

Eagles Wings Team To Uganda June 2008!



Uganda is a truly beautiful nation, not just because of its equatorial climate that brings to life lakes and unusual vegetation, but because of the beautiful people who live there. Many not only miss out on having things they want, but are unable to have things that they need, things that are necessary to live. We may feel at times that we are just a drop in the ocean, but that small drop still manages to make a wider difference. It truly has been an honour and a privilege to be a part of the Eagles Wings team and a helping hand in many of the exciting events i have tried my best to explain in this newsletter.

Katwe Slum - Kampala

It was a wonderful experience visiting the school in Katwe set up by Eagles Wings' partners Paul and Joyce Kinataama. About 50 5-11 year olds ran out to meet us with ripped and ragged school uniforms and beaming smiles across their faces.



They were so excited to demonstrate what words they could say in english and that they could count to 10! We spent time listening to them and singing some english nursery rhymes with an african twist! Many of them expressed their dreams of becoming doctors and lawyers and one of them even wants to be the President of Uganda. At break time they played with broken sticks, old bits of cardboard and plastic tubing, but they are some of the happiest children i know!

We took a keyboard out with us that was donated by an Eagles Wings supporter, along with a portable PA unit kindly donated by members of The Ark Community Church. I spent evenings doing music workshops, teaching some of them how to play and read the chord charts. I also left them the music and some CD's so that after we had left, they could continue to learn themselves.

Kerstin Meeson-Smith, an accountant from Cambridge joined us as part of the Eagles Wings team, and spent time doing sessions on financial planning, coping with debt and giving advice on budgeting and saving particularly in difficult circumstances. It was great to see both men and

women taking notes and giving great feedback on new principles they had learnt and wanted to put into practice.

North West Uganda - Nebbi

The team flew in a small 8 seater plane right up to the north west of Uganda to a town called Nebbi. The runway was overgrown and we literally landed in a bush surrounded by goats! The temperature here was significantly hotter, and the land much drier. We were greeted by about 500 ladies who had eagerly been awaiting our arrival. Many of them had walked up to 70 kilometers to be with us,



coming from the Congo just over the border and other parts of Uganda. Many of these precious ladies had nothing but the clothes on their backs. We began a packed, 3 day programme with practical sessions on health and life skills.

When asked what topics they would most appreciate advice on, the overwhelming response was on family planning and parenting. We were quite surprised at the ignorance of many of these women and the wrong advice that had been passed down through the generations. Many of them had been told that family planning would make them sick and infertile, and one lady was told that her child had died because she was not producing a baby every year.

Sharon Oliver and Sue Carr, both trained nurses, helped them with each query by giving them practical advice appropriate to their culture. Definitely not a time to get embarrassed and a sense of humour was essential!



It was very difficult for me personally to hear stories of people's circumstances that seemed virtually impossible. At times I was completely overwhelmed. One lady told me how she has had 2 husbands die of AIDS, and that she has been left with 8 children that she can't look after as she herself is sick. I found this to be the case for many, not just one or two.

A great help in the practical seminars were the educational DVD's produced by a charity called Thare Machi with whom we are partnering. They sponsored a portable projector and laptop for the DVD's to be played publicly. These DVD's covered topics on basic hygiene, safe water, HIV/AIDS and healthy eating and were appropriate for an audience that was largely illiterate. These DVD's gave opportunity for the audience to answer

simple questions on the information they had just heard. Even though very basic, we were quite surprised to see that the women would get questions wrong on simple principles such as washing your hands before you cook or eat to prevent sickness. Evidently, there were some clear lessons learned here!

On the team with us, a good friend from Nigeria, Bola Adeferasin came with about 30 african dresses to give out. I will never forget the smiles and tears that came when they were received with such grateful hearts. These dresses were specifically given to women who were particularly vulnerable with HIV and AIDS. Many sweatshirts were also kindly donated from one of our local scout groups in Watford and worn with pride and excitement!



For the 3 days that we were in Nebbi, Eagles Wings provided food for every lady attending the sessions. The women enjoyed their staple; Matoke- a savoury banana that is steamed and mashed in banana leaves, (not my cup of tea!) rice, potatoes, spinach, beans and goat's meat. It was a sight watching these ladies line up with whatever they could find for a plate for what was probably the most wholesome meal they would have had for a long time.



I personally had the opportunity to be on live television twice with the Ugandan Broadcasting Corporation airing to around 10 million. Issues they wanted to discuss with me were independence and freedom for youth, and meaningful dating with a particular focus on relationships between parents and children during this process. It was wonderful to be able to share some of my own experiences knowing that it was helping many struggling in those areas. This has been an amazing trip and Eagles Wings would like to thank all who contributed to make it successful.

If you would like to give to Eagles Wings please either visit our website at www.eagleswingsuk.org where you can pay online by card, or write a cheque made payable to Eagles Wings and send to: Eagles Wings 6 Woodland Drive, Watford, Herts WD17 3BX. If you would like to pay directly into Eagles Wings bank account, the bank details are: HSBC Bank, Account number: 81566431, Sort Code: 40-43-28 Address: 67 The Parade, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B72 1PU.

Your contribution whether large or small will make a difference to someone's life.



Email: office@eagleswingsuk.org

Phone: +44 (0) 1923 446511

Website: www.eagleswingsuk.org