



Mary Wood Trust Autumn Newsletter 2019



Greetings to all of you and I hope you have had a good summer. This newsletter is a little later than usual so that we could report back on our latest visit to Kanungu in S W Uganda. Oliver and Clare spent almost three weeks there with two of their granddaughters - Jess (aged 18) and Emily (aged 16). They made a great impression on everyone they met and I know this whole experience had a huge impact on them (Jess and Emily), as you will see from their comments below.

As ever we are so grateful to all who support the Mary Wood Trust in whatever way you do - through regular financial support, for sponsoring girls at Nyakabungo Girls Secondary School. for responding to various requests as they come up, for donating items to be sold on E Bay and most importantly for holding the Mary Wood Trust in your prayers, as we try to improve the lives of young people in Kinkiizi Diocese.



"Recently I embarked on a trip of a lifetime to Uganda. After 6 months of fundraising and balancing my A Levels I finally made it to the fundraising total! Through the work in youth voice and youth empowerment I have done, I wanted to go out there to make a real difference with the girls., and honestly, it was incredible.

But I think I truly experienced a culture shock for the first time. Despite being quite well travelled, Uganda was worlds away from our life back home in the UK. From the shops, foods, attitudes and landscape- everything was so very different.

We were lucky enough to visit many people, through the Diocese and friends. So many people! We visited Nyakatare Health Centre, went on a health outreach programme to Mygere, attended a service at St Peter's Cathedral, Nyakatare, visited Ruth Memorial Nursery School and Nyakabungo Girls Secondary School.

Ruth Memorial Nursery School has evolved so much since the charity has been involved. It is filled with joyful and happy children. We did lots of activities with them! From play dough to colouring and painting to butterfly making! They then showed us how to make dolls, balls and ropes out of banana leaves. It is safe to say I don't quite have that skill!

On our second visit to the school we decided to brighten up their plain classroom walls. We painted a huge rainbow, alphabet tree, handprint tree and logo. For most of the children this was their first time using paint and they loved putting their handprints on the wall! Our hope is these new bright walls will create an even happier learning environment.

I then wanted to experience the life of a schoolgirl at NGSS. So I stayed the night at the school, going to the girls' lessons and living life like they do for two days! Honestly, the lessons are complete worlds away from anything I have ever done in the UK. They are old fashioned parrot style lessons, where the teacher will read something out of a textbook and the students will copy it down. It was hard! But these girls take it all in their stride.

What was most incredible was seeing the real impact the Mary Wood Trust has made. I think we can sometimes forget that the charity is changing young women's lives. The amount they have done at the school is immense and the effect it has on the girls there is clear. It allows them opportunities and an education and that is not something that can be taken for granted.

To conclude, this trip was a true eye opener into all the incredible work the charity does, every single penny goes towards benefitting the lives of real people and that is something that can't be put into words.

A huge thank you to all those who continue to support the MWT, you are giving a voice, hope and change to hundreds of people."
Jess

NGSS Celebratory Day July 13th

This was a special day at the school, not only to celebrate the visit of Jess and Emily, but also to welcome many Old Girls back to the school- to see all the changes that have taken place since they left but also to get them to share their stories with the present pupils and to encourage them. It was a great day, with speeches, sports and music. The rain, always a blessing, put in its appearance during the afternoon, but didn't stop everyone having a great time.



Ruth Memorial Nursery School

Can you imagine a nursery school where no-one has ever played with play dough or paints- not even the teachers? Where craft work consists of making things out of dried banana leaves? Where the classroom walls are unpainted, undecorated; where the children have no coloring books or crayons. Our recent visit changed that a little, as you will see from the photos. Introducing home made playdough was fun, as was painting on paper and also hand prints on the walls. Jess and Emily had a wonderful time with the children and left some of the walls colourful and bright - a much better environment for learning.

The 70 or so children who attend RMNS (all from very poor backgrounds), do however do lots of singing and dancing and they also learn how to count and spell, with very few resources. They are fed each day and they are kept in a safe environment. We are very grateful for that.



Community Outreach to Mygere

Nyakatare Health Centre does a wonderful job of taking its services to the people in the outlying villages of the diocese.

Jess, Emily and Clare accompanied the team on a visit to Mygere, where the church is the focus of the community.

Within the building babies were being weighed and immunised, Peter the dentist talked about oral health and hygiene and then extracted bad teeth (with local anaesthetic!) of the mainly older population. Many people were also tested for HIV, malaria and syphilis. Thankfully there were no positive HIV results among the tested. Jess and Emily gave out baby clothes to the new mothers and Clare was invited to talk the importance of good food for breastfeeding mothers and also about controlling family size. Despite torrential rain it was a happy occasion, finally topped off with singing and dancing. As always an amazing experience and showing just how important this type of health outreach is. The increasing cost of fuel means that the number of these visits is severely limited. We are trying to help with this where we can.



Future plans for NGSS

The kitchen and food store at NGSS has long been in need of upgrading. It leaks when it rains and only one 'oven' works. The store for dry goods is not secure and is vulnerable to vermin and the outside preparation and washing area is almost non-existent.

We have been blessed with two generous donations that we plan to put to this project, once all the costings have been agreed. We expect it to be nearly £10,000. Perhaps you might also like to contribute towards this? To help provide a clean and dry cooking environment and also a covered walkway so that girls can stay dry as they collect their food once it is prepared. The food that the girls get on a daily basis is very simple – posho (a maize porridge) and beans (pulses). On special occasions they might have matoke (green cooking banana), rice or beef.

The school does have some land where they are trying to grow matoke and greens and the girls are encouraged to help with cultivating these crops.



The Cliff Smith sewing room is proving to be a great success. During their visit, Jess and Emily led a session on female empowerment and encouraging the girls to have a voice and to stand up for themselves.

Jess introduced an **I Stand** project (see [I Stand Facebook Page](#)) where the girls are sewing bags made out of African material. These will be mainly sold in the UK. The girls had a democratic vote and decided that they would like to buy a music system for the school with the profits from this bag project. They love music - to play in church and to listen and dance to when they have social events. These bags can also be viewed on our Facebook page and are available to buy. (£10 and £8). Not only would you be supporting the girls but also helping the environment. If you are interested in supporting this project or finding out any more about it then please do get in touch.



Medius has recently successfully completed her course in electrical Installation, Asia has just finished her midwifery course. Noredah has completed her degree in social work and social administration. Pamela is studying for her part 1 CPA (post degree). 5 girls have just started diploma or degree courses at Bishop Barham University. We are also supporting a further 5 girls at university or other institutions of learning and they are at various stages of their training. This is a wonderful achievement, considering the backgrounds of the girls, and we are very proud of them. However, this all costs money and we will struggle to be able to carry on with supporting so many girls. Perhaps you feel this is something you would like to help with? If so, please do get in touch.

Finally, here are Emily's thoughts, looking back on her trip.

"My trip to Uganda with the Mary Wood Trust was the most amazing experience of my life. I met so many amazing people who were so welcoming and kind. The days we spent at Ruth Memorial Nursery School were some of my favourite days because the children there are so happy despite how little they have. However, the celebration day at NGSS was the best day of the trip because the girls were so excited and friendly. I will most definitely remember this trip to Uganda. It was very special"



The Mary Wood Trust relies entirely on your support. Thanks to all who give so generously. If you would like more information about our work or setting up a standing order or taking advantage of Gift Aid then please do get in touch - through our website www.marywoodtrust4uganda.org or our Facebook page: The Mary Wood Trust. Or you can send an e mail to info@marywoodtrust4uganda.org

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