

Travelogue Lwengo Kids Foundation

April 2025



On Saturday 5 April we will fly with Kenya Airlines to Uganda and not with KLM as usual. We have discovered that with Kenya Airlines we are on the road a little longer on both the way there and the way back, but that we are hundreds of euros cheaper. And that is worth something. Unfortunately, a few days before departure, we are told that our flight from Nairobi to Entebbe has been canceled. What now... Sandra and Gert also go along and receive the same email. We choose to travel a day earlier. Sandra and Gert can still be transferred to a KLM day flight. This starts well!

On Sunday morning 9.00 am we land in Entebbe. Unfortunately we arrive in the pouring rain and then everything goes a bit slower. For example, the fourth suitcase takes a very long time to arrive, so we almost start to think that we have lost it, but just when we want to report it, it passes by on the conveyor belt. Fortunately, because there were a lot of relief goods in it.

We drive straight on to do some shopping and exchange money. Then we pick up Sandra (our new board member) and partner Gert at ViaVia and then drive towards Masaka.

Monday we have a quiet, extra day to recover from the trip, which started a day earlier.

Tuesday we go to work. We have quite a bit of catching up to do from what was left behind in October, but we start with a meeting with Anthony and Paul. We go through the program and discuss our concerns and problems and look for solutions.



Tuesday we drive to Lwengo and there we are warmly welcomed by staff and children. There is dancing and singing, the sun is shining. It's wonderful to be here again.

We monitor the youngest children and after lunch we visit the projects: houses for the teachers under construction; The newly built annex that will be used for the toddlers is almost ready. A dear sponsor has collected money as a gift for her birthday. Outdoor play materials are bought for the little ones. After the holidays, they will move to their own premises and then the ground around it will also be prepared to place the playground equipment, as well as a good, lockable gate around it. In October we will see how it turned out. We have money ready to build a nice playground and during this trip we also visited a company that can supply playground equipment. To be continued.



We met the new doctor, who finally has his mobile phone for the Health Center. It is inconceivable for us that a doctor cannot be reached by phone. Thanks to a donation, that has now been resolved. We also meet the dentist who is present every Thursday. In the future, all children will receive an annual dental check-up. That is a great progress.

The next day Anthony picks us up and we drive with Gert on the back of the bodaboda with Douglas, Pieter and Anthony in the front of the car and Sandra and I with four children in the back seat a long way to visit the four children at home. It takes us a day.

Intense visits, a lot of poverty, very small mud houses.

Impressed by all this, we drive back to Anthony's house with sleeping children and finally have lunch at half past four.

Then we will visit Sandra and Gert's sponsor child who fortunately lives around the corner from the school. It was a long, hard day.

The next day we leave in time for a short trip to Lake Mbooro. We drive through the park on bumpy roads. We see a number of giraffes, many zebras, a few monkeys and water buffalo grazing through the meadows around the lake. We take a boat trip and see many hippos. At the end, we speed up, because in the distance there is a terrible dark sky that does not bode well.

Less than half an hour later, when we are just in the car, the water is pouring down from the sky. We decide to go to our lodge, because it is no longer doable. The water gushes down our bus in 2 large streams, while Andrew tries to steer the bus up. We succeed and we are welcomed with umbrellas in Eagle's Nest, our accommodation for the night!



The next day it is dry and Gert and Sandra make a walking safari, where they can get very close to the giraffes!

In the afternoon we drive back to Masaka to resume our work.

After a quiet Sunday in which I have processed all the data of the past few days, Pieter is up to date with other things, we have a good conversation in the evening with Annelou and Niels who have been working in Lwengo for 5 months. Annelou is working on a project specifically for the older girls. A piece of information and care brought together in a good workshop. During the workshop, the girls learn how to make sanitary pads yourself. It is for sale in Uganda, but for our poorest girls, for whom we do our work, it is not affordable. Annelou has a good feeling about her work. Niels is busy setting up a piece of organization within LWERUDES. He also has his attention for the collection of stray plastic. He is also making progress and is satisfied with what he can achieve. Not everything is possible, we have to deal with a different culture, in which we have to find each other, the European and the African. A challenge in itself.

In the new week, Anthony regularly comes to pick us up to see our sponsor children. The children at our Primary School are looking forward to us with great anticipation. After all, there is usually a letter and a small gift! This time Jesca took care of the presents again and she did a great job. As you know, or maybe not yet, Jesca is an ex-sponsor child. She is now a teacher at LWERUDES

Primary School and has a small shop with school materials, among other things. So she knows better than anyone what the children at "her" school like and what is also useful. This time there were stickers for the children with disabilities, a drinking bottle for the toddlers, a lunch box for the older children: a tennis ball, a notebook or a tube of felt-tip pens.



