

Otto News Brief

2019-05-29

Greetings from Kitgum, Northern Uganda. Today the rain is pouring down and once again the power is cut off... so it is a perfect moment to stop and do a little reflecting... I can't believe we've already been here just over a month.

We've finally secured a house for us and are slowly moving out of suitcases, which is wonderful! Our house was in quite a bad state on arrival, so we've spent plenty of days as a family scrubbing and cleaning. It is a 3-bedroom house with another double guest room in the courtyard with its own bathroom. So we are all set for guests now! Please do come by and say hi!! J We have a lovely big yard that even has 2 large mango trees as well as a jackfruit tree.



It has been quite full on setting up our new home from scratch but we're getting there. I'm enjoying living with a little less and just enough plates for everyone to have one, so the dishes have to get done immediately! ☺

Moses has been running around daily on different errands with the charity. Moses organised a get together at the school where all the teachers, parents and students were invited. We provided a meal. Over 1500 people turned up. We conducted monitoring and evaluation of our current projects in Lapana community. We came up with a few questions to be discussed in small groups... we wanted the attention to be moved from 'blaming and begging' to "what can I do?" to help take us forward... It was wonderful to see everyone actively involved in the discussions. We had each group record their main points and then present to the whole group. We collected all the pieces of paper and we'll go through them again and then write up our current action plans and set some doable goals.



We received a very warm welcome from the Lapana community.



Moses has also been meeting regularly with our workers (teachers, cooks, herdsmen, health workers etc.) and hearing their concerns and worries. I love it how Moses really takes time to listen to the people and allow them to come up with solutions as well. Obviously money is always needed, but that is an ongoing challenge and to make our projects sustainable will take time. The kitchen our cooks have been using at the Lapana Primary school is shocking - no chimney, a little tin shed filled with smoke... so we are in process of building a better kitchen... this was just an emergency building the parents put together from scrap bits of tin. The cooks were also struggling to grind the maize flour by hand for such a large group each day (over 300 children), hence we are in process of building a small shed and buying a grinder which can hopefully bring in a small income from local residents who want to bring their maize to be grinded as well. We've also been building some better housing for the teachers as they live at the school property for the entire school term.



Our herdsmen shared their struggle in regards to cattle being on the run due to poor fencing, therefore we are hoping to upgrade the fencing as soon as the funding is available.

We have a deal with the local people to provide and prepare the fence posts, while we provide the wiring and pay for the labour.

We have been working closely with the Nodding Syndrome victim families, providing emergency care, including medical treatment and food supplies. One of the great challenges for the Nodding Syndrome children are severe seizures that can last up to several days and become fatal if not treated. Hence quick transport to the hospital is vital. The local ambulances can be expensive and unreliable. Moses has finally managed to work out an agreement with the local ambulance service to pay for their petrol when ever transporting Nodding Syndrome victims. We have 2 field workers in only 2 sub counties who daily go about checking on the care and current condition of these children. But both are on pushbikes, which can be quite unpractical as a lot of the families are spread out (60-100kms). Therefore we hope to organise funding for motorbikes (\$2300 each). We also need more field workers for about 5 other sub counties currently not covered.



This grandmother caring for a 11 year old grandchild with Nodding Syndrome was brought to our attention. The child is extremely malnourished and reached a stage where he is unable to eat solid foods. We helped the grandmother get a special feeding liquid to help put some further nourishment into him. The grandmother also provides support in caring for the other 6 siblings. We have been supporting the family with food supplies.

Here is a photo of another dedicated grandmother, who rescued her 2 neglected Nodding Syndrome grandchildren and is committed to giving them the best care possible. She was so grateful to Moses for driving her to the hospital and covering the medical costs as both of the children were experiencing severe seizures and were in need of immediate medical attention. We have also been able to support the family with emergency food supplies.



It has been wonderful to see the improved condition of some of the Nodding Syndrome victims that we've been helping for a period of time. It can be a struggle to organise the parents to regularly pick up their children's medication, which can make a big difference. Since we arrived, there hasn't been one death of a Nodding Syndrome child, which used to be a weekly occurrence. We've also been able to organise some emergency housing for Nodding Syndrome victim families. One mud hut costs around \$1000. Here is a photo of a new home we were able to provide for a family whose home was burnt down.



We would love to see the local health centre in Lapana upgraded and made more accessible for the local community. Also the local council has turned to us for help with their Nodding Syndrome rescue program as they lack funding. They have asked if Moses could oversee the program, which we have agreed to.



We want to extend the **biggest thank you** for all of your prayers and financial support. Together we are making a difference!! 😊

For anyone wanting to financially support our family the bank details:

Name: Otto, BSB 067105, AC 1022 4297

Or if you want a tax deductible receipt

you can donate direct to our charity:

Name: Acholi Resilience, BSB 017 214,

AC 4670 11619 or you can go direct to our

charity Acholi Resilience webpage

acholiresilience.org and donate via PayPal.

Also if you want to join a prayer group in

Tassie, you can contact my dear mother

Sirpa McDonald on 0431 201 110.

Love you all,
Moses and Johanna, Josiah, Daniel,
Phinehas, Talitha and Jedidah