
DEAF LINK UGANDA (DLU)

HOSTS

YMCA HEBY & YMCA/YWCA TALLINN

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DEAF LINK UGANDA

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INTRODUCTION

Deaf Link Uganda (DLU), a non-government organisation founded in 2007 to promote the welfare of deaf people in Uganda has over the years received financial support and technical assistance from various individuals and organisations in different parts of the world.

One of the partnerships established and strengthened in the last decade was with the Swedish YMCA/YWCA (KFUM/KFUK Södra, Bromma and Gimle, and recently YMCA Heby). Since 2010 when DLU has received funds from these organisations in a collaborative effort to support its administration and programme activities. This support continues in earnest and laid the foundation for this visit in recognition of 10 remarkable years of dedicated service and support, which has driven DLU's grassroots community programmes in the most deprived regions, creating a positive impact on deaf people's lives, their families and communities. These changes are highlighted in some of the outstanding achievements evident seen during this visit: Uplifting lives and changing negative perceptions towards deafness and Deaf People. DLU extends sincere gratitude to each and every one (individuals and organisations) who have joined us in this noble CAUSE!

THE VISIT



Arrival at Entebbe airport

02nd – 15th January, 2020

On 2nd January Mats Olsén, Habib Achour (YMCA Heby, Sweden) and Piret Kutser (YMCA/YWCA Tallinn, Estonia) arrived at Entebbe airport for their two weeks trip to Uganda to visit Deaf Link Uganda's work. Although a dry season characterized by high temperatures, they braved the heat, traveling with DLU staff to Eastern Uganda where DLU undertakes programme to improve lives of deaf people in rural areas.

"I never expect that our work could help that many people"
Habib Achour (Chairperson KFUM Heby)

The arrival was marked by an evening walk for a taste of Kampala, venturing to Nakasero market to shop for fresh fruits and a taste of the much-relished grasshoppers!



Nakasero market: Kampala.

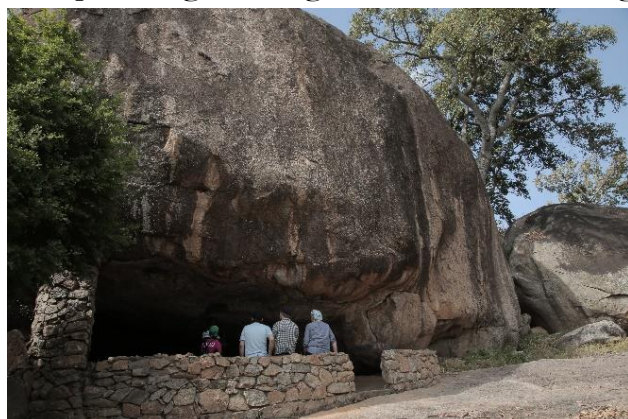


DLU Office: Tufnell Drive, Kamwokya.

Our visitors received a cordial official welcome at DLU Office where they met staff and were oriented on their programme, in addition to obtaining insight into DLU's work. The visit, a key event on our 2020 calendar, highlighted ten years of financial assistance from KFUM/KFUK Södra, Bromma, Gimle and recently KFUM Heby.

DLU-Eastern *established in 2008 serves the needs of the most vulnerable deaf people in remote rural areas; majority of whom experience poverty, are commonly neglected and are discriminated in their communities. Our guests spent most of their time in Eastern Uganda to learn about DLU's intervention work in the region.*

Departing from Namayiba bus terminal (Kampala) at 5:45am on Sunday 5th January, we traveled with *TY Coach* on a six hours journey, arriving safely. After a refreshing break we went on a fascinating tour to Nyero Rocks home to Uganda's pre-historic rock paintings dating back to the stone age era (about 5,000years B.C.).



Nyero Rocks: Tour of pre-historic rock art paintings in Kumi district

Our visit spread out in various villages in Ngora, Kumi and Bukedea districts where our programmes are based (i.e. education for deaf children; micro-credit loans to self-employed individuals, livelihood projects for the deaf, their families and communities as well as advocacy initiatives to increase awareness about deafness and deaf people. DLU's Programmes Officer works with a team of deaf and hearing volunteers to implement our work, following up on all activities to ensure effective outcomes.

