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Travelogue April 2024

Our journey at a glance

On 1 April, Easter Monday, our neighbour Dirk takes us to Schiphol early in the morning and we fly to Uganda on time and without any problems. We have 220 letters for the children in our suitcase, for which we are very grateful.

Late in the evening we reach Entebbe Airport and after a warm welcome we drive to our overnight stop, this time Green Valley.

The other day starts with rain and all the following days, except for a single day, will start no differently. We have never had as much rain as this trip!

Tuesday afternoon we have our first meeting with Anthony and we discuss several things that need to be addressed these weeks. Anthony stays with us and the other day we leave on time for Lwengo. First we go to school where, as usual, we are warmly welcomed by all the children with singing and dancing.



Then we drive by Husein, our friend with a disability. He was sponsored and was in the Special Class. But he was getting too old and too big to learn anything there.

It was decided to buy him a cow. He takes full care of the cow, which is also pregnant! He sells the milk so that he has a small source of income. He lives at home with his mother and they all enjoy it. Thank you sponsor for this great solution for Husein!



We drive past the Family Home. Construction is progressing steadily and they even hope to be able to start at the end of May, beginning of June. I leave a large bag of balloons to hang

during the opening.

This is followed by a dozen home visits. It's a long, long day, but it's a good thing we persevered, 1 because all the other days start with a lot of rain so the roads in Lwengo turn into mudslides that are almost impassable.

When we get home, the power is out. A cable has broken somewhere and no one knows how long this will take.

The next day I have just enough battery to work out the home visits, but then it's also done with the laptop.

Pieter went to Lwengo this day. Doctor Samuel is leaving the project and today there will be interviews with candidate doctors.

Unfortunately, it does not yet result in a new doctor and new candidates will be invited.

How a job interview works:

- Typing test on the computer
- Checking all official papers and diplomas
- Conversation

Pieter didn't get back to Masaka until late in the afternoon with not a very good feeling about the course of the day! Later, Pieter explained to

Anthony how an application procedure works in the Netherlands. So it's a little different!



In the evening, the girl next door comes to visit. She is ill, but on the mend. She has finished Secondary School and there is no money to continue her studies. The girl Sauda and her mother don't know what to do next. These are the sad things we encounter for the Foundation outside of our work. And yes, it comes our way, so we extend a helping hand. The girl sees another dot on the horizon.

We still have to do without power, but luckily we have Solar and therefore some lighting. Our router can also be charged and Pieter's mobile phone. So we remain available.

On Saturday evening we finally have power again and a cheer goes up in our house, but also in the neighborhood.

On Monday we leave for Lwengo to monitor the lowest classes, give letters and hand out the small gifts we always take with us. It's fast and good. No problems with the children and then we drive via a huge detour due to the impassable muddy roads to the Secondary School St. Bernard. When we arrive there we are a bit shocked, because there is a large poster against homosexuality at the entrance....

We ended up visiting about eight schools and we didn't see this poster anywhere. Anthony has promised to talk to the management of this school about this and if the poster does not disappear, we will no longer place sponsor children here. A harsh measure, but it does send a signal!

We have to deal with another rule, which is difficult for us to understand: a mobile phone is not allowed in all Secondary Schools. For one of our sponsor youngsters who goes to Secondary 5 and is 20 years old, we had a (2nd hand) smartphone with us, but unfortunately the phone has to go back with Anthony and he can use it during the holidays.

A different country, a different culture, different rules, we sometimes really struggle with it, but it is what it is.

The story of Florence is also new to us. Anthony gave me a letter last January. Florence was planning to travel to one of the oil states to earn the "promised gold" for her family. She had finished

Secondary 4 and didn't want to continue her education.

We are all familiar with the situation in these countries. Girls are often exploited, barely earn anything, their passports are confiscated so they can't go back, and they are often sold and raped. Terrible.

When we arrived in Lwengo, I asked if I could make one more attempt to persuade her not to leave, but to take her chance at a nice study.

And that's what we did. Luckily it's dry and the sun is shining when we go to her. When we arrive we understand Florence a bit; The poverty splashes off. Really, really bad. we talk to Florence and her mother, explain to her the situation that the promised golden mountains really aren't there and I see a slow change in her face. She defends herself by saying that more girls go there... But then we get her to give up and then she would like to train as a seamstress after we promise to support the family to alleviate the greatest need/poverty.



Mission accomplished!

On Friday we will go to that school to visit one of our students and we will inquire if she can still join. Finally, the first term is almost over.

I am in contact with the sponsor and ask if she is willing to pay for the training for Florence. She agrees, and we also hear that Florence is expected on Monday.

A good end to this second week in Lwengo!

Tuesday the 16th we go to Lwengo for the last time and the first thing Anthony tells us when we are in the car is that Florence is pregnant That comes as a bolt from the blue and we are silent about it. The best thing is that Florence has her baby first. That will be in mid-June. Then she can take care of her child this year and start training to become a seamstress next year.

With this story we go back to the sponsor.

We visit a few more schools and we are visited on St. Joseph St. Mary confronted with complaining youngsters in Secondary 3 and 4. Their complaint is that certain subjects are not taught because there is a shortage of teachers. They are worried, and not unjustifiably.

We immediately discuss it with the director of the school, who denies it in all tones. Anthony will pick out one other. To be continued.



Then we pay a visit to Fred, our oldest nursing student. He is now doing an internship at our Health Center and lives with his mentally ill father. There, too, a lot, a lot of poverty. Fred does his best to keep his head above water with his

earned money and some sponsorship money. But what a responsibility for that guy! We will also continue to monitor him from the Netherlands.

We also stop by Jesca. She studied to be a teacher and passed. She is now a teacher at our school. Her sponsor gave her an amount of money that she could spend on something personal.

In addition to her job as a teacher, Jesca really wanted to start a small shop in school supplies. And she was able to achieve that with the gift of her sponsor. We see a nice assortment of things, from pencil sharpeners to file folders. She now lives



behind the shop and is doing very well.

It gave us the idea to find out if it is possible to buy the small gifts for the sponsor children of the Primary School from her.

More space in the suitcase for us and a nice source of income for her. We are now working on that together and it will certainly work out!

At the beginning of the afternoon it will be dry and the sun will shine again. We thank Joseph for bringing us safely back to Entebbe and after we say goodbye to him, he returns to Masaka. We stay in Entebbe, buy some souvenirs the other day and it is actually a warm, sunny day that we enjoy for a while. From Monday to Tuesday we fly back home.

Monitoring the children went well again, we shared concerns and solved problems with each other and made a priority list.

You will all receive warm greetings from all our people in Uganda and of course from 252 sponsor children! There is enormous gratitude for everything we do together to offer these underprivileged children and families a livable existence.

So the last days in Uganda are dawning and we are slowly getting ready for the return journey. Sunday we drive back to Entebbe in the pouring rain. In Entebbe, the water has really come down with huge buckets of water at the same time, so that a piece of road has been washed away and the already rickety houses are in a muddy stream. What poverty, it's terrible.

A few days later we arrived safely in the Netherlands at Schiphol Airport.

Kind regards!

Pieter and Marga Streefkerk