



17 Feb 2016

Greetings from sunny, hot and very dark at night, N. Uganda!

Halleluiah, Hands Across Nations is back up and running our computers after a 3 week interruption of our electricity due to two transformer burn outs in our neighborhood. The water has also been mostly off and sometimes on for the last week. But we are now thanking God for the experience and for ending it after just 3 weeks!



Keith had our newly purchased generator chained and locked to our Toyota, "Ocen", and watched over at night by Denish, our armed guard.

This week, we are sharing Hands Across Nations Stories from the Lango tribal village "Learning to Read to Read the Bible" classes:

We are hearing encouraging and inspiring stories from the "bush" from Peter Pule, our lead teacher trainer. He returns to our HAN office with a wide smile when asked how things are going with the classes. 3 stories about some learners will also make you smile as so many of you have supported us in this venture.



There are far fewer men in the classes as more men have been educated and those who were not, are ashamed to admit they cannot read or write and don't want to join the classes. But those who come to learn, are excited and soon lose their embarrassment of being in class.

Oyoo Leone, is a 56 year old man who has an odd look at first glance as his eyes face in different directions. He describes himself as a man who missed out on school because of the 20 year war with a rebel army, which forced many into camps. He attempted to go back to primary school once the war ended almost a decade ago, but was "chased away" by the teacher because he was "too old and stubborn". Until just recently, he had despaired that he would never learn to read. Then the Hands Across Nations "Learning to Read to Read the Bible" teacher training came to his village. His name for the program is "Okello Kuc", or "Bringing Peace" in English. His life has been completely changed because he joined the class. First of all, he quickly learned of the love Christ has for him and gave his heart to God. He is a man full of confidence that he will one day become a preacher. His pastors agree and have engaged him in leading some of the prayers at church. He is early on in his learning, but already exhibits a joy in knowing that he has a destiny that has begun with learning to read and write. Leone was the very first in his class to buy the Baibul Atidi (little Bible) which is newly printed in the

Lango language by HAN and is sold at our cost - 15 cents. It contains all the scriptures included in the lessons in the first Primer book. When people struggle to buy their own little Bible, they treasure it and protect it.



Women are quickly learning to read and become confident and useful in their villages.

Lucy Omara was always ashamed when she voted in elections. Others could sign their names but she had to push her thumb into an ink pad, then press it to a paper listing names of those who voted. Often, her hands were dirty, rubbing both ink and grime on the paper necessitating repeating the process on a new sheet. She is only on lesson 11 of Primer #1, but she made it her first mission to learn to write her own name as elections are coming up soon. On February 18, she will proudly vote and use her name, not her thumb, to prove who she is. She is looking forward to the classes and is determined to complete the whole course. Illiteracy is an unspeakable shameful condition which many women have described with tears. Now they have tears of happiness that they are rising up out of their humiliation and disgrace.

Midi Oyoo started her Ber Atek (Very Good) Reading classes, with teachers who were trained in just 3 days, by our HAN Technical Team. It is astounding how ordinary people who can read, but have no training as a teacher, can become the Reading Teachers for dozens of learners in their villages. As they gain experience, their self-assurance rises and many are attempting new challenges they had never tried before. They are able to inspire and encourage their students to believe that though it is sometimes tough and demanding to learn a new skill as an adult, they are intelligent and can make it if they persevere. Midi's husband, Oyoo Richard was against her joining the class but she insisted and started without his approval. He was also illiterate and ashamed of it. At the teacher trainer follow-up meeting, he attended with his wife, and confessed that at night, he would sneak a look at her Primer and homework book, and study it. Soon, he relented, and joined the class with her. They are united in their

quest to learn to read and write well. Each of them bought a Baibul Atidi so they can have their own to study.

As a couple, they are teaching their own children how to read and write in LebLango. When they have mastered a lesson, they instruct their children. The children are in primary school but are learning all of their lessons in English, and can neither read or write in their tribal language. Midi and Richard will be a dynamic teaching team, once they have completed their own learning.

They say that they were deceived on many things by not being able to read. People would mislead them about what a letter or document said, and they had no way of knowing it. Now they will be able to read a document, and then sign it, knowing the truth of what it said.

The Apac District Education Inspector attended the teacher follow-up, and had glowing comments on the cultural results of the community women and men learning to read and write, especially so they can read the Bible. He said that their district was known for not giving the materials and funds from Charities and the Government, to those for whom they were meant. He is happy that HAN is providing glasses to teachers and learners and a method for adults to easily learn to read and write.

This week is national elections in Uganda and there is much anxiety and fear about the outcome, and also that violence might break out. We pray that calm will prevail and that God's chosen ones will be elected. Our favorite candidate was one encountered along the road returning from a Teacher Training Workshop in Amolatar, the most distant district, surrounded on 3 sides by Lake Kioga.



Ajalo Elizabeth Ecir, is running for Women's MP, and had the most creative campaign vehicle of any we have encountered! She was genuinely friendly, and willingly allowed us to take her photo while on the campaign trail. If the children that followed her could vote, she would win by a landslide!

It is a wonderful adventure which we are traveling with our trainers, teachers, learners, supporters and donors. Everyone who has joined us in this must know that they are essential to the final outcome we believe is possible: that every illiterate Lango person who desires to learn to read and write in their own language, would have that opportunity within the next decade. The Lord is showing us the way, and it is already happening.

God bless the HAN supporters and communities which are the ones providing the necessary prayer and funds to make it successful.

Keith and Carolyn Jones

Sharing the love of Christ in practical ways

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