



## **June 1, 2022 HAN Newsletter**

### **Out of the Lockdown, and back into the Prisons!!**

Just a month has passed since our arrival in Uganda and the full day drive North to Lira! It was an uneventful trip and once again we were allowed to bring hundreds of pairs of reading glasses into the country free of duty though the Airport duty person showed us in writing that even NGOs bringing in goods for their projects have to pay duty! After explaining our work with the prisons supported by the second in command of Uganda, and showing her our brochure with photos of the prison literacy classes, she relented and let us through duty free! Praise God, He can easily change people's minds for those who are called according to His purposes!

What a wonderful 4 weeks we had with Connee Potter, from Chewelah WA, joining us in Lira, Uganda! Connee and Jean Homer from Spokane, WA have spent the last several years typing the hand written Lango Tribal Language translations of the Bible by Otim Richard and Ouni Victor. Only the book of Isaiah remains to be typed!



Connie says she LUUUUUUUVS to type and it doesn't even matter that she doesn't know what words she is typing but is joyful that they are God's Word(s)!



She worked incredibly well with teacher/editors Richard Otim (not pictured), and Silver Ogwal who were on the original Primer 1 & 2 development team, and Sam Engol! 23 New Testament books are either printed or ready to print with Acts, Romans, Colossians and Revelation still in the editing process. 31 Old Testament books are completely typed, with all the paragraphs complete, and are ready for the editing process. It is an amazing accomplishment for a few extremely motivated people to accomplish in the time Connee was here. Surely the Lord was assisting them and giving them extra diligence and strength.



Connee was willing to suffer through some hot nights with mosquitos (carrying malaria for sure) buzzing all around her temporary papyrus bed frame with an uncomfortable foam mattress topped with memory foam

she brought from the US, and a mosquito net suspended from a clothes drying rack on each end of the bed. Without any complaint she patiently waited for a bunk bed being made for her. She eventually received her bed and stacked a thin foam rug, several towels and baby quilts, and a yoga mat between one thick mattress and her memory foam to make a passable mattress for her long stay. She was diligent in taking her malaria prevention and never got sick which is quite a feat for most visitors! What a trooper!!

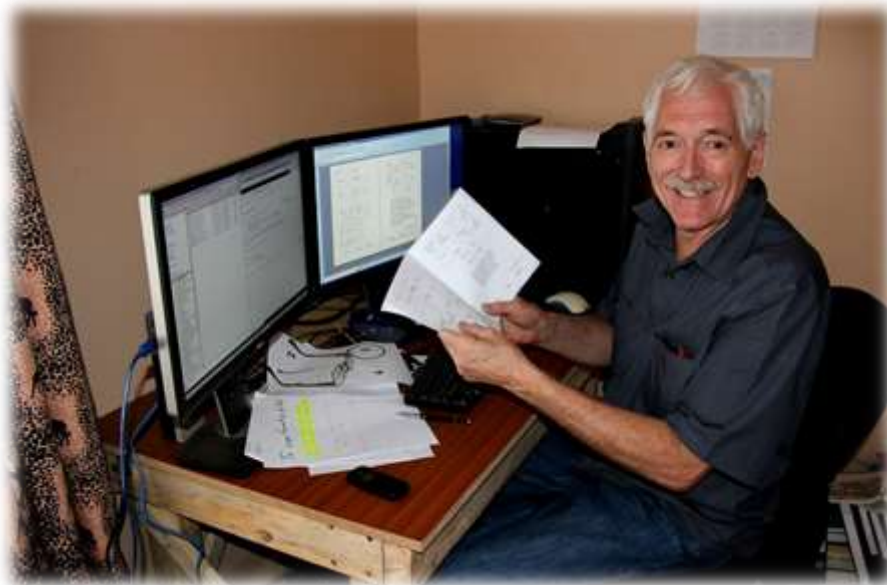
As with many organizations during the Covid years, Hands Across Nations (HAN) has had time to reevaluate how and what we are doing here in the Lango Tribal Sub-Region. We have condensed our HAN team, letting go of several people with generous severance pay, while continuing with others who are needed to manage certain activities and programs, especially having to do with the prison literacy program, taking the Easy to Read Lango Language Bible to completion and running our office/home efficiently. We are thankful for the people God gave us to launch the “Learning to Read to Read the Bible” literacy program in this region and know that they have increased their knowledge and skills in this challenging project from its inception and infancy to being operational on a large scale. We are indebted to them and wish them well as they continue on their journey with Christ as their guide.

