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Linking the people of Guildford and Mukono, Uganda

LINKnews

May 2015



Note from the Chairman

Guildford's Link with Mukono, Uganda has been established for 12 years. Cllr Sallie Thornberry, could never have envisaged that her idea and drive would launch such a dynamic organisation. Our two communities have grown together from the idea that Guildford should have a twin town in the developing world so both could learn from each other. Barriers have been broken down, relationships have developed into friendships and we have achieved diverse objectives. This is because we respond to the enthusiasms of our supporters, ranging from education to sport to the environment.

Seven schools are now Linked with some flourishing, as they share curriculum projects and Guildford schools raise money for infrastructure like classrooms and boreholes. Many teachers from Mukono and Guildford have benefitted from the life-changing experience of visiting each other's schools and many children in Guildford now know more about the lives of children in Uganda, understanding the difficulties they face, from collecting water to learning in a class of 100.

Eight students have been sponsored through university and are now able to contribute more positively to Uganda's future. 500 chil-

dren play football every week and two bands benefit from 50 brass instruments donated by Guildford. Enactus students from Surrey University are developing a project with one of our Link schools.

But it is the future that is so exciting! We have a brilliant committee in Mukono who are equal partners and guide us to the projects that would really benefit their community. As more people in Guildford get involved and offer their skills, more projects can be considered. Workshops are valued highly. A retired science teacher from Guildford gives yearly workshops to primary teachers and is always invited to teach a secondary school class. Have you a skill or experience that would benefit a group in Mukono? You would be welcomed and given an experience of a lifetime.

We have worked with schools and individuals in Guildford but projects could also be supported by organisations or groups of like-minded people to support a project directly. Perhaps you could consider raising money knowing exactly where it is going and who it is benefitting. We are hoping to sponsor talented orphan children through school, as too often these children drop out because they can't afford the uniform and books. Sponsors could have real feedback as they change the future of a child.

Do join us and be part of Guildford's exciting partnership with Mukono.

Tamsy Baker, Chairman

Please visit our website www.guildford-mukono.org.uk and become a member. ●

Weekly sports sessions for 500 children!

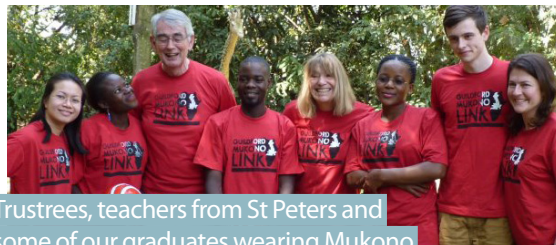
500 children at three different sites across Mukono participate in weekly sports sessions. These sessions are led by teachers from the local schools and students from Mukono's Uganda Christian University. A workshop is organised every year to give skills to the volunteers. This year the workshop was organised by the Sports Co-ordinator Kalule, one of our sponsored graduates. The facilitators focused on managing large groups and ensuring that the activities are beneficial and fun! For many children this community programme is the highlight of their week. Thank you to the many volunteers from Mukono who



Sports session

make this project such a success! But also thanks to the University of Surrey, Cranleigh and Chobham Football Clubs for balls and equipment. ●

Catching up with our university graduates



Trustees, teachers from St Peters and some of our graduates wearing Mukono football t-shirts

An opportunity to meet up with sponsored graduates is an important part of the Trustees' annual visit. As we sat in a beautiful tropical garden we caught up with Kalule, Norah, Bridget, Harriet and Ruth. We met Kenneth - now a history teacher at Lutengo United Secondary School - a few days later.

Kalule is a member of the Link committee has co-ordinated the sports project for the past two years. This has included preparing budgets, managing the 17 coaches, organising equipment and facilities. He has also built a chicken farm which houses over 250 chickens and intends to run workshops on good husbandry. He supports these enterprises through additional work with

telecommunications.

Norah is a journalist with New Vision newspaper. Her husband is the Mukono Committee Link's Auditor.

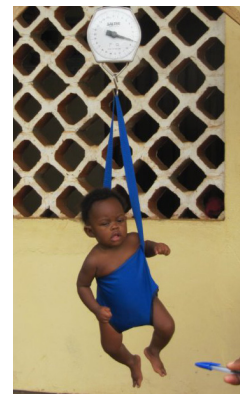
Bridget runs a kindergarten which she started two years ago, and now has 50 pupils and four teachers. This year she wants to add another class and would eventually like to start a primary school. Bridget is also a Link committee member.

Harriet handles data for a firm keeping records for different companies.

