



## HANDS ACROSS NATIONS BACK HOME IN UGANDA

March 2020

Greetings from Lira, Uganda our second home! Keith and Carolyn Jones, Co-Directors of Hands Across Nations HAN are finally back in Uganda after a fairly long stint in the U.S. It takes almost 3 days with several flights from Spokane through Minneapolis, Amsterdam, Kigali Rwanda, to Entebbe Uganda. Then there is a day's wait for a small aircraft flown by Mission Aviation Fellowship to the dirt runway in Lira, N. Uganda where Hands Across Nations resides. A small entourage of our staff was there to welcome Carolyn and her 8 pieces of luggage, mostly carrying reading glasses for the literacy students.



Richard (left of boxes), Carolyn Lucy and Victor with Peter behind them, having a great reunion on the runway in Lira



Gee it's good to be together again!

Our two vehicles are still down with broken transmissions so one borrowed car and one motorcycle made several trips to get people and luggage back to the office which is fortunately only 5 minutes from the airstrip! It sure beats the 7-8 hour drive we've had in the past to/from Kampala.

Though we are in the "dry season", it's been surprisingly rainy so everything is very green and our compound inside 7-8 ft walls resembles a jungle of orange, tangerine, lemon, banana, papaya and mango trees with gardens of veggies and flowers.



Jonathan is the main caretaker of our compound gardens on top of all his other tasks. He and Grace, our kitchen helper, are standing by one of our papaya trees. Below he is displaying a mango tree which was barely taller than he is, when we moved here in 2013. Jonathan and his brother Peter are excellent interpreters for speakers and they are both now learning how to translate from written documents and books. They are working on the story of Alexander MacKay – an early British missionary to Southern Uganda.



There is a swarm of billions of locusts heading our way from Kenya which hasn't seen an outbreak in 70 years. In fact it has already crossed the Ugandan border and has attacked vegetation in an area only 3 hours drive from Lira.

The experts are saying that a medium-size swarm of locusts can eat the same amount of food as the entire population of Kenya in a day!! That is about the size of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York combined! So Uganda is on the edge of a disaster.

The good news: In the month since the swarm arrived in N. Uganda – no locusts have been seen in our district!! Praise God. The other areas have had ground and arial spraying and the swarms have moved north toward Sudan.



Living here means getting used to the power and internet being consistently inconsistent, off and on regularly. The water is usually off at night when the power is on and visa versa! Then there's the wildlife that we encounter both inside and out of the house – a variety of lizards and rodents along with the ever present malaria carrying mosquitos. We heard a terrible racket one night and found a snake in the hallway which had fallen from an opening in the attic where Keith had suspended a fan to draw away the hot air in the house. That poor fella got a beating by the fan blades on the way down and Keith finished him off by a machete chop to the head! Carolyn encountered a second snake just this week in the office which was quickly dispatched by Lucy with a hoe.....We are in a continuous battle with ants, rats and mice but we will never give in! Never a dull moment!

Prayer is needed for our team:

1. Victor, "the Emperor" we call him, has retired with a big send off!





He is ready, at 87 years old, for the quiet life in the village and being able to sleep late each morning....His statement was "What was essential has been completed" referring to the translation of the entire Bible into an easy-to-read Lango Language version. He will be available to help with the editing and proof reading. The New Testament and much of the Old Testament has been transcribed by Jean Homer and Connee Potter with others intermittently. Booklets of Matthew, James and 1 John are in circulation already.



2. Isaac, our illustrator, is diligently continuing his artwork for the Bible. He initially struggled to complete his illustrations in a corner of a dark, rat infested woodworking shop.



Isaac now has his own light filled space in the HAN office and he has adopted a rather unique posture in which to draw his illustrations!



Isaac has also completed a series of color drawings depicting the suffering his tribe suffered at the hands of the “Lord’s Resistance Army” for 20 years. They rarely talk about it but they continue to be affected by the losses and afflictions they experienced.

3. Peter, our head Literacy Coordinator made the journey by bus to Kampala to find our registration and permit paperwork which had been held up though it had been applied and paid for 2 years ago. His perserverance and people skills provided just the right combination for him to return back to Lira with both documents in hand! It was also a cause for a great celebration of thanksgiving to God and Peter.





Prayer is still needed for a new regulation document called a “Validation” which is in process – another layer of Red Tape to overcome.

4. Several of our team members have had sickness and deaths in their families and an arrest in one family. Hardly a day goes by in which there isn't some distressing situation for them. They would be grateful for your prayers as so often they are the ones carrying the burden for the rest of their family.
5. Keith, the visionary part of the team, is continuing to develop the plan for a future project in the prisons, which has been requested by the Regional Prison Commander and the Commissioner General of Prisons. For the time being, it is just in the planning stages, so once it is more concrete, we'll explain the details. Keith says his “ideas are a dime a dozen” as many come to him throughout the days and nights.....Carolyn says her ideas are worth a “million dollars each” because they come to her exceedingly sporadically with lots of space between! (Unless they have to do with people and parties!) She is finishing all the documentation of the financial data base which covers all of 2019 in preparation for the Ugandan auditor and for US taxes generously taken care of by Kemper Rojas at Fruci and Associates in Spokane. She is also writing the HAN Newsletters and 2019 reports for the village and prison literacy programs, while keeping up with the staff and office finances. This is not her strength but it is becoming more familiar and easier. That allows Keith to do the planning and preparations for the new project as well as documents necessary to keep us up to date with the Ugandan government.
6. The literacy programs in the villages and prisons are running on their own and there are many classes which have now finished their 2 primers and are preparing for their final exams. The numbers are quite amazing of what has been accomplished since January 2014 when we first wrote the primers, trained teachers that February, and started classes in the villages shortly thereafter. A general report is in progress.....we plan to send it out soon.
7. A recent bad news/good news story .....Richard, one of our translators and board members has had some difficult days with two of his children quite sick and his wife taking care of her ill mother far out in her home village.....recently the youngest boy Paul was brought home sick from school so Richard felt he should go bring his wife home to take care of him. He found she had been bitten on her ankle by a poisonous snake the night before and had swelling to the top of her thigh. She was in such pain she was unable to



walk. Immediately he knew what to do because of all the training in the use of charcoal remedies through our literacy program.



He pounded charcoal and sifted it to a fine powder, added water and some flour and made a poltice in a cloth for her ankle and brought her home on a motorcycle. Through the night, he reapplied a new poltice every 30 minutes. In the morning her leg pain was nearly gone. She can walk normally on it, and there is minimal swelling. She will continue with the poltices on her own. People calling from the village are amazed at her recovery thinking she would be much worse or possibly dead! Richard now has a wide audience to train in the use of ordinary charcoal for many medical problems including wounds, diarrhea, sore throat, nausea, and snake/insect bites etc. HAN has instruction sheets in English and the Lango Language to give away. John Dinsley, author of [CharcoalRemedies.com](http://CharcoalRemedies.com), who trained many of us in Chewelah in the use of charcoal, would have been proud of Richard's quick action! See [charcoalremedies.com](http://charcoalremedies.com) for more information and products. It may save a life in your family.

We miss our friends at home but will keep in touch through The Independent Newspaper, The ALF newsletter, our website, email and our HAN newsletter. You can also text Carolyn at 509-979-7448. Thank you to the many who have supported us over the years. Without you we couldn't be here. God Bless all of you.

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