Travelogue Lwengo Kids Foundation

October 2026

This time we travel to Uganda with six sponsors, namely; Annet and Noor, André (also board member), Carola, Leonie and Joke. After some delay at Schiphol we finally fly via Nairobi to Entebbe and when we arrive in Uganda after a long flight of more than 13 hours, Andrew is waiting for us with a huge bus! After all, we are with eight people, which means 16 large suitcases and then the necessary hand luggage and trolley suitcases. It is a bit of a struggle, but when all the suitcases have been lifted in through the window and everyone has found their place in the bus, we leave.

In Entebbe we first drive past our painter Joram, where we buy a number of beautiful paintings, which we will auction during our 10-year anniversary party. We arrange good internet to be accessible and then we really drive towards Masaka. It is hot and we are tired after the night flight. As we get further south, we see nature becoming drier and drier. Coffee bushes look like pathetic twigs with a leaf here and there and a dried bean. The banana bushes are completely withered at the bottom and are the main food for the Ugandan in the south. Our emergency aid was really, really needed.

At Masaka Backpackers we are warmly welcomed and everyone has time to settle in and recover from the long journey.

We have a full program and little time so we go to Lwengo the next day with 2 cars and are welcomed by the children. They are lined up in two rows in the schoolyard and we walk between them. It's a party again!

When the party is over, we monitor the children with disabilities and later we also monitor the toddlers. These little ones are doing well. Our sponsors entertain the other preschoolers by making a flag garland for the classroom.

Then we see the sky getting darker and darker, and after a few big flashes of light and thunder, a real bucket of water comes down. Tubs and buckets are put out everywhere to collect this precious water. There is quite a bit of falling, but not nearly enough, of course. And the various harvests have failed and that will not change anymore.

Because we couldn't go on a work trip in April, we now have a lot of catching up to do. We have to make 20 home visits this trip. Some children live nearby, but for others we have to drive for miles. And of course the sponsors who travel with us see their children, so we also go on home visits there,

Joke's visit to Rose Mary and brother Simon Peter who is sponsored by her sister

Upon arrival, it is very clearly visible what damage the drought has caused. The green, dense landscape is brown and open. We are very warmly and lovingly welcomed by the mother of our sponsor children, Rose

Mary and brother Simon Peter, in a small house made of clay. The kitchen has collapsed and the cottage is in poor condition. When the children are at school, the four of them still live in this small house. They don't have chairs, just a mat on the floor to sit on and a few mats to sleep on. I hear that because of the drought they can no longer grow their own food and the community takes care of them. When I heard this, I got a lump in my throat and a stone in my stomach. This beautiful, sweet, strong woman takes care of her sister, mother and children. She sits here with a smile and I still experience, despite everything she has to bear, more peace than last year with her. Maybe because 2 of her children are in school and she knows they have a better chance of a good future? When we leave, I also get a mat. They have almost nothing, but what they have she also shares with us. So beautiful and special, but hard to accept anything from someone who has nothing... Not accepting is not an option but an insult, so I take the mat with me. This mat is so incredibly valuable and for me it symbolizes strength and love that I experienced during my visit to Uganda.

The home visits remain the most special part of the trip. People lovingly welcome you into their homes with open arms. Dress in their finest clothes. Answer all questions openly and honestly. How difficult and emotional is it when you have to tell them that you can keep 1 child with you, have had to leave the other behind because you can't both give enough to let them live. That the father and/or mother has run away, etc. Despite everything they have had to go through, they are not bitter, but you can see a smile and give and share love with anyone who wants to receive it. That is Lwengo in Uganda, the pearl of Africa. Not only because of the beautiful nature, but especially because of the people who live there. They are grateful, see and share what they have. We can learn a lot from these people.

Joke vd Kamp

The visit of Noor and Annet to their sponsor child Muniru Masereka

After months of waiting, the time had finally come on September 30, 2026: we left for Uganda for two weeks, where we were able to take a closer look at the projects of Lwengo Kids Foundation. It has become a special trip that has made a deep impression on us and that we will not soon forget.

During our visit, we were confronted with the poverty in which many people in this area live. At the same time, we were able to experience the warmth, hospitality and resilience of the people and children. Despite the difficult circumstances, we were welcomed with open arms everywhere. That touched us.

