



Issue 54

Newsletter

Spring 2023

Do you want to be a charity trustee?

FOAG is looking for new trustees to help manage the charity.

This is a fantastic opportunity to help us build a brighter future for the most vulnerable people in rural Uganda.

We're looking for a blend of talent, so you might be:

- Young, bright and eager at the start of your working life
- A skilled professional in the middle of your career
- An experienced retiree with a passion to give back

Whichever you are, the common denominator will be a desire to help fight poverty in Uganda and a commitment to give some of your spare time.

Are you interested? Or do you know someone that might be? Send us a note and let's have a chat: info@foag.org



Run a marathon, bake a cake or...go zip wiring for a good cause!



Jan ready to go

Our supporters have come up with lots of wonderful ways to raise money for FOAG, but zip wiring is a first.

In June 2022 our Treasurer Jan McConville was joined by her friends Cori, Mary, and Rosie to ride the fastest zip line in the world.

The quartet raised just over £2,700 to support this year's FOAG Summer Appeal to buy a new generator at Kumi hospital. All four agreed at the end that it was "over too soon"!



Mary, Rosie, Cori and Jan



Jan flying!

Help us? Whether it is running a marathon, baking a cake, or going zip wiring – we'd be delighted if you would raise money for us in 2023!

Life changing operations for £200

Around 10,000 children in eastern Uganda suffer from gluteal fibrosis – a muscle disorder that effects the function of the hip joint. It is extremely painful and causes difficulty sitting and squatting.

It is thought the condition can be caused when quinine is injected incorrectly into the gluteus maximus muscle as part of treatment for severe cases of malaria.

The good news is that the condition can be treated.

Surgeons at Kumi Hospital, a rural hospital in eastern Uganda, have perfected an operation to help children with gluteal fibrosis physiotherapy.



One young girl pre-surgery (left) and another post-surgery (right)

FOAG now works in partnership with Elspeth Robinson, a physiotherapist, and her charity Kumi Community Foundation to support operations in Kumi Hospital. Elspeth has built a team to identify children in need and bring them to the hospital for corrective surgery.

Last year, with your support, FOAG paid for 18 operations and has pledged to support another 40 children to undergo treatment in 2023.

Help us? £200 can pay for an operation to change a child's life. (See back page 'how to donate')

Developing life skills for special needs children

We continue to support the Pearls of Africa Special Needs Centres (PASNEC) Foundation which has two sites – Kanyana and Seguku – near the capital city Kampala.

The centres help children, from age two upwards and with a mental or physical disability, to develop skills for a fulfilled life.

Patti Squire, who helps run the centres, said it was great to have children back after a nearly two-year hiatus during the Covid pandemic.



Asumpta and Janat watering their greens

“The numbers at both centres have slowly risen and we have about 25 children in each centre. FOAG money helped us to restock all vocational materials and we have gradually been building back up with the resumption of making candles, liquid soap, books and jewellery. This teaches the children skills for use in later life, as well as bringing us in a little income.”

The centres have also worked hard on growing their own food. “We are limited as to what we grow as the monkeys come and eat anything which is edible, but they do not like the greens which is good for us!” says Patti.

Emma Lojuan, an occupational therapist at Seguku, said the children were benefitting from their own milk too. “Our cow gives milk, so we all enjoy this, and the older boys go out and sell the milk into the local community. Our plans are to increase our dairy herd and for us to be more self-sufficient.”



Simon learning to milk a cow

Help us? School fees are £40 a month. (See back page 'how to donate')

Sponsoring students to get an education

In Uganda, many children miss out on a chance to go to secondary school, college or university. Often this is simply because families cannot afford school fees, or it could be because their children have a disability.

With your support FOAG is currently supporting 20 students who would otherwise have missed out. You have helped to change their lives and given them hope to have a career and earn a good living.

Here are some of the students you have supported:



Martin Okwera

Martin has been studying at the Umcat School of Journalism and Mass Communication in Soroti. He wrote to his sponsor:

"I write this letter of appreciation to you for the wonderful continuous support that you have provided in my life. I am also glad to inform you that I successfully completed my internship. I am in my last semester for pursuing a Certificate in Media Studies."

Christine Kantano (left), Stephen Omuut (right), Sister Margaret Itadal (centre)

Christine and Stephen recently completed their O-Level exams at the Mother Kevin Comprehensive Secondary School, Pallisa.