Ruth is in her final year as a student at Kyambogo University studying for a Bachelor of Business Studies with Education. ●

Mukono Health Centre

The Mukono Health Centre provides basic health care but Dr Klonde has a vision of improving the facilities so that patients can be treated in Mukono rather than traveling to the nearest hospital 25 miles away. When we first visited the dental department, patients sat on a wooden bench and teeth were extracted with pliers. York dental surgery in West Byfleet and Health Care Direct in Boreham Wood, Herts have generously donated modern dental equipment so the range of treatments are much improved. ●



ENACTUS

ENACTUS University of Surrey - part of a global not-for-profit organisation - designed to create sustainable entrepreneurial projects to improve the standard of living and quality of life of those in need. Mbalala Primary School is the location for one of our projects.

This project is in two parts, jewellery creation as a business to increase the number of parents who are able to pay school fees and vegetable growing for the teachers to supplement the children's diet.



ENACTUS students presenting their project based in Mbalala

So far three teachers have undergone farming training at Kasenge Riverford Organic Farm. We loaned them the money for a water source at the school so that they were able to start planting seeds as soon as the rainy season began.

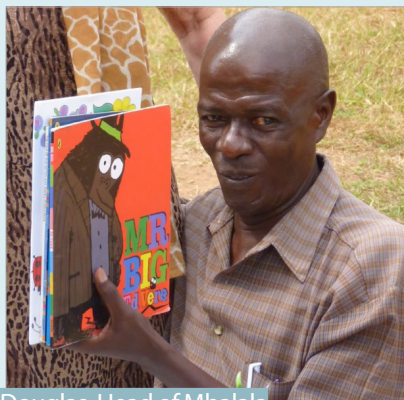
Four ENACTUS students have been lucky enough to go to Uganda on two separate trips and have received a warm welcome from everyone at Mbalala school. We hope that with our help and the partnership with Stoughton First School the conditions at the school will improve over the coming years.

Pippy Vernon ENACTUS ●

School links

This year **Stoughton First School** formed a link with **Mbalala Primary School**. There

have been shared school projects and a parcel of pens and books was presented to the school on the last visit. Several projects such as vegetable growing and jewellery making are now centred on this small, underresourced school to enable it and the



Douglas, Head of Mbalala

community to become self-sustaining. A few years ago a Surrey University student donated a cow. Douglas, the Head uses every opportunity to enrich the children's lives.

The Guildford County School raised money during rag week for a new dormitory at **Mukono High School**. The girls no longer have a long walk to school which can be dangerous and can deter girls from attending.

Teachers from **St Peter's Secondary** and **Worplesdon Primary** have visited their link schools in Mukono. This year we have had visits from **Lutengo United Secondary School** and **Busenya Primary**. These visits are a vital part of creating strong links. ●



Girls next to their new dormitory

Young Farmers Club

On one of our visits we realised that many children didn't have lunch. Our Young Farmers Club is doing well after the workshop on food and nutrition. We are also constructing energy saving stoves. We decided to use Worplesdon School's donation to construct four more stoves. We have also introduced the culture of children using cutlery as part of hygiene and we have bought more cups and plates for all the 850 children which we have presently. All this is included in the funding from



Growing food for a more varied and nutritious lunch

Worplesdon School. The children are very happy. Thank you for

your support. Susan Wamala Head Teacher, Mukono Boarding School. ●

Music

Although traditional music and dancing is a very important part of Ugandan culture, Western music is also encouraged and enjoyed, and in Mukono there are two brass bands, Keenotes and FDF, run by William Bulega and Davis Niwamanya. Both have benefitted from the 50

instruments supplied by Guildford in the past five years, mostly sourced from the 'retired' stock of Surrey Arts. In 2015 Guildford supplied four trombones, four tenor horns one baritone horn and a bugle. These bands have trained hundreds of young aspiring musicians to perform publicly in Mukono and Guildford visitors again enjoyed wonderful performances. ●



Keenotes band



FDF band

Green Peace

Green Peace is the idea of Robert, a teacher at Lutengo United Secondary School. In the past, Bulika village had enough wood for their own needs but recently people from Kampala have been taking wood for sale in the city. Our funding of £250 has paid for tools and seedlings and now a small rural community is growing trees for



First seedlings are nurtured by the community

fuel and fruit. Young people tend the seedlings which will be planted out in a 'wood lot'. We hope that we will be able to support other communities in a similar way. ●

Teddies

Teddies for Tragedy - a Guildford-based organisation - donated over 100 teddies as well as nearly 100 sets of newborn baby clothes to take to Mukono Health Centre where there are 15 deliveries per day, double the number in RSCH. The teddies were particularly appreciated by disadvantaged children at Mbalala PS and at the deaf school, where children's



Two girls love their teddies

tennis racquets, also supplied from Guildford, are being used for sports training by Vincent and Julius. ●

A view from Mukono

At our meeting in February, it was overwhelming to learn how much has been spent on projects in Mukono over the last 10 years, a total of £125,000. However, our Link is a Community Based Organisation that emphasises friendship rather than how much money has been put in.