Thanks to Pieter and Marga we have been able to follow a wonderful and varied program. They took us along various projects and initiatives, ranging from the Lwerudeso Primary School and the Bukoto Farm (including cocoa and vanilla) to the company Eco Brix (processing of plastic bottles). We have been able to see with our own eyes how they work in different ways on opportunities, development and a better future for the people in Lwengo. It is special to see how much involvement and commitment is hidden behind these projects.

An absolute highlight of our trip was meeting our sponsor child Muniru. It was very special not only to know him from photos and stories, but to now also meet him in person. The home visit to his family also made a deep impression on us. We saw a small house with holes in the roof, in which the family lives under difficult conditions. It was precisely there that we were touched by a gesture that we will not soon forget: although his parents have almost nothing themselves, they had made a present especially for us. A small gesture, but with a big meaning.

This journey has not only shown us how important the work of the Lwengo Kids Foundation is, but also made us realize the value of providing opportunities for children and contributing to a better future.

We look back on two special weeks full of encounters, impressions and emotions. Uganda, the people of Lwengo and Muniru have a place in our hearts.

Annet and Noor Hoeven

On the third day, Robbe and Carsten also join the group and from then on there are ten of us.

Also this time the group visits the cocoa farm, because that is very nice to see, how the beans grow (not now) and the vanilla pods are grown. Fortunately, the sticks yield quite a bit so that the family can still make ends meet. We buy a kilo and you will see them again when you visit our sponsor day on May 22!

With the whole group we travel to Rakai, where several sponsor students are following the nursing course. We now have 12 students at school there. On the way we make a stopover at the hospital Kalisizo where a number of students are doing their internship. Marthe meets Carsten, her sponsor here and that is a huge surprise for her!

And on this day exactly at 00.00 hours little Sheena was born, daughter of Jesca and Douglas! Jesca has also been in sponsorship and is now a teacher with the little ones at Lwerudeso Primary School. Douglas is mainly my support and anchor when we are in Uganda, but I also have weekly contact with him about the children's work.

The group of sponsors also wants to see something of the area and they make a day trip to Lake Mboro. A day that starts with rain, but eventually the sun shines again and they happily cycle between zebras and giraffes!

On October 8, we drive with the whole group to Masaka to pay a home visit to one of our disabled children. We can't get all the way to the house, and Douglas and Farouk park the cars at the top of a mountain. I drop out together with two others and let Pieter do the home visit here! When they come back, it is quite a challenge to get the car turned around again and Farouk decides to drive the narrow path all the way backwards! When we are all safely back on the main road, we drive to school to monitor Primary 4 and 5. André, Carsten and Robbe help me and the others do creative things with the other children of those classes.

The night before we practiced with colored chenille wire to make beautiful figures such as butterflies and flowers after examples on the mobile. When the children came to me to pick up their letter, I saw no butterflies, no flowers, but all kinds of glasses! It was a bit of a laugh!

In the afternoon, Carsten has an appointment with dr. Peter in and about the Health Center.

His experiences regarding sponsorship and the conversation with dr. Peter:

Finally we managed to travel with Pieter and Marga! We have been sponsoring the project for many years and it had always been the intention to meet 'our' children and see the operation of LKF live. I have to tell you how emotional the meeting with the children was and how deeply we were moved. Very special that they all remembered what we wrote in our letters, even though our last letter was from October last year. So it really means something to the children!

As emergency doctors in Belgium, we have the privilege of helping to evaluate the operation of the Health Center. Huge, what has already been done here in this short time. Very special that during our stay Douglas' wife gave birth to a healthy daughter in the center and we were also able to help with the care after a car accident (see later in this report). Together we want to think further about how we can further improve the operation and make it sustainable. For example, there is a problem that patients stay away from drought because they cannot afford even the few costs of the consultation. We are going to work on it and want to look for solutions in the coming months.

Says Carsten Steinkamm, emergency doctor in Belgium.

We continue and visit David and Benard with the rest of the group. Boys with disabilities who have been given their own cow that they now have to take care of. A calf was born to David, a bull. He will become the friend of the Community and have a lot of offspring! Benard is also very happy with his cow and takes good care of it together with mother.

