

STORIES FROM ARUA

Last week as David was driving north to Oraba, on the South Sudan border, the phone rang 4 times. It was a taxi driver trying to find our home in Arua, he did not have Heather's number and that day she was feeling unwell. He was coming to collect a young man Innocent, who had spent the night with us.

Global Link Afrika

Innocent is from Eastern Uganda and is going to work for a year at Anyavu health centre on the Congo border, as an Environmental Health Officer. Innocent is with a Uganda mission group, Global Link Afrika (GLA), who train and enable young Christian professional people to give a year back to God after their professional training. They have been so valuable to us in the health centres and they bring a really strong spiritual influence into the health centres. Each one of them also develops a spiritual ministry with the local churches usually with young people and children. This is greatly needed, as the young people have few role models and these young missionaries live out their Christian values. This year we have 8 young GLA missionaries, 4 young ladies and 4 young men. We so enjoy these young people, their zeal for God is amazing and they have high professional values.



Boniface Olwa from Lira

Rosemary Omondi from Kenya working in Health Promotion



With all these calls David was late in arriving at the church to meet the farmers for their monthly discussions and learning together. He was warmly welcomed as he unpacked the teaching pictures, notes and materials needed. They talked together about the challenges facing farmers in West Nile, the change in the climate, population increasing and food demands growing, but their focus was on looking for good practical ways to farm to overcome the challenges. It makes all the travel and preparation worthwhile when faces begin to light up as we talk about planned ways of farming that prioritizes feeding the family well first before looking at what we can sell.

We had discussions on

- The negative impact of cassava in the diet. Cassava has now become the main staple food.
- Which foods led to a healthy family
- Growing a variety of crops to maintain the soil fertility
- How trees and food crops can coexist together

The day ended with laughter, sharing stories, sitting together, sharing a simple meal before the long journey back to Arua, this time no telephone calls.



Sharing tea and food together

Using the Bible as our guide



A new herd of milk goats.

David really enjoys working with milk goats, and since we left South Sudan he has had no involvement with milk goats until the beginning of this year. A group of vulnerable women, some widowed, some single mothers, other HIV positive all have children they need to feed and support. The women came together and decided on a project that could help nourish their children and raise some money for school fees. This is where the idea of dairy goats came in. The women worked together with some men, to build a goat house and in February they received 6 young goats, 4 female and 2 male goats. It is hoped by May this year the females should become pregnant and then we all look forward to having some goat milk in October, some for the children to drink and some to sell to get money for school fees.



One of the women feeding the goats with nutritious leaves

One of the young children carrying the goat to her new home



Light up every birth

We have been so grateful recently to receive from a partner solar suitcases for 3 of our health centres. These health centres are in very rural areas, far from the main road and also for any mains electricity. The solar suitcase is a yellow plastic suitcase that contains a control box and charging points, the suitcase is connected to a solar panel on the roof which give the energy to a battery. Two lights can be plugged into the control box and they light up the delivery room and the ward. It also contains a fetal Doppler for listening to the baby's heart and a charging point so the midwife can charge her telephone.

Before the getting the suitcase, when a woman in advance labour would arrive at the health centre, the midwife would light a smoky paraffin lamp and put her telephone in her mouth to give a light to help deliver the baby!



The solar suitcase in Yivu Abea Health Centre

Prayer pointers

- As both of our **work loads** and responsibilities increase, we both are aware that we should be teaching and mentoring local colleagues to take on some of the responsibilities. Pray that we will find the **right people** to come alongside us and take on the responsibilities with a real Christian heart of service for rural people.
- We continue to have a lot of travel on busy and dangerous roads. Pray for **protection** as we travel, keep us alert as we drive and guard us from dangerous drivers
- **Praise God** for a very good harvest of honey approx. 75lbs from the Beehives at Eden Farm
- Pray for **Tree Sunday** on the 17th March. The theme this year is “Plant trees to slow down the impact of changing weather”. This will lead into a major planting of trees across the whole Diocese.
- Pray for the young **Global Link Afrika** missionaries being posted to the various health centres across Uganda, that they will settle and quickly adapt to a new area, where they do not know the language and culture. Pray that they will share their love for Jesus with the local community.
- Pray for keeping up with the **administration work**, writing reports for partners, financial accountabilities and the day to day local admin work. We both enjoy being with people rather than the office work.