Christine wrote: *"I wish to extend my sincere thanks to my sponsor. It is because of your support and love that has enabled me to stay at school."*

Stephen wrote: *"Thank you for supporting me. Without you I would not be in this level."*



Arnold Kongo

Arnold is halfway through a nursing degree, and has written, *"Sincere regards and appreciation I continue to send to my sponsor and prayers for their generosity and kindness they express and how much they have changed my life. I can never appreciate enough for this far you have pushed me from where I was to now almost achieving my dream of serving as a medic."*

Sofia Aujo

Sofia Aujo (black dress) stands with Sister Margaret Itadal, Head of Budaka Rehabilitation Centre.

Sofia had a club foot as a child which was operated on with FOAG support. We sponsored her through school and university and she is now a fully qualified nurse. In the photo she is revisiting the Budaka Rehabilitation Centre that looked after her as a child, to encourage the children to work hard at school, even though they may have a disability, and succeed like her.



Sister Margaret Itadal, Head of Budaka Rehabilitation Centre

"On behalf of the Home, students and the community of Budaka, I would like to pass a vote of appreciation to you and to all the FOAG members for their tireless efforts and hard work in supporting the students with school fees and scholastic materials."



Evaline Muyeko

FOAG-sponsored student Evaline Muyeko is training to be a nurse and is the daughter of Robert, a physiotherapist at Butiru Rehabilitation Centre. Evaline will eventually be able to assist her father with the treatment of children who come to the Centre with ailments.

Vivien Akello, Philip Okello and Winifred Iwooyo

These three students, from Lira in northern Uganda are sponsored to attend St. Joseph's College Padhola, in Tororo.

The Head Teacher Simon Peter Omollo has written: *"On behalf of St. Joseph's College and on my own behalf, permit me to extend spirit-filled and inspirational gratitude to FOAG for all their endeavours in the enlightenment process of our three students above as we strive to teach their minds, touch their hearts and transform their lives."*



Ronald Mutuba

"I did not have a person to pay my school fees. My parents could not make it. But through your support I gained strength. I can now read and write, even repair a vehicle and operate a computer system! I hope to become a driver and mechanic."

Help us? Get in touch if you want to sponsor a child.
(See back page 'how to donate')



Kazimoto's evergreen agriculture success story

In 2020 FOAG teamed up with a local Ugandan NGO called EADEN in eastern Uganda to commence a four-year project to promote the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, sometimes called regenerative, conservation or evergreen agriculture.

Here one of the farmer beneficiaries, Kazimoto Siminyu Francis, tells us about his experience on the project.

“I am 55 years old, married and have three children. As a farmer the major problems that I face include pest and diseases, infertile soils, un-predictable weather patterns and poor planning on my side, among others!



Kazimoto on his farm

“In 2021, EADEN selected me and five others to give our land for a demonstration of evergreen agriculture, supported by FOAG. I happily agreed to give half an acre to the trial.

“We were introduced to sustainable farming systems where we have to maintain continuous cover of the soil, keep leguminous trees on land, plant diversity through intercropping, minimise soil disturbance through use of planting basins, and ripping rather than ploughing the land.

“In the first season of 2022, I experienced increased production of maize (129kg), soya beans (32kg) and pigeon peas (20kg) thanks to improved soil fertility and soil conditions due to intercropping with leguminous crops and use of fertilizer. My garden looks beautiful, and crops are healthy.



Verdant crops on Kazimoto's farm

“I can confidently say that within this short period, my life has started to change. I have enough food to feed my family and I use excess green vegetation as fodder to feed my livestock and I am planning to expand my garden to one acre as I continue to learn.

“Last but not least, I plan to train my neighbours and other farmers visiting my garden about evergreen agriculture. Thanks to EADEN and FOAG for this tremendous support.”

Big Give helps more farmers grow more food

Buoyed by the success of our project to help farmers grow more food sustainably (see previous page) FOAG embarked on a major fundraising drive in 2022 to bring conservation agriculture to even more farmers.

We are delighted to announce that we have raised £9,000 with generous help from our supporters, from the Reed Foundation and with great help from the match-funding site, Big Give.