We drop the group off at school. They are going to organize a fun sports afternoon and Pieter, Carola and I are going to do the distant home visits. A long drive, but Douglas drives us safely to the farthest corners in Lwengo. We meet a family with 8 children. Two of them we have new in sponsorship. The other children, all older, had to break off their studies because father died in July this year and there was no income at that time. She proudly shows a photo of her husband. Mother is grateful to us that at least two of the eight can still go to school. She is very sad and the only thing I can think of at that moment is to give her a big hug. Too sad for words..... What can we do about it? It keeps haunting my mind, but I haven't come up with a solution (yet).

While talking and thinking about a solution, we drive home, where we can end the long day at 19:00 in the evening with the usual drinks with the group and finally every evening there is still something from my side: "are there any questions?" And that usually results in some laughter at first....

Douglas drives back to Lwengo with the two sponsor children who have traveled with him. I ask him to text when he is home. At 20.11 I get his text: "we reached safely". Fortunately, because driving in the dark in Uganda, with two children in your back seat, is not a party.

The next day, Friday 9 October, we will do a number of home visits in Nakyenyi. That is near the school.

Then we also have the farewell of Robbe and Carsten.

In the evening we have a nice, cozy, last evening for the whole group plus staff of Masaka BackPackers.

Robbe and Carsten have an appointment in the afternoon at a hospital in Masaka where they get a tour from doctor Dawson, our family doctor after my illness here.

In short: another beautiful, but full day. We are all rested again and waiting for Farouk, our regular driver and Douglas. We were supposed to be picked up at 9.00 am and as usual Farouk is well on time.

Douglas or Anthony would pick us up this morning to do a number of home visits with the group. At a quarter past nine, my phone vibrates and Molly reports. That's strange, because usually Anthony or Douglas texts at that time when they have a bit of a delay! But no, Molly texts that Douglas had an accident with the car. The school bus is on its way to pick us up. We are shocked when a little later Anthony sends the photos of the car. Thanks to the belt and airbags, Douglas gets off well with a slight concussion and some abrasions and cuts. But the car is no more.....

A little later the school bus comes to pick us up and we drive to Lwengo, after all, the program has to continue, but what will we find there.... When we take the exit to Lwengo we see many people along the road in the distance. The car is just being hoisted up and taken away. The shock is enormous and I notice that I am hopelessly emotional and I am not the only one.

We drive on to the Health Center. The group continues with the home visits and Carsten and I wait at the Health Center. I speak to Jesca who is waiting there crying and then I walk to Douglas who is now talking to the Police. He is smiling again, but still... Of course, he is also shocked! A little later, Carsten examines him again and the injuries are indeed not too bad.

In the meantime, the group has completed the planned home visits and we are going to experience the farewell of the two men with the toddlers.

The music is very faltering, but what is not faltering today! But in the end they get a nice farewell and the certificate, as a token of appreciation and after lunch, much later than planned, we go back to Masaka.

Carsten, Robbe and Pieter go to the hospital for the planned tour and another visit to one of our students.

The doctor is not there because of an emergency and the student was not on duty. Unfortunately, things are not going well today!

We will also end this day with a drink and evaluation. There are no questions this time ...

We still make it a pleasant evening with good food and a campfire.

The next day we say goodbye to Carsten and Robbe, too bad, both really wanted to stay longer, but unfortunately that was not possible due to work and study.

We continue our program and visit Eco Brix. Here, thousands and thousands of plastic bottles are recycled into small pieces of plastic that are then exported to a.o. China where all kinds of things are made from it. The company was started by an Englishman and now processes 10,000 kg of bottles per day. It's impressive!

Today also lunch and sightseeing through Masaka. At the end of the afternoon, part of the group leaves for a Barcloth workshop and we (Joke and I) are updating part of the administration today.

Our program is a bit different because we miss the car due to the accident. We now have to do everything with the school bus, but of course it also has to take the children to school and back home in the afternoon. So it's arranging and organizing. It's nice that the bus is there, but for the children! Because every now and then we get shaken up and I wonder if everything is still in its place in my body!

So we shorten the program a bit on some days.

The school also works with a Girls Club. Molly regularly organizes a meeting with the girls of Primary 5, 6 and 7 to talk about all the feminine things that concern them. A very good project that should definitely stay. For example, the girls learn to sew their own rewashable pads, because the sanitary napkins from the store are unaffordable for many. However, the budget for this year is almost gone and if there is to be a follow-up next year, the budget must therefore be supplemented. Annet, Noor and Leonie participated in the conversation and found it very instructive.