All the children were so happy with it!

Just a day of monitoring: We drive to different Secondary Schools. We meet Lawrence who turns out to have asthma. We see an enthusiastic Jackline and a quiet Daniel, all satisfied at the school of their choice. In the afternoon we go to Secondary School Nakyenya and we have to conclude that one of our sponsor children has not returned to school. Very unfortunate. Unfortunately, it is not the first time that we miss Elizabeth. We speak to mother, who also doesn't know what to do anymore, but the girl has no intention of returning. This is where the sponsorship of one of our sponsor children stops. However sad it may be, there are also limits for Lwengo Kids Foundation.

Two more home visits are planned. Dark clouds gather over Lwengo and we hold our hearts. A strong wind causes a palm branch to sail down and luckily our table was just under another tree!

One home visit is still dry, but the second we slide and slither to the house by car until Anthony says: this far and no further, otherwise I won't get out. We slither the last bit on foot in the rain to Josephine's house.

It remains gloomy and a bit dripping, but fortunately it is not all that bad. We have had another day with good and bad things!

Gert and Sandra leave for home. It was nice, useful and fun with each other. We go with Anthony to Secondary School St. Bernards.

No problems here fortunately. Everyone is having a good time and we see satisfied children. We drive to Lwengo Technical Institute where two students went this year. So a new school for us. We are kindly welcomed by the director. Unfortunately, one of the two students (Florence) is not present. We will have to follow up on that, although her story is fairly familiar to us. We visit the mother of Gaudencia (grandmother of Dennis and Lyton) and hear the story that we already knew but now from grandmother, that her eldest daughter is unwantedly pregnant. Too bad, too bad, too bad. The girl is not at home and we will come back later, how to proceed.

After Easter, the work continues. We go back to Lwengo, monitor P1 to P5 and do two more home visits. We bought some materials for the disabled children including two wheelchairs. They are so happy with it!



Thursday, our last day in Lwengo, we monitor the last classes of Primary School and we visit Gaudencia, where another grandchild has come forward who would like to go to school and is currently being nominated for sponsorship by two Dutch volunteers in Lwengo.

But first Gaudencia, she is at home and we see a young woman who hangs her head and clearly does not know how to deal with the situation. At Anthony's request, I first talk to her alone and I start to give her a hug. What else can you do? Then we talk, she doesn't know what to do either, but would like to go to journalism school. But pregnant girls are not allowed. In the end we decide that she should have her baby first this year. Then we ask if mother is willing to take care of the baby if Gaudencia wants to go to school. She agrees, after all, it is your child, you do everything for that.... But we know this family and there has already been so much grief. We agree that we will have another conversation during our trip in October. After all, a lot changes for a mom when she has her first child! We will then see what she wants and the possibilities are. She has to cry, yes, I get it, this is not what she wanted.

After our conversation, she sits on the edge of the house; I feel sorry for her, such a vulnerable, such a lonely girl! We will continue to follow her for the time being.



We talk to the other granddaughter, who jumps for joy when she hears that she can also go to school. A sponsor has now been found.

We have to move on; But I find it difficult. I see Gaudencia sitting, I see (grand)mother sitting.. This is a project within a project. Tears sting my eyes too... I give Gaudencia another hug, wipe away her tears and promise her that it will be okay. (Grand)mother also gets a big hug. Then we go, that's all we can do for a while.

We say goodbye to Lwengo. In September/October we will be back to continue working with these beautiful people, to solve problems and to share concerns.

Friday we have another day of administration and we pack the suitcases for departure. Saturday we drive back to Entebbe with a suitcase full of stories. That night we fly back to Nairobi and Sunday back to Amsterdam.

While we relax, eat and drink in Entebbe at our regular spot, ViaVia, we get a message that our flight to Nairobi has been canceled. This is really not fun. We can only return the next night. So we extend our stay by one day. It is what it is.

And I haven't told you everything yet..... But that also does not fit in with a report that should not be longer than three pages.

The best thing is to see it for yourself, to smell it, to taste it, to share the concerns with the people here. And yes, we too are still gripped by so many things that come our way and cannot be explained on paper.

Will you join us? We will go again in October. On May 24, we will organize an information moment. You can still sign up.

Kind regards,

Marga Streefkerk