



[www.lwengokids.nl](http://www.lwengokids.nl)  
 Bakkerstraat 2, 3882 AA Putten  
 Tel. 06 1307 1167  
 mail: [lwengokids@gmail.com](mailto:lwengokids@gmail.com)

Chamber of Commerce no. 68254237 | ANBI-registered  
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Newsletter no. 15 and travelogue April/May 2023

## On a working trip to Uganda

With a suitcase full of letters, we flew to Uganda on April 23 together with our board member Harry Hoorn. Later in the week, his son Tom will also join us. You can read their story later in this newsletter.

As usual we travel to Masaka the next day, but now we first drive to Kampala in search of a wheelchair for Rihana. She is back home and needs to be carried everywhere. A wheelchair with rubber tires would be incredibly nice and save a lot of caregivers' backs! But we only find bad 2nd hand wheelchairs. We decide to travel to Masaka.



A few days later we find a good, new wheelchair with rubber tires in Masaka and we buy it for Rihana.

The next day we relax a bit and prepare for our first day in Lwengo. Tom also arrives today.

Before we leave for Lwengo, we first drive past the Hospital in Masaka where our sponsor child Pheibe has been admitted to the mental ward. For a long time we have found her gloomy. She is now in Primary 7 and therefore in boarding section, which she doesn't really like. Pheibe is HIV positive, she takes medication for that, but in boarding that goes wrong because she is ashamed of the other children for her medication use. Then it all went wrong. She became depressed and cried constantly.

So now in the hospital. I bought her a diary and hope that she will write down her nice and less fun stories in it so that there is room in her head for positive things again. Maybe it will help.

We see Pheibe sitting with grandma, waiting for the doctor on a bench in the hall. A very faint smile shows that she recognizes us. We talk to grandma

a bit, but what escalated things is not really clear yet.

Sad for Pheibe, we leave the hospital. You then ask yourself: "where did it go wrong". But, switch on, because we have to continue, to Lwengo where the children are waiting for us and we are warmly welcomed again with song and dance! At the end of the ceremony we symbolically hand over the new bodaboda, new school books, the new copier and making the water pump electric.



due to holidays.

Tom and Harry are assisting us today and like a well-oiled machine we do our job in our Lwengo shirt!

In addition to the letter from the sponsor, we always have a nice gift from the Foundation with us. This has arisen from the fact that some children do not receive a greeting from the sponsor. This time another extra: a small wuppie in the shape of a var-kentje. The children are happy with it and especially the "embizi" (= pig in Lugan-da) is very popular with young and old!



While Tom, Harry and Pieter go on a home visit to the Tom-sponsored children in Lwengo the other

day and continue to view our project, I start the progress reports and add all the photos to the digital files on the laptop. That's a job though! But I go to work with love and I see all the children pass me by one by one.



We visit the new Secondary School St. Mary Laetitia. A beautiful school with a magnificent view! Most of the youngsters we speak to are having a good time. Everywhere we see

young plantings of hedges and trees. The dormitories are a bit higher up and also look neat. A good choice for a Secondary School in the area that is easy to monitor for both Anthony and us.

On Sunday we have a conversation with our oldest sponsor youth Axum. He has some problems that need to be solved. I'm startled when he walks into the gate. He's skinny and with his head down he walks towards us.

There is a whole story, followed by a cry about why it went the way it did. We thought he had graduated, but that turns out not to be the case, he now has his degree as a mechanical engineer graduate, but not yet as a teacher of automotive engineering which is the goal. Now he has to work for a year to gain experience. But that work is not there yet and so he has no income and therefore no food. After the year of experience, he can go back to school to get his diploma. Of course we solve this together with Anthony and so we also learn that we have to draw up a good policy plan on how to deal with our (almost) graduated young people.

Tuesday we are back in Lwengo. Monday it rained all day, but today the sun is shining happily!

We monitor Primary 4 to Primary 7 and especially the latter group gets a little more attention. We can tell them that their sponsor is willing to pay for their studies at Secondary School. And that is received with great joy among the young people! They applaud, pass on a "big hug" and are very happy! I get a lump in my throat every now and then, they are so happy!

Thank you dear sponsors of these Primary 7 children, that you have responded positively to my "begging letter" because we know that the jump from 250 euros per year to 450 euros per year is substantial!

The next group will follow in January 2024, so if your sponsor child is now in Primary 6, you already know that



Today we drive to Pheibe in the hospital at the end of the day. We wait together for the young doctor. When asked if she's written anything yet, she mumbles that she doesn't have a pen. I give it to her. Her fingers cramp around my hand. She wants to go home... But the young doctor won't let that happen yet.

First his colleague has to make a judgment tomorrow and maybe she can go home on Monday. We leave her in despair with grandma. What a pity!