To create employment and improve the lives of the deaf and their families, DLU undertakes Business Groups to promote economic welfare for beneficiaries through sustainable home-based activities. Using a *re-cycling* system, we distribute donations-in-kind to eligible individuals. Visitors interacted with beneficiaries in 3 projects:

- a) Farming & agriculture;
- b) Tailoring
- c) Carpentry

Investing in families of the deaf and communities is key to social cohesion and not only do we focus on deaf persons, but entire family units with objectives of uplifting the family, bridging gaps between deaf and hearing communities and tackling discrimination against the deaf. Family relationships have been strengthened as parents work together with their deaf child to generate income. Born deaf, Apoo Jennifer never had an opportunity to go to school due to poverty. From an early age, her parents and grandparents trained her in agriculture and farming, equipping her with skills in self-sufficiency and food production. Apoo has grown into a skilled farmer, rearing sheep, goats and hens. In 2019 DLU donated 3 turkeys to provide her with additional income avenues. Despite limited communication, she emerged as our best performer in the turkey project with a current count of 24 turkeys at the time of our visit! We honour and recognize her and her family for their unity and exceptional hard work!



Visit to Apoo's home (Osion village): Parents Business Group (PBG) – Turkey Rearing Project

In Kadesok village - Bukedea district, we visited two deaf children under PBG - Sheep rearing. Last year each child received a donation of two sheep (male & female) and when their two-year cycle ends, they'll return one sheep to DLU for donation to another family of a deaf child. It was great that at this visit, the sheep had a lamb to show off!



Oct 2019: Deaf child receives two sheep; 08 Jan 2020: PBG Project – Sheep rearing



Deaf Business Group (DBG) an initiative that aims to promote self-employment and boosts economic empowerment among deaf people, has enabled them lead independent lives. In Atoot village, Akol Anna, single mother of 3 benefitted greatly from DLU's interventions, emerging as an exemplary role model and highly productive farmer. In 2010 she received donations of bulls to generate

income. Unfortunately, her desperate living condition negatively affected her progress. Through the Humanitarian Support project, DLU provided additional support: constructing a new house for her, which made a remarkable difference, opening up possibilities for self-reliance. Akol has emerged a robust business woman and is on DLU's volunteer staff team.

Deaf beneficiaries have made significant breakthroughs, overcoming difficult circumstances to achieve success! For those managing their own businesses, DLU micro-credit loans have secured their employment. In turn some have taken on deaf peers for training in particular trades, with provision of Start-up kits for income avenues in tailoring and carpentry. In Mukura Town, a group of deaf carpenters led by Ebolu Francis received tools to support their enterprise. Ebolu, a skilled carpenter, provides

additional training in Sign Language for young deaf trainees who lack communication skills. The group makes beds, chairs, benches, coffins, tables and brick - making boxes.



Meeting the carpenters in Mukura Town & Omoding at his workshop – A display of table set



Kachinga village: Visit Omoding at his carpentry workshop which he built using a DLU loan: *On four occasions, I applied and received micro-credit loans to improve my business. With the 4th loan, I built this workshop which is my business center. In 2016 I accepted DLU's request for Akello to use my premises for her tailoring business. Both of us support each other and encourage other deaf people to work and*

earn their own living. The workshop attracts many customers. Akello Ketty an industrious tailor was sponsored by DLU to study *Tailoring & Fashion Design* at Apoolo Na Angor institute. With a DLU Start Up Tailoring kit, she began her business: making, mending and selling 2nd hand clothings. She attracts a large clientele and is a highly respected member of the community. She's currently training a deaf apprentice as well as expanding her business to other areas beyond her village.

Ngora Market: To enable deaf enterprenuers gain exposure and mobility in mainstream markets, increase public awareness about their economic potentials and enable them expand their customer base, we set up a stall in Ngora market. This venture has had a positive impact on the community of traders and customers who interact freely with the deaf. **The visit** culminated with a visit to Madoch Ailak Primary School, a former school for two of



our students who began their education at the inclusive government school. The congregation gathered over 100 people with pupils, teachers, community leaders, parents, deaf and hearing members of society, enthusiastic to meet our visitors. It was a remarkable event, highlighting the significant contributions DLU has made to society. The change in social attitude towards the deaf was evident, elevating communities in the region to levels of greater understanding and appreciation of Deaf people as valuable members of society. The visit ended as an inspirational event for all of us: joined together in Good Will, Friendship, with renewed Hope for a Better Future!

A Refreshing and Great Start to 2020!



From Kadesok: Thanks to YMCA Heby & YMCA/YWCA Tallinn for Your VISIT!

The Team sets off for Atoot village: Riding along the dusty Kumi-Ngora Highway



Boda-boda: Our way to penetrate and reach remote rural villages