Our Link Schools in Guildford have effected positive changes in the lives of children in Uganda.

The library acts as a source of knowledge and we all know that knowledge is power.

The link changes lives through education and the students who have been sponsored are a gift to the community.

The teachers who have attended the workshops have realised a great change in their teaching. They have acquired new strategies and better approaches to teaching. The good results in the national exams

testify this. The teachers who have attended the primary science courses tell me that they have tried so much to use "Pete's approaches" and I realise how the training is impactful. I strongly believe it was worth investing in these teachers.

The school farms have enabled us to give the children lunches. When children are not fed, education is the last priority. That is why there is absenteeism and poor performance.

Children have found joy in the sports. Most of them have discovered and improved on their talent. They have also learnt to interact and work with one another.

At the health centre, the Link has provided dental and other medical equipment. With the teddies and clothes, the mothers realised that there is someone out there who cares and this changes their lives.

We know the limitations of government in service delivery. So Guildford comes in to bring 'a smile' on people's faces through acts

of kindness.

Thank you Guildford Trustees for the great and life-changing opportunities you give to Ugandans. You have shaped me and you continue to be a great part of my life. I shall forever be grateful.

The Link is not small!!

Susan Wamala



Susan Wamala, Head of Mukono Boarding School

Safari dinner

St John's Church Hall was decorated with African colours, guests arrived to the music of Elly Wamala, the famous musician father of our Secretary in Mukono, and the food was cooked by our Ugandan supporter Sheila Ocen which included her special Jerk chicken. We were entertained by a guitar and voice jazz duo from the ACM and Alison Hall gave an illustrated talk on the work of 'Seeds for Development' in Mukono. We had a silent auction and tombola which helped us raise £3100. We hope next year's dinner will be even better! ●

Retirements

Jim Rattray will be missed both in Guildford and Mukono as he steps down from his responsibilities as Secretary and latterly Treasurer of The Link. Jim was at the inaugural meeting in 2003 and has consistently steered the committee towards a well-run, focused organisation that has made a huge impact. Thousands of children in our Linked schools now have a greater understanding of children in another continent, he has sourced 50 brass instruments for two music schools, provided support for the



Jim Rattray

Medical Centre in Mukono and has motivated people here and in Mukono to make a positive contribution. The Mukono Committee recognised Jim's contribution to The Link during the annual Trustees' visit when

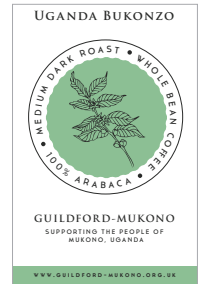
he was awarded a certificate of appreciation and Susan Wamala and Timothy Njakasi thanked him for all the support and encouragement he has given them. We are all going to miss his super-efficiency, commitment to the people of Mukono and his kindness.

Sat Luthra is also stepping down after 6 years and we will miss her warmth and wisdom.

We wish them well and hope they will continue to be involved. ●

Mukono Link Coffee

The women's cooperative, The Happy Coffee Bean, sends their beans to Redber Coffee in Merrow, where they are roasted and packaged. Some is sold under the Mukono Link label at the farmers' market in Guildford on the Fair Trade stall. ●



After a visit to Mukono..

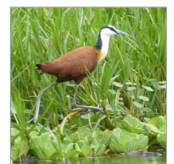


Saddle-billed stork

Uganda has an extraordinary variety of natural habitats, from deserts to swamps and tropical rain

forests. It is one of the top holiday destinations for birders. This year we visited The Queen Elizabeth National Park. Along with elephants, hippos and lions we recorded 24 species of eagle and other birds of prey and 150 different species altogether. On the boat trip up the Kazinga Channel, we saw the huge Saddle-billed Stork, the Goliath Heron and the very rare Shoebill Stork. Kingfishers and bee-eaters dart around the shoreline over the hippos and crocodiles.

Tony Edie. ●



African Jacana

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