



Partnership News
Issue No 73



Teso Development Trust

partnering with communities in Teso, Uganda



This magazine is aptly named 'Partnership News' as it demonstrates how TDT's partnerships in Uganda allow it to undertake a remarkable range of activity, while still operating with a low administrative overhead. It also hints at the other partnerships on which we rely; those with our donors in the UK. Without these partnerships in Teso and at home, we simply couldn't deliver the support which is used so effectively to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable people in Teso, Uganda.

The most vital part of our income is that which is provided for general funding. It covers our administration, funds relief projects and allows us to respond to new initiatives from our Ugandan partners. Through such a response, TDT was among the first charities to support village savings groups as transformative initiatives in rural communities – nearly all charities working in Africa now have such groups as a core part of their community work. General funds also enable us to undertake important areas of work like training in new forms of agriculture or small business development, for which it is difficult to raise dedicated funds. Our general funding comes from regular giving and also from legacies. We encourage our supporters to annually review their giving, particularly as costs have risen a great deal in Teso over the past two years, and we have also included within this magazine a leaflet to help supporters think about whether they would like to establish a legacy to support our work in Teso.

Finally, I must mention David Watts from whom I took over as Chair of TDT in October. David was Chair for five years but, well before that, was a driving force in the development of TDT, firstly as administrator and then on the committee in various posts. During that time, he has driven forward his great passion for the provision of wells and boreholes to provide clean water in Teso. Over 250 have been provided so far, supporting over 150,000 people in the process. I am delighted to say that David has agreed to stay on the committee to continue this work and more generally to support those of us with less experience of working in Teso.

We hope you enjoy reading in this magazine about some of the projects that are changing lives in Teso.

Andrew Third, Chair, Teso Development Trust

Update on PAG Central projects

- Agriculture and SHGs

A new agriculture project was piloted with 8 communities who have previously been beneficiaries of a borehole and where there is an already established Self Help Group. Seeds were planted into communal nursery beds (then when established the young plants are distributed amongst the group) as well as some vegetable seeds distributed for planting directly into the beneficiaries gardens.



Members have been able to learn new skills in the process of vegetable growing with tomatoes and aubergine doing particularly well, however issues are being felt regarding the changing and unstable climate. Integrating aspects of climate smart agriculture will therefore be considered for future groups. Groups now have food reserves and seeds to plant for the next seasons. This helps to reduce incidences of food shortages and means families can also sell some vegetables at market. Overall the families involved reported that household nutrition and health are better and they can more easily pay for school fees.

Project participants in their vegetable gardens of tomatoes (above) and aubergine (right and below)



PAG Central continue to set up Self Help Groups in the communities that have been supplied with fresh water. 5 new groups were established between May and October 2023 with a total of 1,879,000 UGX (£392) saved across the groups by the end of October. Self Help groups are savings groups that also allow selected representatives of the individual groups to gather together periodically to address wider community problems in what is called a Cluster thereby supporting communities to address their own needs. TDT hopes to continue to support the set up of SHG groups and their training in good agricultural practices. It costs approximately £5600 to run an agricultural project for 16 communities and a similar amount for SHG group set up. The reason TDT and our partners are so keen on this type of work is because it enables families to be much more stable and self sufficient, able to provide better for their own needs.



Photos from the top Komolo SHG, Ongobai SHG, Omugura SHG and Moru SHG with their savings boxes.

Update from PAG North Projects - Okerai A

Work in Okerai A is drawing to a close. Farmers are integrating climate smart agriculture practises to mitigate the effects of pests and diseases. Tomatoes and aubergines have been very successfully grown. Farmers have also been encouraged to practice small scale irrigation using drip bottles and water collection areas to provide water during drier seasons. Good yields are expected from the cassava cuttings although fewer acres overall were planted than planned. Direct beneficiaries have started to share cuttings with other community members at lower prices or for free which has protected the community at large from the impact of malnutrition and provided income sources over the last two years.



As with the PAG Central Groups training was conducted with VSLA representatives on Cluster Associations. The aim is also to encourage the community to be aware of the resources they have and how they can mobilise to address community issues. Overall VSLA's have bought a positive impact to the community as they have allowed members to set up small businesses, educate their children and buy livestock. This has been done in groups with 5 group members initially sharing a sheep and then as off-spring arrive these are shared out so that now there is a ratio of 2 group members per sheep. Sheep were chosen as they can cope with harsh conditions such as drought and have a short gestation period.

An observation that has come up as a result of the project is the need for nutrition education as many famers will sell the majority of what they grow for income leaving the household still at risk of malnutrition, particularly children and the elderly.

A similar community development programme to Okerai A is beginning to train 300 households in Odiding near the Karamoja border.

Transformation in living standards and future prospects can be brought to these communities in a three-year programme costing around £16 per household per year.

VSLA groups meeting (below) and a beneficiary with her sheep that she have received as part of the project. (top right)



TDT recently engaged with PAG North Teso to conduct a survey in Apopong to try and evaluate the ongoing impact of the projects. Overall participants said they eat more meals a day. They also have better access to services such as health and education due to the improved income. VSLAs give people the opportunity to start small scale business thereby improving incomes. Participants grow a wider range of crops and training on livestock management, as well as a small input of the animals themselves, has encouraged farmers to diversify making them less dependant on one particular crop or income source. The farmers have noticed an improvement in soil quality having started growing legumes and from putting other climate smart techniques into practice, overall increasing their yields.

