



28 February 2017

Greetings from Hands Across Nations HAN in Uganda, land of perpetual summertime! We are in the dry season, which is especially brutal to many this year with swamps and springs drying up and the local water system struggling to have enough for people who are supposed to have running water to their homes.

We thank God for the small, drilled well that was left inside our compound when the Uganda Army left after the war that ended in 2007. Our rented home/office was used for the Army Headquarters during the 20 year war, and was renovated afterwards. The well was left without a pump, but Keith made one that is now our water lifeline during the driest of times.



Moses, (left) our backyard neighbor, and Jonathan, our staff member, give pumping a whirl as the regular water supply has completely dried up.

In the last several weeks, the literacy and English programs in Lira Main Prison have progressed to where both of the classes on the men's side and the literacy class on the women's side are halfway to finishing once again. Their previous classes graduated in November 2016 so progress is being made rapidly.

A new prison program has been started at Erute Government Farm Prison very close to our office.



Left to right – Bosco, Erute prison Welfare Officer, new teachers: Joyce, Sharon and Teddy, Carolyn – HAN Co-Director, after graduation at Erute Prison Teacher Trainer Workshop. The three women will be helping teach at the lepers/disabled class in Lira.

There were 5 of our Lira Prison teachers transferred there after they were convicted, who became the core group of 18 teachers who were trained for the Erute classes. Of the other 110 men in the prison, 71 signed up who are already excitedly taking part in 4 separate classes. Each has a name the learners chose: “Israel”, “New York”, “Bejing” and “Zebra”. As Peter, our lead teacher trainer, and I observed this amazing cacophony of classes barking out the syllables and words they were learning, we could hardly contain our pleasure at seeing another fledgling “Learning to Read to Read the Bible” program take flight.

The prison Welfare Officer has been extremely supportive of the program and has asked if HAN could help them start a library. They have a good size “Hall” for it, but will need bookshelves, tables, benches and books. It seems like a great project for the Chewelah Schools to support.... How about it Chewelah educators! We don’t yet have the dimensions of the room or the costs of the materials, but for a reasonable amount, the men will have a place to go to sit and read books in both LebLango, their tribal language, and in English, their national language. Jean Homer, former Chewelah Middle School Principal will be here for 7 weeks in March and April and will be able to give her expertise in developing the new library.

While hundreds of men are waiting for their cases to come to court and others who have been convicted are serving their sentences, there have been several in our “Learning to Read to Read the Bible” Program who have completed their prison time and have gone home. Two of them are near

and dear to us; Cipriano, C.P., and Francis Okello. Cipriano, completed a 10 year sentence and Francis a 5 year term.

Cipriano was one of the graduates in the very first graduation class in all of the Lango sub-region which happened to also be the first graduating class in Lira Main Prison. All of the first graduates and teachers received a Lango Bible. Carolyn, HAN co-director was blessed to be one of the first to congratulate them along with 2 Bishops and the Prison Deputy Officer in Charge.

Cipriano, had been a featured musician on the thumb piano for several HAN literacy program graduations. His profuse thankfulness for learning to read and write, touched our hearts deeply as he promised to pass his knowledge on to his family.



Victor, our translator who is from the same clan, called the clan leader to arrange a welcome home for Cipriano. Two of them met him at the prison to let him know that they were preparing for his homecoming in the village. C.P. after being in prison for so long, had no clothes, shoes or money for going home. HAN was able to outfit him, provide a mattress and soap, and staff member Jonathan (far right) to take him back to his home village.



Far left is C.P.'s wife and standing in the middle is his 10 year old son who was only months old when his father went to prison. Hopefully their father-son relationship will develop quickly and strongly. At first everyone was a bit shy and wondering how to react to each other.



Shortly, the family began to show their excitement and happiness at the return of their Muzee (elderly person). Cipriano is happy now to be reunited with his family.

Francis was Head Librarian at the small Lira Prison library and one of the English teachers Jean Homer trained last year.

Francis was “ever cheerful” (as the expression goes here) with a wide, welcoming smile whenever we visited the prison. Communication between inmates and their families is extremely limited. Our staff often helps them by contacting families by phone.



Francis and head teacher trainer Peter were more than happy on the morning of Francis’ release!



Francis gets a “lift” from a “Boda Boda” (motorcycle taxi) to his home village. (notice the absence of helmets) Motorcycle accidents are one of the largest causes of injury and death in our area. All of our staff have had at least one accident or near miss since being on our team. We thank God that their lives were spared.

Both Cipriano and Francis, went home with their heads raised, feeling that their time in prison contained a large benefit from what they learned through the HAN literacy and English as a Second Language programs. They now have special skills which could be used to lift their entire families and even communities from illiteracy and poverty. Both have said they will teach others in their villages to read and write using what they learned during their incarceration. Please pray for them to be able to carry that dream to completion.

The verses in the Bible that keeps coming back to us are in Matthew 25: 31-46. Part of what Jesus says in that story is that when we feed someone who is hungry, give a drink to a person who is thirsty, clothe the naked, invite in a stranger, look after the sick and **visit those in prison, we are doing it for Him** and will be rewarded with eternal life. Those who do not, have not done it for Him and will go away to eternal punishment. So we know that God will bless those who have helped those in prison and all the other ways of caring for the poor.

Thank you, to the hundreds of people who have been a part of this ministry! I hope through these stories you have a glimpse of how you are affecting the Lango people on a large scale. They frequently ask us to let you know how much they appreciate your assistance and are praying for you.

If you would like to help start the Erute Prison Library, or support another project, you may send a donation to:

Hands Across Nations, PO box 9048, Spokane, WA 99209

Go with God, Keith and Carolyn Jones, Co-Directors, Hands Across Nations

[keith.jones@handsacrossnations.com](mailto:keith.jones@handsacrossnations.com), [carolyn.jones@handsacrossnations.com](mailto:carolyn.jones@handsacrossnations.com)