This money is now being invested to help more farmers like Kazimoto. In addition, we are working with four of our rehabilitation centres (Budaka, Butiru, Pamba and YOUFRA) to train staff to grow their own food sustainably and to help end the need for donations to help meet food bills.

Help us? Your support will help our centres and farmers become more self-sufficient. (See back page 'how to donate')

Project beneficiary Josephine Akello, left, with her two daughters and seven grandchildren

Josephine says: *“Conservation agriculture helps me to conserve water and improve fertility of my farmland...I now store more food for my family and cash from my soya bean helps meet other household needs and educate my grandchildren”*



Members of Budaka rehabilitation home inspect a soya bean field as part of their training on conservation agriculture

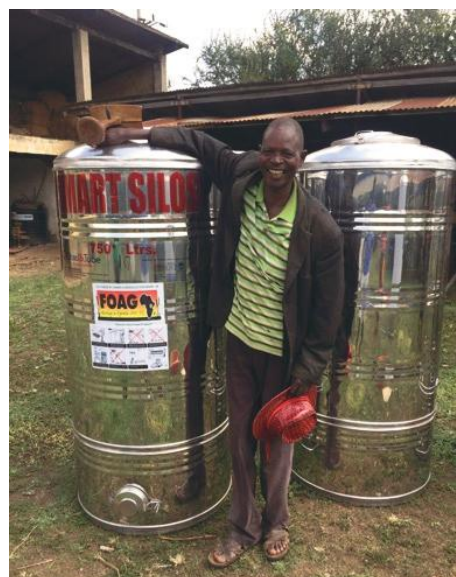
20 more silos delivered!

Farmers in Namalu, in the northeast of Uganda, grow crops in the most extreme conditions. They are blighted by long droughts that are often followed by flash floods that can sweep away their efforts.

Due to poor storage at least one third of the food they do manage to harvest is likely to rot or be eaten by pests before it gets to the people that need it.

But food loss is a very solvable problem with the use of airtight metal containers!

Last month we delivered 20 metal silos to 20 Namalu farmers. This is in addition to 75 silos delivered in 2021. That is a grand total of 95 silos with a total storage capacity of more than 100 tons of grain!



Help us? £133 will buy a 1,250-litre silo for the next farmer. (See back page 'how to donate')



A new generator to power life-saving operations

Imagine your local hospital having a power outage just before a loved one was about to have an important operation.

Now imagine that the hospital power cuts out for two hours a day, every single day. It's unthinkable, isn't it?

Not for Kumi Hospital, five hours north-east of Uganda's capital city Kampala, where doctors and patients have had to get used to it.

That's why FOAG's 2022 Summer Appeal was to raise £16,000 to buy a new generator for Kumi.

And we succeeded!



The need is immediate, and the impact will be nothing short of lifesaving. Thank you for your support.

Above: Backbreaking work to get the generator positioned.

Below: The new generator, ready to go



FOAG says thank you to Mike McConville

With great sadness we report that Mike McConville passed away at the age of 85 in August 2022, leaving his wife Jan McConville, our FOAG treasurer, two children and seven grand and great grandchildren.

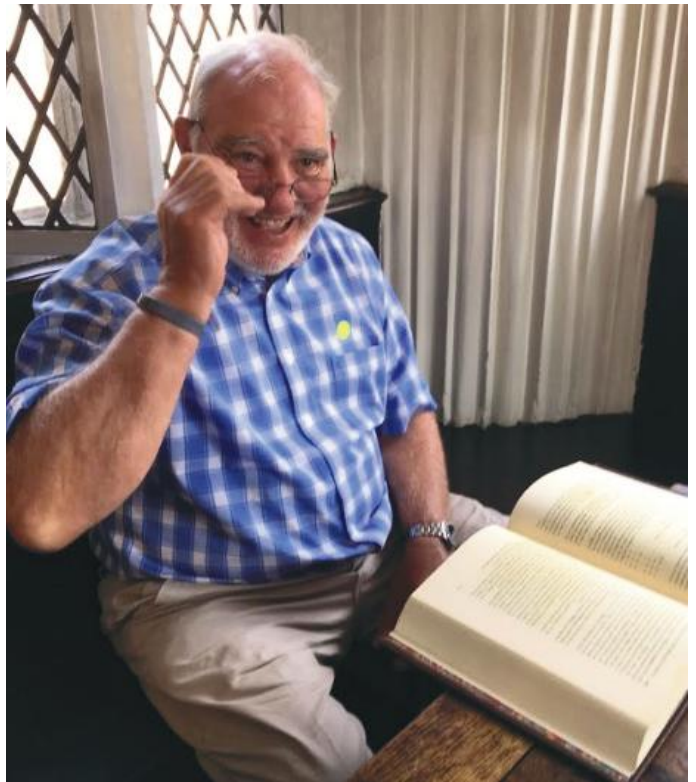
Born in Richmond, Yorkshire on the 24 June 1937, the eldest of three children to Andrew and Constance, Mike attended the Army Boarding School at Chepstow before moving onto the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers to qualify as an electronic engineer. Mike found his passion in teaching, and always sought to get the very best out of everyone he worked with. He taught electrical engineering at various colleges before setting up Newcastle Under Lyme college.

