

Travel report October 2019

This time we go out with 4 young ladies (Joyce, Amber, Leja and Sella), befriended (sponsor) couple Chris and Brigitte and daughter Sanne. It is quite special that 4 young ladies between the ages of 16 and 18 participate. That gives an extra dimension to this trip. One of the parents of the young people has a passenger bus and is willing to take us away in the early hours of October 17 and pick us up again. Super relaxed and cozy. Some parents choose to bring their daughter to Schiphol so that they can wave them and us goodbye. Very cozy of course.

On 17 October we leave Putten at 6.45 am. Via the polder we avoid the traffic jams and we are at Schiphol at the departure desk at 8.00 am. Our sponsors from Krimpen a/d IJssel are also there by train well in time. Although it is quite busy, checking in goes smoothly. At customs, our youngest participant is picked out. She must provide her parents' statement that she has permission to travel with us. After this last check we drink coffee and tea and then go to the gate where we are taken to the plane by bus. After a pleasant flight - we are all in the tail of the aircraft - we land around half past eleven in the evening local time, in Entebbe. Joseph and Andrew catch us and we stay the first night in the already well-known and good hotel Victoria Beach hotel overlooking Lake Victoria. After a glass of soda / beer we go to bed at 1.45 am.

Friday, October 18, we have breakfast at 9 am to travel to Kampala around 10.30 am.

There we visit the Palace and prison of Idi Amin. Impressive. Thousands of Ugandans have been brutally tortured and murdered here. They were crammed into the main hall, a layer of water came in and then the current was put on it.



Then we visit the women market; a market mainly with women who sell handcrafts usually made by themselves.

After the market we get back in the cars for the trip of about 2 hours to the equator.

There we have lunch at Anne Maria (Flamingo's Joint) and then continue our journey to Masaka; from the equator still more than 1 hour away.

We stay at Masaka Backpackers, the home of Joseph.



Saturday morning we travel with the whole group, except Sanne, with Joseph in the "Otjebus" to park Lake Mburo where we stay in restaurant Rwakobo Rock and want to make a bike ride through the park.

Sanne is picked up early by Anthony, she goes to Lwengo.

We drink coffee/tea and order lunch. Unfortunately, that's not going to work; there is not enough food in stock for a group of 10

people.

The weather is moderate; thunderstorms at a distance and occasional rain and then there is no cycling. Especially of thunderstorms they are very afraid here because there has not been an impact for so long.

So we wait for the weather forecast and finally around 14:00 part of the group goes on the mountain bike under the guidance of a guide; cycling between the zebras and antelopes. How nice is that!!! After their return and a refreshing drink we go to restaurant Leopard; here we can have lunch. It is now 16.00 hours. After lunch we drive back to Masaka where we arrive home in the dark around 7.30 pm. We let the dinner lapse. Because of the late, good lunch, no one is hungry anymore.



On Sunday morning, the travel companions have the choice between relaxing with backpackers or going to church. With a large group we leave for the Roman Catholic church service in Masaka. Although the official language is Ugandan, we understand the essence and it is a good feeling to experience this celebration.



After lunch come and Rose and Teddy. They provide a workshop on making bowls. The sun has broken through (after a morning of rain) and in "the restaurant" of Joseph we make dishes.

Around 17:00 Anthony (with Sanne), a number of sisters of Kitovu and Cissy (Joseph's niece), arrives. We invited them for the meal; an extensive buffet.



At 19:00 Kabiswa Pius will give a performance with a number of children. Too bad it's mostly dancing and little singing.

But we have a great time!

Monday morning around 9.00 am we leave with Joseph to Lwengo. The Otjebus offers plenty of space for our group with some luggage, as well as the extra bigshoppers with relief goods and gifts for Lwengo. Around 10.30 am we arrive at the Lwerudeso Primary School and an enthusiastic, warm welcome awaits us. The children of the sponsors who travelled with them are at the front and meet those distant friends from the Netherlands. Moving. After an official welcome we go into a classroom, the rain is now falling in buckets from the sky again. In the classroom we dance and sing for us. Fantastic.





We make some home visits to, among others, the children of our accompanying sponsors and other families of which (the) children (s) have been taken into sponsorship.

Unfortunately, due to the enormous rainfall, we could not do all the home visits. That is force majeure that we cannot do anything about. In January Pieter and Marga will go to Uganda together and will finish the work of October.

After lunch in the Volunteer House, the young people go to the sports field where they provide a sports afternoon for a large part of the children of our school. The balls and other attributes brought along come in handy and lead to a lot of joy in playing.



Around 5.30 pm we are brought back to Masaka by Anthony. The ladies stay behind in Lwengo where they will stay full-time with Sanne for the next few days (until Thursday). Great to be there again and see the kids.



On Tuesday, October 22, Anthony picks us up again at 9:00 am. The youngsters had a good night in Lwengo and enjoy the adventure. With the whole group under the supervision and guidance of Marga we take on the biggest job of this trip; per class the children come to us for a short conversation, receiving the letter from the sponsor, measuring and the photo session (by Sanne this time).

We see about 150 children at this primary school passing by in this way. It is good to see that the vast majority of children are doing well, they look good, are very happy with the message from the Netherlands from their sponsor and now that they are getting to know us better and better, there are nice conversations.

