

[Note: Prison photos have been removed from this newsletter for privacy reasons]



HAN Newsletter 12 Feb 2018

Prisons have become Universities!

Keith and Carolyn send you all greetings from Hands Across Nations in Northern Uganda, land of the sweltering hot dry season! With only one working fan in the house, and broken air-conditioning in our vehicles, we are becoming REAL Lango people keeping cool by moving slower, splashing ourselves with water, and protecting ourselves from the heat! It doesn't seem to bother us as much as in the past.....it's just normal now!

These past few weeks have been so exciting and filled with seeing the hand of God in so many happenings! So often, people on the mission field do not see any results from all their labors for quite some time. We have been blessed to see the Lord's interventions and blessings in the past, but lately they seem to be coming more rapidly and powerfully.

Our Ugandan Team of 7, all of whom started with us nearly from the beginning of the literacy program in 2015, are still with us! We have added Grace Amalo, who used to work as a nurse's aide, joining us full time mid-2017 to take over the housekeeping and kitchen work from Lucy. Lucy has stepped into the position as "Office Manager" beautifully as Keith trained her in the running of our Duplicator/Printing Machine. She is independently printing all of our Primer books, and class materials, and other booklets for the English as a Second Language classes. Lucy finished only 3<sup>rd</sup> grade but has learned to not only read in LeLango, she is becoming a teacher in the Leper/Disabled classes with Jonathan, her mentor who is one of our Teacher Trainers. We are blessed beyond measure to have such a cohesive and dedicated team!

Victor and Richard have completed translating all 27 Books of the New Testament and have completed 21 Books of the Old Testament, for a total of 48 Books completed, with "only" 18 more to go to complete the WHOLE BIBLE!! This project was started in January 2016, and there were several short-term translations done for the Farming God's Way Manuals and Little Bibles for the classes. It is simply beyond comprehension that they could produce such a body of work in such a short period of time! It is only with God's strength.

Congratulations is in order for Lira Main Prison, Men's 9<sup>th</sup> Graduation class. Every class member GRADUATED! We were honored by the presence of Officer in Charge, OC Maureen Ninsiima, (red hat) L-Center, Regional Prison Commander RPC, Tobias Oca Ebong, (red hat) Center, and to his left in the gray shirt, Oyam District Prison Commander DPC, Ebong Patrick. OC Maureen was the first person to partner with Hands Across Nations to initiate the "Ber Atek" Literacy Program in February 2015. Lira Main Prison was the Pioneer Program, and it is still going strong!

Since Carolyn's return from the States at the end of December, there have been 3 prison graduations and a village graduation, plus a Teacher Training Workshop which was spearheaded by a former inmate, all in the last 3 weeks! It's been quite a wild ride with all the celebrations, and setting up for the next Teacher Training Workshops.

Lira Main Prison had 75 graduates and had more that were either transferred or released.

At each graduation there are usually a song or two and a drama, written by teachers and learners in the "Ber Atek" classes.

In each prison, Our team trains teachers from the new graduates who have a heart for it, and they become teachers for the next classes. At this point there are usually about 100 inmates in each prison who sign up for the "Ber Atek" learners class. They complete their 2 primer books usually in 4 months so 2-3 groups of inmates per year in each prison, learn to read and write in their native tongue. The graduates can now join the "English as a Second Language" classes as well.

Oyam Prison has a very successful men's literacy and ESL program and regularly have over 100 learners in classes of both Literacy in the Lango language and English as a Second Language ESL! The women have smaller classes and hope to start ESL after the next Literacy graduation.

The Regional Prison Commander (RPC), on the right above, has attended all 3 prison graduations. That is a first, as no other RPC has ever attended a graduation. As a believer in Jesus Christ, he is dedicated to promoting this learning not only in our 3 prisons but in the other 13 prisons under his command! He has given us permission to expand to all of them! He now calls the prisons "Literacy Universities"! The graduates and teachers are highly motivated by the RPC's appreciation of their efforts and accomplishments.

It has also been said at a meeting of all prison Welfare Officers, that the Lango Sub-Region Prisons have the best literacy programs in all of Uganda, in part due to the Hands Across Nations programs. Imagine that! To God goes all the credit and honor as He has led us one step at a time, one important contact person at a time, to where we are today. There have been over 800 prison graduates since the initial class in 2015, and with literacy and ESL programs expanding into other prisons, we will have thousands of men and women who will be returning to their home communities to start classes for "Learning to Read to Read the Bible".

After having many problems with PA Systems as above, that are rented, with bare wires twisted together instead of plugs and poor microphones which switch on and off throughout the program, we are intending to purchase a good, lightweight system we can count on for future graduations.

We have also met another missionary from the U.S. who is a prison chaplain and is very interested in getting involved in prison ministry here in the Lango Sub-Region. Recently he left to return for a month to the U.S. but he has attended one graduation and is enthusiastic about taking part when he returns with his family.

We are continually blessed and thankful to be a part of something so astounding, which started out of a short-term mission to Uganda back in 2001. Everyday there is more evidence of our living God, who is active in working through His people to raise others up out of ignorance and poverty to higher ground. Keith and Carolyn do the background work to make our Ugandan team successful in their work

taking “Learning to Read to Read the Bible to all of the 2 million Lango Tribe members. Little did we ever dream that God would use prisoners in such a powerful way! He’s not using the rich and powerful. He’s chosen the imprisoned, the weak, the disabled and the Lepers to be the ones who will bring this to the rest of their illiterate sisters and brothers. Halleluiah!

Sharing the love of Christ in practical ways,

Keith and Carolyn Jones,

Co-Directors, Hands Across Nations

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