

LATEST UPDATE FROM LANDS FAR AWAY...

Dear Friends,

This letter has been in the making for about 2 weeks already, and as you can see, i have only now gotten down to it. I hope you are all well and that spring is bringing up all sorts of new and positive life in your beings.

The main reason i'm writing, is to inform you about Sigulu – the island in lake Victoria where we have most recently started a project.

Let's go back a step...while i was in India in February, i received an email from a friend whom i met a couple of years ago in the lineup at the airport. We have kept in loose contact over time. The mail was telling me about their trip to Uganda, and what God had been doing through them, and what needs they had been seeing. One of the greatest needs that Kirk saw, was on Sigulu Island, far away from any mainland...he saw people bathing, washing their clothes and taking drinking water, all from the same source...urination and defecation is quite probable as well. Bilharzia, a waterborne disease, is very common in those waters, and more recently Cholera, which is very infectious and deadly and is also waterborne. As Kirk and I had spoken about our work he dropped me a line to tell me about this need for clean water, and that's where it all began...

On May 3, i left Lamu to go to an unknown island deep in Lake Victoria (the largest lake in Africa, and one of the largest in the world, shared by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), to help people with clean drinking water and to spread the message of God's love through Jesus. I was given the contact of True Vine Ministries, who were such a blessing in organising my time there. Pastor Wilber made the connections with government officials from Uganda in whose zone Sigulu is, to request that we do not pay duty on the tanks we were bringing in from Kenya. I decided to go via Kenya for the tanks, because of the substantial difference in price.

We were helped in Port Victoria on the Kenyan shore of the lake, by Pastor Douglas. There we received the 30 tanks, and put the taps on them and painted YESU ANAKUPENDA on them...a quiet message of the love of God through Jesus for people, which is shown practically with the tank. The tanks left in two loads, for the one and a half hour journey to the shores of Sigulu Island, where Sam, our True Vine Ministries worker, offloaded them at the particular villages he had previously prepared for the arrival of the tanks.

As usual, our stipulation was a strong support for the tanks, and we were so happy to see the effort people had put into them! They received the tanks and us, with such warmth and graciousness, and in many cases, fed us so well in thanks.

Sigulu is a big island, very green and fertile because of the lake. Bilharzia, a waterborne disease, is prevalent in the water, and is contracted by swimming or wading in the lake. At the current time, an outbreak of cholera has been reported, which is also waterborne. Usage of rainwater from the tanks should help prevent the rampant spread of this deadly disease, and future education of sterilising water through either boiling or chlorination, should also help the people to live healthier lives.

We gave 30, 920litre tanks to 7 villages. We chose locations in the villages which already had iron sheets on the roofs, so we could maximise the number of tanks with the money we had remaining, and with the time that we had prior to the onset of the rains.

In future, God willing, we will also have to add iron sheets to some of the tanks that we add, as there were huts far up the hill in very thick foliage. The huts were made from mud and grass thatch, sitting high on the hill ...it must be very challenging for those people to get their water from the lake each day...

I'm grateful to God and to True Vine Ministries and all those who worked with us, for their help to launch this new project. Many thanks also goes out to the Eaux Potable, Geneve (the people in charge of drinking water all over Switzerland, who are based out of Geneva), who graciously gave us a donation of 5000 francs in 2009, which was the strength of the money we used to place 42 new water stations on Bet Dwarka in India, and about 10 of the stations in Sigulu. Very grateful thanks also, to our faithful financial supporters all over Switzerland and elsewhere, to those who pray for us and to those who send words of encouragement to keep us going..it really is a team effort!!

Please note, that 99% or more of the money that's given to us, goes directly to the work that we are doing on the field. Plane fares and other administration costs are covered by donations given to help me with my existence here in Kenya.

Again, sincere thanks for your part in the work that we have accomplished in less than 6 months...over 60,000 litres of clean drinking water available after each heavy rainfall!!

Every blessing,

Tasmin Keshavjee
(Wings of Grace International)