Mike had a number of hobbies, but sailing, photography and charity work were his biggest passions. He was a Rotarian and chairman of the international committee for the Stourbridge club for three years, where he first encountered FOAG in 1997. He became involved in 1998 when he arranged three projects for Masindi centre for the handicapped.

Mike never shied away from big projects at FOAG; he raised funds to provide two buildings for staff accommodation, and help for the buildings to be wired and connected to mains electricity. 24 years later many Ugandans still aspire to be connected to mains electricity, (this may come as a surprise to many).

In 2006 Mike undertook another large project to buy a 60kva generator for Kumi Hospital, where power cuts often delay important surgery. The generator was shipped from the UK to Uganda via Kenya. Mike worked tirelessly to ensure the generator was picked up from Mombasa, managed to waiver the import duties and VAT through connections via local Rotary clubs, and have it delivered to Kumi Hospital.

The generator was eventually replaced in 2022 by FOAG after it had provided approximately 18,000 hours of power (or 4 hours daily on average, allowing the hospital to continue to provide life changing surgery for patients).



Nurses and doctors can still work during power cuts, thanks the generator from FOAG, organised by Mike

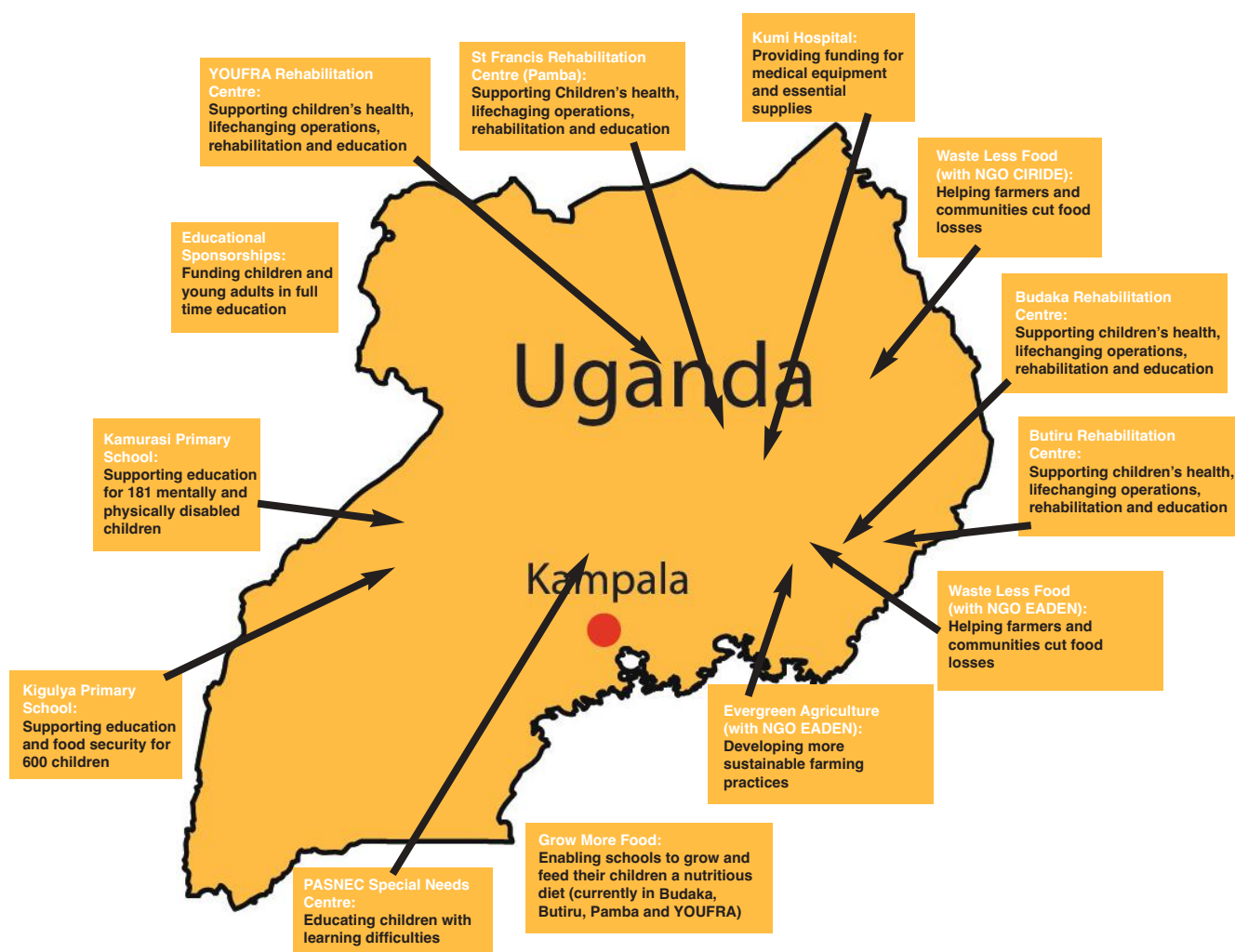
Mike was a FOAG trustee and member for over 20 years and served as treasurer from 2009 to 2014, before Jan, his wife, took on the role of treasurer. Mike visited Uganda on seven occasions and always had his cameras at the ready. He built a collection of wonderful albums and was always happy to put video clips together or a collage of photographs and more than willing to present talks on FOAG's progress up and down the country.