Ben and Jacinta's Story

Ben and Jacinta have 10 children and live in Okerai A.

When they first got married they struggled to make ends meet and often worked as casual labourers on other people's farms. Ben also spent some time cutting down trees and burning them to create charcoal for sale out of desperation to make a living. Over recent years however deforestation for charcoal has become a punishable crime and ultimately it resulted in Ben spending 3 days in prison before his wife came to the prison and Ben was released on bail.



Once out of prison Ben was fortunate enough to be visited by a sympathetic friend who was able to give him 200,000 UGX (£43) to start a poultry business which had always been one of his dreams. He bought 10 chickens at the local market at a rate of 15,000 per chicken and then sold them in Soroti for 20,000 each earning him 50,000 UGX a week. He gave 10,000 UGX to his wife for household items and saved the rest. The VSLA and family business training has been a big influence on the family who had been able to save 3,000,000 UGX (£625) by April 2023 after borrowing money to set up a produce business - buying products locally and then selling them for a profit in Soroti town. They have also planted various trees and spices that will give them fruit to sell in town and bought two oxen and a plough with some of the money saved. Overall the PAG programme enables the family to plan for a better future; educating their children, buying more land for production and building a permanent house.



The **Kumi Compassionate Fund** is still meeting a massive need in the community helping the most desperate cases out of the many that come through the hospital doors. TDT sends £1500 a quarter to Kumi Hospital to keep the fund running. Photos show Teddy (top far left) who

is a year old and needed surgery to correct a mis-growth of the toes on her right foot. Teddy's father had died when her mother was pregnant leaving them in a financially difficult state. Atima Merabu (top right) was fitted with a prosthetic leg as she was born with a disfigurement of the left leg. Mikaya, 65 years old, was mismanaged at the government hospital in Soroti after a road traffic accident in November 2023 and taken back to his village. As he has no family at all a concerned community member bought him to Kumi Hospital in January 2024. He was malnourished as his injuries prevented him from looking after himself and needed major surgery. William Odongo (bottom right) received treatment for a fractured right arm. They all wish to thank the Compassionate Fund for the help they have received.



Water Update

David works closely with PAG North, Central and South to continue the ongoing water programme. In 2023 7 projects were completed providing water for 6932 people and 23 projects have been identified for 2024. 19% of last years project funding was spent on water projects. A spring protection costs £1000, a shallow well £1500 and a borehole £6500. Occasionally donors have raised or given money specifically for a well or borehole to be constructed. One such borehole was Orapak borehole in Morungatuny Sub county in Amuria.



The closest water point to the community of 610 people in Orapak (105 households) was previously 3-4km away. The community also has a primary school of 262 pupils and a weekly market that attracts around 400 people.



This created many issues in the community not least a lack of hygiene and high levels of disease but also children missing school to collect water and girls putting themselves at risk walking long distances in the evenings.

Funds were raised in memory of the late Michael Winter who was a long term supporter of TDT and had also worked in Teso. A plaque will be placed on the well in his memory.



Teresa Akopo (above right) who is 100 years old asks God to bless those who sent their money to give her community water. All her life she has only ever collected water from swamps. Over the years the community have suffered greatly because of raiding and fighting by the Lord's Resistance Army and the Karamajong making sustainable living and peace a distant memory. This fresh water is a great blessing for them.



Photos right show from the top the original state of Abilayep well that was protected by PAG South (Kumi) last year, of its construction and current completed state.



St Peter's College

Many of you, last year, sponsored Robert's sky dive that in the end raised £45,000 from individual donations and charitable trusts.



These funds have largely been put towards the new classroom and staff office block that is nearly complete (see photos). Earlier in the year, £8600 was given by various trusts towards a new kitchen, training courses and for the purchase of English Bibles, essential for the students in that all the teaching is done in English. Ongoing running costs are now met by the diocese. Currently there are 155 lay church leaders, amongst them a few women, signed up for the two year course. Many of the students are incredibly receptive and intelligent. Bishop Kosea, Sam Ediau (the diocesan secretary) and Boniface Esomu, the Principal, work well together and it is a joy to see this diocesan cohesion.



In October a team will be visiting Teso including Tim Britton, who, in the eighties headed up the Ngora Lay Readers training college. Robert and Tim will be spending time at the college by which time the new classrooms should be fully operative. It has been such a joy to see this college flourish. Good numbers of students have gone on to ordination, but the majority continue to lead their village churches. May the college continue to equip them in their love of Jesus, their service to their communities and in faithful discipleship.

Prayer Points

- Give thanks for our faithful donors without their support none of the work would be possible and thanks for our partners in their tireless work to improve the lives of the Teso people and for the encouragement and training they provide. May God continue to give them strength and courage as they work in difficult times.
- We ask for guidance and wisdom for the leadership teams of the Kumi and Ngora Freda Carr hospitals as they work through the challenges that they face.
- That the Compassionate Fund would continue to be effective in helping the poorest people with much needed health care and the financial support needed to maintain the Fund would be received together with funds to complete all the TDT on-going projects.
- For wisdom for the TDT team to make good decisions as we endeavour to meet the challenges faced by the Teso people.



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