Currently we are happy to be welcomed back inside Lira Main Prison for men. There are over 900 men in the prison which is in a building stage of new wards (dormitories) for the men who are accused or convicted of serious crimes. We have had the opportunity to have strong relationships with most of the Prison, District and Regional Commanders in the Lango Tribal Sub Region which has given us excellent support and access to working with the men and women inside the prisons.



In Lira Main Prison most of the men are awaiting their trials, usually for 4 years, and some over 8 years. Many are highly motivated to learn how to read both in their native language and in English. Some men that are already readers have become excellent teachers and teacher trainers through our HAN program. Most have a great desire to return to their home villages and teach their clan, family members and neighbors how to read. It also gives them a skill which makes their return home positive for those receiving them. They have something extremely valuable to offer their communities. While on Covid lockdown, Bible Discovery reading groups continued using the Gospels from the New Testament with many of the men coming to faith in Christ and pledging their lives to Him.





Keith is the guru behind the scenes who coordinates the setting up and printing of the Primers, and individual Books of the Bible with Lucy, our Office Manager, helping out with the actual printing and collating process. The Christian character of the men in the Bible Discovery groups has grown, and been praised by the Officers in Charge and the entire prison has continued to be increasingly peaceful as an outcome. Focusing on Matthew 25: 31-46 where Jesus talks about the Final Judgement coming for all people, has given the men an opportunity to consider how they have lived their lives in the past and how they will live their lives from today on. Putting the Bible in their native language, into their hands, is absolutely life changing.



This past week, the first Ber Atek (Very Good) Literacy Class since the lockdown, held a graduation ceremony in the Lira Main Prison. 24 men successfully passed their examinations, and 4 will return and go through the lessons again with the new classes containing 54 students. It usually takes about 4 months to successfully complete all 72 lessons well. The simple and amazing method of teaching reading was developed by “Literacy and Evangelism International”, a Christian Organization in Tulsa Oklahoma, ([literacyevangelism.org](http://literacyevangelism.org)). Carolyn Jones and Abongo Levi, our HAN Board Chairman, attended a 5 week training program in 2013 to learn the teaching method. Connee, Silver Ogwai, Sam Engol (editors of Lango Language Bible), and our office manager Lucy were also able to attend the graduation to witness how their work in writing the Lango language primers

and working on the Lango language Bible is having an enormous impact on the men learning to read. On graduation day, the District Prison Commander attended and was extremely pleased when he randomly chose 4 graduates and had them read from the HAN printed Lango language Bible books of James and 1 John which they were seeing for the first time! To his amazement, without any previous practice, they were all able to read the various passages selected. The graduates will now start English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons. Their first book in English will be a "Bridge Book" developed by Jean Homer, former middle school principal from Chewelah, which uses the words they learned to read in the Lango literacy class. Using illustrations from their earlier Primers with the new English words makes it easier for them to make the transition into reading the English Primers called "Today", "Yesterday", and "Tomorrow" which were also developed by Literacy and Evangelism International.



HAN has had thousands of reading glasses donated by Mike and Helen Salapka of Chewelah and through the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs making it possible for even those who have extremely poor near vision to read well. The recipients enjoy being able to select their own colorful and sturdy glasses cases handmade by Carmen Deal of Chewelah. While she's in sunny Arizona for the winter, she gathers stunning fabrics and sews hundreds of cases each year!

This has been a thrilling, and exhausting month and there's more to tell! Stay tuned for the next newsletter which will cover a visit to a special young girl out in the "village" and a real live Safari trip for Connee!

God bless you for supporting and praying for Hands Across Nations and all of the people who are working to make the "Sharing the Love of Christ in Practical Ways" possible.

Keith and Carolyn Jones

[www.handsacrossnations.org](http://www.handsacrossnations.org)

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