And then Joke, Leonie, Carola, Noor and Annet also leave us, André stays for another week. They are going to make a day trip in Kampala and then back home. I fill the day with administration and a lot of research, but it is very quiet.....

Our work here in Lwengo continues and today we are going to visit a house with disabled children with the group of Lwerudeso, Anthony, Joseph, Molly and Paul, André, Pieter and I. Let's see if we get wiser to set up something similar in Lwengo. But that requires preparation, research and will really take some time before we have found a sustainable, good solution for our children with disabilities.

The house looks neat, well-kept, but here too the biggest problem is: money and qualified staff. That is unthinkable in Uganda it seems. We see a number of children here who are at home all day. Another part does go to school, but little is done with them.

Together they take care of a few cows, some chickens, goats and pigs. But that's about it.

There is actually no money for anything, the government only makes, almost impossible, requirements. Our enthusiasm is heavily dampened: will it be feasible? We are full of doubts and questions.

After this visit we drive to our house in Masaka. There we discuss our experiences of this morning and talk to each other about possibilities and impossibilities. We can't really figure it out yet and a sequel will certainly be needed. You will read a lot about this project in the coming newsletters until we know what the best solution is for our children with disabilities.

A home visit. When we were at school to monitor our sponsor children, we saw a young woman with a prosthetic leg coming out of the staff office, followed a little later by Anthony. When we asked what this woman came to do, he explained to us that this woman had an accident with the bodaboda. She lost a leg and her husband was killed. Their twins of a few months, which they had with them, were thrown off during the fall and they miraculously had nothing wrong. These twins are now 4 years old and now mother came to ask if there was a place at school for sponsorship of her children. Anthony tells us that this happens almost weekly and we understand that it is very difficult to ignore these questions. But now we are here and this mother is lucky with that.

A few days later we went to have a look at her house and in a tiny house made of mud, we find mother. If you accidentally touch the wall, the pieces fall off. Inside we also find her father, sitting on the floor. He is crippled by polio. Then there is a little girl, half of the twins we think. But no, there are no twins at all, mother wanted to appear more pathetic than it all already was in order to qualify for sponsorship. Well, that was not necessary. The hut is no bigger than 3x3 meters and almost collapses. Father has already had to sell pieces of land to pay for medical treatment and medicines for himself and daughter. We are convinced that help must be provided here. We have already had consultations with Robbe and Carsten. They take care of the girl with the beautiful name "Hope" and they will also take care of better housing. And that makes us so happy! Thank you dear men!

After this visit we think that there should actually be a house project. This is not the first house that is so incredibly bad that we have encountered this and previous trips and here and there we have helped. Another thing to think about.

The same afternoon we also receive René and Jesse, two enthusiastic 17-year-old boys who will be volunteering at Lwerudeso for two months. We wish them good luck. We will meet them again.

Then André also leaves for home and Pieter and I stay behind together to have the last conversations, do home visits and of course say goodbye at school.

The last day Anthony comes to pick us up. He has a replacement car and we are all happy with that. We drive towards St. Bernards Secondary School. It is quite a drive on the red roads and in the meantime we discuss a number of things.

At the end of the day we say goodbye to each other, somewhat emotionally. A lot has happened and been said this trip. The work is done. New ideas are bubbling up again and we also travel together with our driver Farouk, back to Entebbe, where we make the necessary purchases for our anniversary celebration in May and we do the last work behind the laptop.

At night we will fly back to Amsterdam, but Kenya Airways puts a stop to that for the second time this return trip and cancels our flight from Entebbe to Nairobi again.

At the moment I am typing this, we are waiting for the message from Kenya Airways on how we can return to the Netherlands.

But given the fact that you are reading this report, you will understand that after a night on hard chairs in Nairobi and a flight to the Netherlands that has been postponed again, we have arrived home safely but completely demolished!

It was a journey with bumps and dents, but most days I wouldn't have missed for the world!

Regards,

Pieter and Marga Streefkerk

in the company of Joke, André, Carola, Leonie, Annet, Noor, Carsten and Robbe.

Thank you for your input in any form, because we learn from that too!

The flags are fluttering in the wind when we are present at school.

P.S. Would you also like to travel with us and visit your sponsor child in Lwengo? Please contact us.