



Paul, Tania and Lana Baker

Kiwoko Hospital,
Luwero Diocese, Uganda

Spring 2016



CMS Ireland Link Letter

Dear Friends...

January marked five years for us here in Kiwoko and we have experienced many things in that time, including becoming parents. New laws around legal guardianship have recently been passed here in Uganda, although we have been assured they won't affect us. However, we would appreciate your continued prayers as we seek a 'UK settlement visa' for Lana that will allow us to travel back and forward to Northern Ireland with her.



The 3rd year at the Fashion School started in February and it really thrills me to see 10 more girls sit down at the machines, looking very nervous, and know how confident and experienced they will be by the end of the year.

Last month, we said goodbye to one of our favourite people here in Kiwoko. Nakato had been living on female ward for over 20 years and had taught us much L'uganda. She always called you to stop and chat when you passed her bed. Kiwoko has lost a legend and we have lost a friend.



Patrick

I (Paul) mentioned in our last Link Letter how I had been asked to help with the hospital vehicles. We have 11 vehicles including two minibuses, an ambulance, two pickups and a pair of antique Massey Fergusons. Most of the vehicles are over 20 years old and each one was in a fairly awful condition. With no MOTs and horrendous roads, it's easy to see how they can get this way.

For many years, shortcuts had been taken. For example, silicone sealant (like you have around the edge of your bath) was used to repair pipes in the engine. We found that our Nissan minibus with a clutch problem actually had a clutch from a Toyota Corolla, with some crazy modifications to make it fit. Not ideal!

Thankfully, there was a change of workshop staff when I became involved. Patrick, who had actually been a volunteer in the workshop for over a year, was officially given the role of Hospital Mechanic.



Patrick is in his mid-20s and recently completed a vehicle engineering course. He is very friendly - each morning he greets me with a smile, asking how Tania and Lana are before telling me how one of the wheels fell off the lorry the night before. Since Patrick is from another region of Uganda, where they don't speak the language here, we had a common challenge of not speaking L'uganda very well. Thankfully his English is very good. Mine is improving.

Since I have no training as a mechanic, I probably wasn't the best person to help turn things around. However, Patrick and I set out to get the vehicles into a roadworthy condition.

We started by putting a big sheet of plywood on the wall of the workshop. We painted it with blackboard paint, and with chalk made a section for each vehicle. Inside each section we listed all the problems. After a while we had to start again using much smaller writing. At the end of the exercise we could see the size of the task at hand. We had to sit down for a while to take it in. Not many words were said.

Our approach is simple. Patrick does the 'mechanicing' and I find the things he needs to do it. Sometimes I get to put on my overalls and get covered in oil and grease but mostly I am on the phone trying to find things like crankshaft oil seals and tie-rod ends. Things I had never heard of before, but Patrick is a good teacher. Some of the cars with major issues had to be brought to a mechanic in Kampala, an Indian man called Kirit, whom I talk to on the phone more than anyone. In a country full of short-cut-taking mechanics, Kirit is a God-send.

After six months, things were improving. The biggest problems were dealt with but no sooner had you wiped something of the blackboard than something else replaced it. Patrick was working evenings and weekends, without overtime, and he didn't even get to use his annual leave last year.

Patrick and I have become good friends. We have come to trust each other. We encourage each other. Our attitude to the work is the same. The best thing is: I am not his boss, we are a partnership, each with a different role to play. But together we are getting somewhere.



Every other Monday morning, Patrick and I meet early at the workshop. We set up a laptop, projector and put out seats. At 7:45am all of the Estates department men join us: gardeners, builders...some Christian, some Muslim, many with no faith...over 50 men meet for a simple church service before the week begins. Since the start of this year we've been showing a video series of Bible stories. The men have been arriving earlier each week to get the best seats.

Personally, I don't see myself as here to develop a hospital. My focus is to work alongside and encourage the men, tell them about Jesus and in God's time see lives transformed. Partnering with individuals like Patrick is at the root of this work. It's about friendship, working together, and trying to figure out why so many bolts are left over when the gearbox has been reassembled.

Thank you again for your interest and your prayers!

Paul, Tania & Lana

Prayer Points:

- For the settlement visa for Lana. As we travel back and forward to Kampala to collect forms, see our solicitor and submit the application. Our documents and Lana's passport will be sent to the British Embassy in South Africa. Please pray that nothing will be lost and that God will guide those making the decision.
- As we start to prepare for home assignment this August, pray we will use our time here well and effectively. Also that we will be able to find somewhere suitable to live for 5 months in Northern Ireland.
- For the safety of all those travelling in our hospital vehicles both patients and staff.

For more news and views from the Bakers, check out their blog on the CMSI website. You can also support the Bakers financially via the website or by contacting the CMSI offices. We're keen to secure additional support!



cmsireland
equipping the church in mission

www.cmsireland.org



Dublin

Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue,
Rathmines, Dublin D06 CF67
T: +353 (0)1 4970931;
E: dublinoffice@cmsireland.org

Belfast

33 Dargan Road, Belfast, BT3 9JU
T: +44 (0)28 90775020;
E: belfastoffice@cmsireland.org