## Our home visits

We see a number of (new) sponsor children at home and that sometimes results in harrowing images. We come to Angel. Tiny house and grandma takes care of the children but she doesn't know what to do anymore. We come to Elizabeth, who completed the first term at Laetitia Secondary School and now it turns out that she would have preferred to go to St. Joseph where her friends also went. We meet the grandmother of Swaibat who surprises us with a rooster! We drive to little Maria who is taken care of with so much warmth after 3 months of boarding school. Pheibe is back home, we drive by, but a conversation is hardly possible. We agree for the time being that she will try again at school after the holidays and then be picked up and brought with the bodaboda. Anthony goes to talk to brother Tonny to see if he knows how she got into this depression. The diary comes out of the bag undescribed.

We arrive at Ntanzi's house where mother only gets sicker because of a quack.



And then we come to the family where we find Emmanuel deathly ill in bed. Sister Christine, an 11-year-old girl standing with a large knife in her hands to prepare the bananas for the matoke, Tonny who doesn't want to go home. No mom, no neighbor, no one!

But we also come to Shahidi with a sweet mom and to little Bruno, where poverty is indescribable, but love prevails. We see Shivan with a sweet, young mother, but so poor! Tracy welcoming us to her home with a hug.



We also drive by Brian; He has some mental problems, but now, with the good training, he seems to have been solved.

Together with Anthony we discuss the sometimes enormous worries and problems in the various families and together we look for the best solutions. That's what's so great about our work: talking together and thinking about how we can best arrange things. It's so rewarding when it succeeds!

At the end of our trip we have a meeting with Anthony.

You can read the outcome of this either in our next newsletter, which will be published in September, or in the progress report of your sponsor child.

The last days of our stay we work on the elaboration of all information. And on Saturday we travel back to Entebbe with a good feeling, via a detour, because Lake Victoria has asserted itself and due to the enormous amounts of rain the main road to Entebbe is flooded for miles.

Just relax, buy some souvenirs. From Sunday to Monday we fly back to the Netherlands with a satisfied feeling, but also with a heart full of worries. We will continue to work on this at home until we have found the best solutions together.

What wonderful work we have!



All that remains for me, on behalf of all the children, is to thank their sponsors for their card or letter! We have seen a lot of bright brown eyes! And if you have two sponsors, then if all goes well, you have two letters!

Next to this is the story of Harry and then a contribution from his son Tom

## Dear readers,

*It was 1st Easter Day 2023 when two of my children started telling me that I should also go to Uganda.*

*"You are involved as a board member and you have to go there," they said.*

*My son had already indicated to Pieter and Marga that he would definitely like to go there to visit his two sponsor children.*

*So, what do you do? To Uganda, Africa..... And then such a trip and then the cost. With the right argumentation and some pressure and also with the experiential expertise and guidance of Pieter and Marga, I said YES to see "our work", the work of and on behalf of you.*

*I can tell you about the many harrowing poverty I have seen, also about many happy faces and a wonderful welcome at school, about the spending of your sponsor money and donations, I can tell you about .....so many experiences and feelings !!*



*But I also like to tell you that 'whoever does good meets good' and development is visible!*

*I am glad that I got to make this trip and experience. I've seen it "different". Not Right or Wrong but different! With that knowledge, it remains necessary to give the children of today and the future a chance in that other world.*

*As co-director of Lwengo Kids Foundation I thank Marga and Pieter! Good that I have had such passionate tour guides by my side.*

*It was also a good time with my son to get to know Uganda.*

*There is still a lot of work to be done, but really, dear readers of this newsletter, your contribution, your support, your involvement makes THE difference for many children!*



*Sharing what we can do without and supporting the development and education of children with that available part, which will make poverty disappear.*

*In conclusion, my appeal to think along:*

You can help us! Of course you already do that, but it would be nice if you would map out your network in order to gain even wider support and even more resources for development.

With kind regards

Harry Horn

lwengokids.sponsoring@gmail.com

## Tom's contribution

When I read in one of the previous newsletters that there was the possibility for sponsors to travel with Pieter and Marga to Uganda, I was immediately enthusiastic. As a sponsor and through my father who is a board member at the Lwengo Kids Foundation, I had already heard a lot about Lwengo and I wanted to experience what it is like in Uganda.



What impressions! It is great to see what has already been built up in recent years, and overwhelming to see what still needs to be done to offer all children in the region humane future opportunities. With relatively little money, so much difference can be made.

Children who can go to a school where there are decent dormitories and where there is running water. Access for all students to basic health care at the Lwengo Health Center. All things that would not have been there without the sponsorship and the donations. At the same time, there is still so much potential and urgency to help and develop further.

I enjoyed the people who, almost entirely without possessions, are still incredibly friendly, warm and cheerful and form a beautiful community.

Because of them I realized again how busy and rushed my life is sometimes. I was told: "you have the watch, but we have the time".

In the end, I believe the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Through interaction, sharing and collaboration, that right balance can be found. That is why I have a lot of respect for the great work of Lwengo Kids Foundation and everyone who contributes to it!

Tom Horn



Are you impressed by the stories of these men? And would you like to see our beautiful work with your own eyes?

4

In October we go again!

On behalf of the board Lwengo Kids Foundation

Marga Streefkerk

After a rain shower, a kind of flies rise from the ground. The children pull off the wings and eat the fly themselves.....

