



Report from Macedonian Vision Africa

February 10th – 24th 2014

Once again I was fortunate enough to spend a couple of weeks in Jinja, Uganda working with Pastor Alfred Adundo and the team at Macedonian Vision Africa (MVA). This was my sixth visit to Uganda, the fourth with a big team of people from Manchester and Trowbridge.

My commitment to supporting Alfred and the project over the past four years brings its rewards; developing friendships, trust and being a small part of the transformation of people's lives from poverty. Of course, this would not be possible without the support of my friends and family. Thank you.

'In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth.' Isaiah 42:3, 4

Macedonian Vision Africa (MVA) is based in the Masese slum, Jinja, Uganda. According to the Jinja Municipality Slum Profile of 2010, in Masese 1 and 2 (Masese 3 is not recorded) there is approximately 14000 people living there. MVA is the umbrella name for a number of sub groups:

Macedonian Children's Outreach Project (MCOP)

The project funds local children of the slum to go to school who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford it. Numbers had dropped in October down to 132 but were back up to 156 this February. As well as paying school fees, the project provides them with breakfast on Saturday mornings and Bible study teaching.



The team giving out breakfast in Masese

Pastor Alfred has always believed in paying for two thirds of the school fees, encouraging parents/guardians to pay the other third (primary level). The principle behind that is to keep the guardians engaged with the education of the child. Recently MVA have been struggling because a number of the guardians aren't paying their contributions.

In the programme they have 100 children in primary school and 56 children in secondary school. MCOP's primary fees are 30,000US\$ per term and secondary fees are 100,000US\$ per term (parents/guardians paying equivalent at secondary level). This is a huge financial commitment from MCOP of 8,600,000US\$ per term. With the exchange rate at approximately 4000US\$ to the pound, that is £2150 per term.

Most of the money is provided by fundraising partners in the UK and the US. During this visit there has been a very exciting development, the possibility of individual child sponsorship. It is only £10 per term to sponsor a child to go to primary school (incl. admin costs), which is very manageable for a lot of people. I was unaware that MCOP was able to place individuals in the programme with sponsors but when I found out, two of our team decided to sponsor children in Masese.



Sponsorship provides MCOP with some financial commitment and security, enabling them to be more strategic in their planning. If you are interested in sponsoring a child in Masese through the MCOP programme, please get in touch.

Macedonian African Youth Initiative (MAYI)

The girls in MAYI are drawn from the vocational course and MCOP. They meet every Saturday afternoon for sexual and social health discussion which is led by Christine Adundo, Alfred's daughter. Last February we brought out hundreds of pairs of knickers for them when I had discovered the previous October that many of them only had one pair. This year our plan was to teach them how to make washable sanitary towels. Girls miss so much school during their period because all they have are rags to use. The hope is with better more comfortable sanitary towels their attendance at school will improve.

Julie Harris from Trowbridge (what a star!) researched, planned and taught a group of people in the UK how to make the best washable sanitary towels. We then brought a truck load of towels, shower curtains and sewing equipment over in our luggage, and washable sanitary towels that were already made.

Most of the women on the team spent two Saturday afternoons teaching around 70 girls how to make the sanitary towels. They were a big hit. It was a wonderful feeling with so many women and girls working together to help improve such a fundamental thing in life.



The first day of Sanitary towel teaching

Christine Nabwire completed the third and final part of 'Wise Choices for Life' reproductive and sexual health training. (<http://www.wisechoicesforlife.org/>) The knowledge she has gained on the course has been invaluable as she teaches the girls in MAYI as well as hundreds of others in the local primary schools. Her participation on the course has been part funded by our fundraising efforts. I was able to go and visit her during the training in Mbale with Paula, another member of our team.



Christine is talking through what she has learnt on the reproductive and sexual health training course, Wise Choices for Life, and later with her graduation certificate.

Macedonian Vocational School (MVS)

Up 'til now, MVS has focussed on teaching tailoring, with the first cohort of girls graduating May this year. This group of girls is one of the reasons I have returned this February. I saw them in October and wanted to see them one more time before they graduated. When I first met them they were quiet and cautious with me. Last October they talked to me, used my name, listened to what I was saying and looked forward to me returning. I feel significant (albeit to a small degree) in their lives, and they are most definitely significant in mine. A relationship has built up with them over two years, and I care about what happens to them.

A friend of mine in Manchester, Lisa Watson (<http://www.quiltsbylisawatson.co.uk/>), wants to set up a group in the Masese slum to make quilts to be sold in the UK. I took over a sample quilt to show the tailoring teacher to see if the girls would be able to make it. The idea we have is to set up a co-operative quilting group which is separate from the tailoring course, but is fed by the tailoring group. I had two failed attempts to meet the co-operative representative in Jinja, and a meeting at Nytil fabric manufacturers with group member Tom, to discuss the purchasing of 'lost wax fabric'. The cogs of this particular wheel are moving very slowly, but we did establish that the girls are skilled enough to make the quilts, and the fabric will have to be bought from the high street rather than direct from the factory.

Tom's life business has been in textile manufacturing, and he was able to bring expertise and insight into all the discussions I had with Nytil and the girls. It was fantastic and a great 'God moment'.

Watch this space for any developments of this particular business venture.

I also met the new cohort of tailoring students. I told them that the next time I see them they will be more confident and able to talk to me. I look forward to it.



Me with the tailoring group

MVS is branching out in 2014 and establishing a hairdressing group. We brought over a substantial amount of hairdressing equipment, which was kindly donated by Lorraine in my tango class (<http://www.strictlytango.co.uk/>) and others from Ashton Sixth form College. Thank you.



Sorting out 'stuff' brought over for MVA



The beginnings of the hairdressing course

I have nothing to report on the **Macedonian Microfinance group**, apart from meeting the people who raised the initial capital to set it up. (http://www.gatewayglobaloutreach.org/gateway_global_outreach_009.htm) I will be liaising with them about funding and the various aspects of MVA we support.

Other news

We brought over some football equipment and a manual (thank you James Thompson) of how to set up a football league. Pastor Alfred would love to establish a **Macedonian Football league**. It is slow progress, but I can see some headway is being made. The Macedonian project mainly focusses on girls and women, and football is a way into supporting the male community.



Macedonian football team goes head to head with Nile Baptist football team

We also taught the mums in Masese slum how to knit. It was an incredibly spiritual thing to do which was an amazing thing to be part of. Knit and natter at its best!



So what's next?

Of course money is important as well as prayer.

£110 will buy a teaching pack for Christine to use with her sexual and reproductive health conversations with the young girls in Masese. This includes baby dolls, magnetic images of female and male reproductive organs, a pelvis, placenta, etc. etc. You get the picture.

Sponsorship and fundraising for the children of Masese to go to school. If you are interested email me on masesejinja@gmail.com.

Capital to increase the numbers of women in the microfinance group (details to follow).

The cost of the rental building where the teaching of the vocational courses and MCOP takes place (2.4 million USH per annum = £600)

Money (I'll try and find out how much) for the refurbishment of the bought building to develop as office space, releasing teaching space in the rental building.

I'd like to say a big thank you for everyone's support and encouragement in my work with MVA. Thank you to John Ossoway for agreeing to write their new website for free (<http://www.ragingtrifle.com/>) – it will be launched in 2014
www.macedonianvisionafrica.org.

Thank you to Toby Windsor (<http://www.smrs.co.uk/>) for his support in the design and development of the logos.

If there is any way you think you can help or you have any ideas, please get in touch.

I will be fundraising in 2014 by taking part in the Great North Swim. What a ridiculous idea, me in a wetsuit, but my friend Sandra has made me do it!

February 2014