



Friends of Teso (Uganda)

Newsletter 2014

Answering Your Questions

Why is help needed in Northern Uganda?



Uganda has had a troubled history since independence in 1962. Northern Uganda is still suffering the legacy of the murderous 'Lord's Resistance Army' and other internal conflicts.

The violence of the LRA forced nearly two million people to leave their land and move to Internally Displaced Persons Camps.

The security situation is now greatly improved. This, however, is only the beginning: vital infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, must be rebuilt and re-equipped, and long abandoned farms, laid waste by time, must be re-established.

Support will be needed more than ever in the coming years to help the people of Northern Uganda re-establish self-sufficient communities.

This redevelopment process has also been hindered by random adverse events. For example, devastation caused by floods in Uganda in recent times has led to major setbacks.

The determination of the people to work together to overcome obstacles continues to greatly impress, however. We were moved to hear that people to whom we ship goods had collected food for those affected by floods, and by a recent fire, despite their own hardships. We were also impressed to hear that they had forwarded clothes, bedding and other emergency items provided by Friends of Teso.



How do you provide that help?

Useful goods are collected, and money is raised to pay for their transportation in 40 foot containers.

What has been achieved since you began in 2002?

Our eleventh container arrived in Soroti just before Christmas 2013 – another 40 foot metal box full of bicycles, wheelchairs, clothes, books, tools, toys, shoes, educational materials, walking aids, bedding, and much more.

Long experience has now allowed us to be very specific about the goods that are of most value to the recipients:



One bicycle can provide transport for a whole family and greatly increase their economic prospects.

A typical recipient of a wheelchair, Okwii Misairi, is now able to leave his home, unaided, for the first time.

Another disabled younger person, Isaac, is able to go to school, now that we have provided him with walking aids.



Independence and financial self-sufficiency have been given to very many others by the simple provision of sewing machines and tools.

Sometimes, it's everything including ...

How do goods travel to Teso?



A container arrives in Bishop's Waltham on a lorry and is packed by a team of enthusiastic volunteers.

It is then taken to a containership at a UK port – usually Southampton. The ship sails via the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal to Mombasa, Kenya.



The container is then offloaded, and transported by lorry to Kampala, Uganda, where, after clearing customs, it continues north to Teso for a celebratory opening and the distribution of goods.



How do you know the goods get to where they are needed?

There are 'Container Committees' in both Soroti and Kumi that ensure all goods are checked on arrival against the manifest. They then supervise the distribution, and maintain detailed records. Those records are also a requirement of the Ugandan Government, who exempt the goods from import duty.

We also visit Teso (at no expense to the charity) approximately every two years to seek an update on the local situation and to ensure that the distribution systems are working well. The most recent such visit was in November 2013.



Special mention is needed for those who manage the above process in Uganda: Bishop George of Soroti, Bishop Thomas of Kumi, their teams and Mothers' Unions. Also, Bishop Tom Okello who acts as a link with the Ugandan Government.

What is the reaction to the shipments from those in need in Uganda?



We have a large number of testimonies relating to the effects that the donated goods have had on people's lives in Uganda. Just two examples are:
'...the provision of books, writing equipment and other educational materials is something for which we are very thankful' – *Ouma Poly OTUK – Headteacher, Kamod Secondary School, Soroti*.
'...we are very grateful for the contents of the container. This will help people in Kumi in so many different ways' – *The Rt. Rev. Thomas Edison Irigei – Bishop of Kumi Diocese*.

Space in this newsletter precludes more quotations, but similar expressions of thanks have been recently received from Kadungulu Secondary School, Soroti; Akou-Etom orphanage; Atutur Hospital, and Ngora Hospital, to name just a few institutional recipients.

In addition, items have been distributed to very many individuals. Particularly moving have been accounts from those who have received wheelchairs or other mobility equipment, many of whom have had their lives transformed by the new freedom afforded by those aids.

What does it cost to send a 40 foot container to Uganda?

The total cost of the container and transportation is £10,000. This represents £2,000 for the 40 foot container, and the balance for transportation and insurance.

The containers remain in Uganda, and are valuable for storage, and even accommodation!



Where does the money come from?

There are some generous regular contributors. Much of the remainder of the money usually comes from fund-raising events.

These include book sales; table top sales; car boot sales; coffee mornings; sponsored events; concerts; folk evenings; talks; fashion shows; wine tasting; horse and frog racing evenings; stalls at carnivals and festivals; murder mystery events; quiz nights; golf tournaments; beetle drives and themed evenings.

There is support from the Rotary Club of Bishops Waltham, and, in 2013, Mr Brian Oldfield, a businessman and owner of SHRED UK, donated the container and paid for part of its journey.

In addition, we use up to ten per cent of the container space to transport, at cost price, donated goods for other charities.

Where do you get the goods from?



They mostly come from you: local mums who provide children's clothes and toys; older ladies who knit blankets; men who raid their sheds for tools, to name but a few – and not forgetting the men who can knit blankets and the older ladies who have tool sheds!

It is quite *amazing* how items that do not seem particularly significant in Bishop's Waltham can change lives in Soroti.



How can I help?

Ah... we're glad you've asked!

First of all, look at our website: <http://www.friends-of-teso-uganda.org.uk/>. Everything is explained there in more detail.

After that, you might want to:

Donate goods ~ Make a one off, or regular, donation ~
Sponsor the next container – just £1.29 will take it one mile closer to Soroti ~ Attend one of our events ~ Run an event – maybe a coffee morning, or sell something at a car boot sale ~ Help at an event ~ Join forces with us to combine shipments to Uganda.