But before we see the children individually, we honor the children with a Dutch song and let ex-teacher Pieter get to know the Netherlands on the basis of a beautiful photo book. We have now done this for the second time, for next year something else has to be thought of.

Tired but satisfied we travel back to Masaka in the evening.

Chris and Brigitte left on this Wednesday around 7.00 am with Andrew for a 2-day wildlife safari to Wildpark Queen Elisabeth. This park is a 5 1/2 hour drive from Masaka, past Mbarara.





Spent the night in a lodge, didn't sleep much but enjoyed the sounds of the bush. They make a tour on Thursday morning where they also see various lions.

On Wednesday we visit - with constantly changing composition of young people - the remaining new sponsor children at home. Anthony and Francis have the program well organized so that we travel efficiently and can make the vast majority of visits on time.

To this end, Francis picks up a number of children at school and brings them home to the bodaboda, where we then visit them and get to know their parents / guardians and see where they live.



Photo of almost all (150) sponsored children at Lwerudeso Primary School

After lunch we visit about 6 students at Nakyenzi Secondary School, which is within walking distance of the volunteer house.



Sanne, Sella and Anthony visit a special sponsor child who lives at a great distance from the school. Marga and Pieter are picked up by Joseph at the end of the day. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, our young travel companions work on various projects; for example, a water tank is pieced, worked in the garden, beans are selected and painted in the health center. And of course there was plenty of opportunity to go crazy with the children, to sing, to play, to hold a balloon party etc.



Thursday Chris and Brigitte have their^{2nd} day of the trip and Marga and I are in Masaka. There is a lot of information to process, Marga makes a start with this. Pieter does the necessary shopping with Joseph in Masaka. At 15:00 we go with Joseph to Lwengo to pick up the group. A grand farewell falls to us, many emotions among our participants.

It is difficult for them to say goodbye to the children, staff and Anthony.

Around 19:00 we are back in Masaka. Chris, Brigitte and Andrew also arrive there and together we have a fantastic dinner in restaurant Frikadellen.

Friday 25 October we start quietly. Around 10.30 am we leave for an excursion; the harvest of barkcloth. This is about a 1/2 hour drive from the Backpackers.

Around 13:00 we are back and we have a quick lunch and then go to our sponsor student Axum.



He is a student of automotive engineering at St. Kizito's Technical Institute, Kitovu in Masaka.

It is a joy to see him again; so enthusiastic about his school and the opportunity he gets through Lwengo Kids Foundation. He shows us around extensively; especially the practical classrooms where students learn to work wood, bricklaying, automotive technology and metalworking are interesting. A teacher regularly gives a further explanation.

He shows us his homemade dump-bin, which he is quite proud of and we with him! He also tells about his seriously ill father who will not get better. We give him a pocket money, so that he can travel to his father, who is cared for in Entebbe.

Around 15:00 we leave for Banda Lodge to swim and relax for a few hours. The weather has just turned out nicely so we are lucky.

In the evening we have the closing buffet at the Backpackers that the ladies have taken fantastic care of.

Saturday morning it rains again. At 9.30 am we are waved off by Joseph's staff and Andrew and Joseph take us back to Entebbe in the torrential rain. We have another stop on the equator for coffee or something else. Unfortunately, Andrew's car is

stranded and his passengers have to continue the journey in a taxi (van). The car Joseph drives cannot keep the rain out, regularly a splash of rain pours on the passengers. These discomforts do not affect our mood, which remains supreme. With the necessary delay we reach Victoria Beach hotel where our booked rooms can be occupied. Meanwhile it is dry, the sun occasionally comes through and it is wonderful weather with about 25 degrees celsius. Then, when everyone is there, we have lunch at KFC in Victoria Mall. After saying goodbye to Joseph and Andrew we visit the many market stalls across the street with souvenirs. The afternoon is spent relaxed. At 19:00 we take a very luxurious taxi bus to 4 Points to dine there. A graduation party is also celebrated in the restaurant. Together with them we do another dance.

Sunday 27 October at 10.00 am Lisette and her partner Steven are ready to show us around Entebbe. Steven first tells us something about the history of Uganda and Entebbe in particular. Then we drive with him via the airport, where we see the once hijacked ELAL plane, to the large fishing port of Uganda. We are allowed on the premises and can see the processing of tons of tilapias and Nile perch up close.





We also know how the fishing boats are made and have a drink in a restaurant with a view over the harbor. Around 14:00 we are back at the hotel after a very interesting excursion and everyone can do whatever he wants until 15:30 when we meet again in Java restaurant for an extensive, late lunch.

Around 20.15 hours 2 taxis are ready to take us to the airport. Without any problems we get through all the checks and we take a seat in the tail of the Airbus again. We leave on time and land safely at Schiphol 1/2 hour before the scheduled arrival time where a crowd of parents is waiting for us. After drinking a cup of coffee, tea or chocolate milk together, we travel back to our hometowns.

It's over. With a little melancholy we say goodbye to this beautiful country with its lovely inhabitants. We had a busy, exciting trip. Again noticed that things are getting better with Lwengo and its inhabitants, thanks to a.o. you, our sponsors. Thank you so much for that!