope it rains a lot? Using our contacts at the orphanage in Iganga, that visitors' support, we were able to employ two of the orphans to paint suitable words on the tanks to tell everyone that the support had come from WfK and also make the whole project look much neater. At the official handover last year the Medical Officer said it was one of the smartest rural health centres in Uganda with its gravity fed rainwater storage serving the internal basins and shower.



Visiting WfK members got the chance to work on one of the spring protection projects; moving the earth surrounding the source and then placing the rocks in the hole to provide the filter. During the project we were able to employ the local ladies **Drama Group**, organised by Ruth who runs the orphanage. They visited the site and, through drama and songs, emphasised to the villagers the need for health education, hand washing and clean storage containers. The local people living in a very rural community enjoyed the laughter and fun included in the serious message,

In Iganga WfK has helped with water and plumbing repairs at the Town Council Health Centre but there is also a **Muslim Clinic** immediately in the centre of the town. Although it is called the Muslim Clinic, it is used by all the community with no segregation or division. Muzamiru the local Public Health Assistant, who makes our projects happen in Uganda, being a Muslim and part of that Community which forms around 60% of the local population, had asked that we support the Muslim Clinic. WfK were happy to not only provide water connections and basins to all wards but also to carry out necessary repairs and installation of new deep sinks for the laboratory. All the staff were thrilled, the patients surprised and the Elder of the Muslim Community made a special official thank you to WfK and the visitors from England for their kind gesture to his community.

We also continued working at **Iganga District Hospital** where WfK has been assisting DFOI with important refurbishment for the last 2 years. This time, following repairs and new sinks in the operating theatre and dental unit, we were able to completely replace a large internal roof storage tank, which was leaking badly and wasting a great deal of water. Also we carried out repairs to ensure that water was supplied to several wash basins and sinks in the maternity ward.



Think for a minute - Iganga has recently rejoiced at the connection of piped water pumped all the way from Lake Victoria 20 miles away. The hospital connected, when its deep borehole pump failed, but now they cannot afford to pay the water usage charges and are having to repair their borehole, this being cheaper than paying for the piped water. The International Funding from the IMF to provide piped water to many African communities is not the success it is supposed to be when the local ordinary people cannot afford to pay for it? Water for Kids has come to the rescue again.

We visited the home of several hundred displaced persons at **Mukono**, near Kampala. Originally this area of land on a hill in the centre of a very large sugar plantation was the home for the workers who had left their homes in the extreme north of Uganda to find work. But when the LRA had wreaked their hell through northern Uganda many of their relatives had run away from certain death to stay with their families near Mukono, set up home, had children and become residents. The government has built them a school but they have very little water, which they have to collect by walking large distances and up and down a steep hill. At the request of a friend of our previous Chairman Steven Young, we visited the site and with the help of local EHO and previous Commonwealth Fellow, **David Mwebaze**, we intended to explore the provision of water to the site with at least water harvesting off the roof of the school.

Sadly, since agreeing to that, David has tragically died of kidney failure and as a very young man, only in his mid thirties WfK has lost a great friend and supporter in Uganda. Our thoughts are with his young family, soon to have another young addition as they face life without David. WfK made a small donation to the funeral and family. It is hoped that if we can provide water to the community in Mukono, we can do this in memory of David.



WfK gets requests all the time from communities in Iganga that hear of our work. These are all visited, assessed and help is given to the more needy communities, where possible. One such request was from Peter Waiswa a Medical Officer from Iganga who had been able to open a government supported small rural health centre in his home village of Naigobya in a beautiful area 30 miles north of Iganga but still within the district. Peter requested that we consider helping with water protection nearby, but assessment and inspection showed that there was an inadequate quantity of good quality water, so a water

harvesting scheme was considered. This was approved and the project was being completed as the visiting party flew home. Reports are that it was a success and we look forward to receiving photos of the installation and visiting the site in 2010. *(The pic shows a group at the clinic with balloons for the kids)*

Hopefully, as supporters and members of WfK, you have read this story of how we have successfully spent your donations and gifts in Uganda. We still have some problems with maintenance of the water projects that we protect. We have started training which has resulted in improvements and our local team of Muzamiru, Hajji and Steven are spending more time regularly visiting the sites and making inspections. They are also advising village headmen and making the local communities understand why they must take more care in looking after their water sources. Sustainability is not easy in most African projects but we have learnt from our problems and I look forward to finding big improvements when we visit next year.



The picture above shows the party in Feb 2009 at Lake Victoria before departure for home

Peter Minhinnett
(Trustee of Water for Kids)
October 2009

A WfK Field Trip to Uganda in 2010?

I have had many requests from teachers who would like to visit in their school holidays so they can accompany us and bring families and friends. So leaving in late July 2010 is being considered. No clashes with world cup football ending on 11th July, or the WfK trip to Zambia. If you are interested the flight would be around £500 and I would say it would cost you a total of £900 for 2 weeks mainly in Iganga and £1300 if you stay the whole trip and join in the safari at the end. Let me know if you are interested, I will be confirming details very soon. I promise you will have a great time.



Water for Kids

Registered Charity No. 1059901

Helping people to get safe water for the first time.

www.waterforkids.org.uk