Mike was an excellent and knowledgeable travelling companion, and displayed great pragmatism, understanding and thoroughness when inspecting FOAG's projects.

Mike will be sorely missed. His love, selflessness and companionship have created everlasting memories for us, and changed the lives of many disadvantaged people in Uganda. RIP.

WHERE WE WORK

Here is an overview of our current projects.



COME TO OUR CONCERT!

We are once again partnering with the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra (image below) to put on a concert on 15th July 2023 at Pershore Abbey where you can listen to fabulous music while also supporting FOAG!

What:

Dvořák: Festival March in C major, op54; Bartók: Violin concerto no.2; Dvořák: Symphony no.8

When:

Saturday 15th July at 7.30pm

Where:

Pershore Abbey, Pershore, WR10 1BL

How:

Tickets are £18 for adults (£9 for students and free for children), including a free drink. Tickets can be ordered from the FOAG Office on 01886 853295 or by sending an email to info@foag.org



HOW TO DONATE

Since 1981, when FOAG began its work in Uganda, your continued generosity has helped us to keep supporting those most in need in Uganda. On behalf of our Ugandan partners – thank you.

There are many ways you can donate – all of which are listed below!

1 Donate online

It couldn't be easier to give a one-off, or regular payment direct to FOAG through our stewardship donation page.

You can find FOAG's donation page at <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20023984>. Then simply choose the frequency and amount you would like to donate.

Please tick the box to share your contact details so we can acknowledge your support personally.

2 Become a member

For just £20 per year, you can become a member. If possible, please pay by Online Bank Transfer to FOAG at NatWest Bank. Details below:

NatWest Bank

Name: Farmers Overseas Action Group

Sort Code: 53-81-33

Account Number: 08376158

3 Donate by Cheque or CAF voucher

Please send your cheques or vouchers, made payable to FOAG, to Robin Dean, FOAG Administrator, Rectory Cottage, Stanford Bridge, Worcester, WR6 6ST.

4 Leave a legacy

Over the years we have been very grateful to supporters who have left FOAG a legacy in their Will, and have been honoured to set up or support projects in their name.

The importance of Gift Aid

Whichever way you choose to donate, recovering Gift Aid on all eligible donations is particularly important as it increases their value by 25%. We hold completed declarations from many of our members. However, when a donation is received where we do not hold one, our Administrator Robin Dean, will forward you the necessary form and ask you if you are able to complete and return it, when he thanks you for your donation.

