



## What a difference a month makes for Hands Across Nations

April 2017

Greetings from Uganda, now in the monsoon season!

Less than 4 years ago, we would never have imagined the change coming in our purpose for Hands Across Nations, HAN, here in Uganda. The realization that very few of the village Lango people could read or write meant they could not be given the Bibles and glasses we had for them. That fateful question Keith asked of them one Sunday, “Would you like to learn to read so you can read the Bible?” changed our entire direction.

Now after 3 ½ years and many hours of training ourselves, teacher trainers, and potential teachers, local community and church leaders and illiterate learners how to organize, set up and run their own learning to read programs – we are seeing the beautiful fruit of everyone’s labor for God’s purposes. We were told it could not be done with all volunteer teachers and with learners buying their own books. No charity organization here or government program had ever done a program that way and most people said it would fail. In fact, when organizations did pay their teachers and gave the books free, they were unsuccessful anyway!

We knew we couldn’t fund the payment of teachers and they needed to have the right heart of compassion for their neighbors, or it wouldn’t work. And God has “shown himself powerful on our behalf” (comes from 2 Chronicles 16:9) because all of our hearts have been set on Him and His way of doing things.

Here’s what has happened through the “Learning to Read to Read the Bible” program just in the last month (reporting a bit late – much more has happened since this was written):

- Jean Homer, formerly of Chewelah, who now lives in Spokane, arrived, bringing 2 huge boxes of reading glasses. The airline did not charge her for the extra luggage and customs on this end did not charge us! God is good! Jean has been here 7 weeks, taking on transcribing of a new “Learner’s Bible”, organizing our “reading glasses room”, household chores and making visits to the villages, encouraging teachers and learners. What a gift she is to all of us! Please pray for her protection and health on her way home this week.



The small village of Angetta, Omoro County, in Alebtong District, “deep in the bush”, graduated 35 people including 2 disabled by the after effects of Polio.



Marching down the main street of the trading center with the one disabled man leading the way in his wheelchair, and the second at the back, drew attention to the long awaited graduation of the “Least of these” who can now take part in the community affairs because they now read and write well.

- Just under 500 learners in 4 village centers, have taken and passed exams and graduated from the program! That means they can read common Lango Language writings and scriptures put before them, write a letter or simple story using correct spelling and grammar, and do basic mathematics. This brings the number of total graduates since the first graduation in June 2015, to nearly 2,000!
- Another literacy center has taken their exams and are ready to graduate.
- Radio interviews and news reports of Hands Across Nations literacy program graduations have been broadcast all over the Lango Sub-Region and calls are coming in to start programs in new areas. Because of the news of the successful outcomes of the HAN reading program, some trained teachers from past workshops, who never started classes, are calling our head trainer, Peter, to begin classes in their area.





- Our class of 21 people with leprosy and other disabilities is finished with the first Primer book and starting Primer 2. (I couldn't fit the whole group in the photo as the space was so small) Though slower than most learners, 5 of them are becoming good readers, and most of the others are not far behind. Some who have mental disabilities are just enjoying being part of the class.....feeling loved and accepted. A second class of similar learners has started as well.



Jean made her way into the hearts of all the teachers and learners and had way too much fun learning their dances for the Lord.





- One female inmate, Sofia, (standing far left) graduated from the Hands Across Nations Lira Main prison literacy program November 25 2016 and returned home. She and Grace, (standing next to Sofia) a friend of hers from another tribe, have mobilized 55 people in their village, mostly young single mothers and elderly men and women, who are learning to read just using Sofia's primer book and a smoothed square on the outside wall of a local business for a blackboard. (back, center of photo) They are determined to complete the program together, even though many in their community ridicule their efforts. We had NOTHING to do with organizing and starting their program but Sofia learned basically how to do it from being a learner herself. She called Peter to provide assistance in teaching the learners well. We've provided a blackboard and chalk and will make the primers, and "Little Bibles" available for purchase for the learners.



- Peter has scheduled a Teacher Training Workshop for 8 new teachers who want to help Sofia and Grace with the classes. Here he is working with 6 of them to give them a head start with organizing the classes and beginning to teach. We're excited that God is expanding the learning where we haven't even been ourselves! We will keep you informed about this amazing group.





Victor and Richard celebrating the final transcribing and editing of the Gospel of John.

- The Gospel of John is fully translated into easy to read LebLango (Lango tribal language) and is complete in transcribing it to the computer by Rachel Amai, an American missionary who volunteered her time. She and her Lango husband, lead Bible Studies with local Lango men and women. John's Gospel will soon be printed and available to the adult literacy learners and teachers, and to the prison Bible Study group Stan Chambers, from Valley, WA. started last year.





- The booklets of James and 1 John continue to sell out, at 6 cents apiece, when learners find they can start to read them after only 20 – 25 lessons.



Jean, Richard and Victor editing Bible books the men have translated. Jean is transcribing them into digital files which will be printed into a “Learner’s Bible” soon.

Through all the physical challenges – repeat bouts of malaria, relatives and neighbors of our staff being injured, sick and dying, cars breaking down, power and water outages, and spiritually – disappointment in things not going according to plan, people letting others down (not unlike our own country).....We are still experiencing the Abundant Life that God promises when we give our lives to Him and His purposes. We stand amazed at what He has done and is doing through our “not so perfect” efforts and in spite of them as well. We can’t take credit for it because much of it was unplanned by us.

As we revel in God’s awesome interest and power in transforming people and communities, we continually recognize that our HAN supporters have made it possible. We know it would not be achievable without the prayers, assistance with sending glasses and other needed equipment, and financial support of those



at home. Thank you for being the “wind beneath our wings”. What a privilege!  
Thank you, again and again AMEN!

Keith and Carolyn Jones

Sharing the love of Christ in practical ways

If you would like to help support the work in Uganda, you may send donations to:  
Hands Across Nations, PO Box 9048, Spokane, WA 99209.

Or feel free to write us at: [keith.jones@handsacrossnations.com](mailto:keith.jones@handsacrossnations.com), and  
[carolyn.jones@handsacrossnations.com](mailto:carolyn.jones@handsacrossnations.com). We love hearing news from “home”.