

a little bit of news

October 2016

Nurturing hope in the Butaleja District of Uganda by enabling people to overcome the hurdles that prevent them reaching their full potential.



Registered Charity No. 1147623

Education | Health, water and sanitation | Business and innovation | Vulnerable households

Christopher: his journey of HOPE continues...



Phil first met Christopher in 2011. Over the past five years Christopher has been on quite a journey!

Christopher was born into a family of nine children. Unfortunately, his father struggled with alcohol dependency, which meant that most of the small amount of money the family earned as subsistence farmers was spent on alcohol. However, Christopher's mother was committed to ensuring Christopher was educated. And he was also determined – doing whatever he could to earn money to pay his own school fees.

When he and Phil met in 2011, he had just been awarded a scholarship from some Canadian students – to enable him to complete his A-Level equivalents. While they paid his school fees he volunteered at the library where he set up the StraightTalk youth group in Butaleja District. This is a nationwide initiative that encourages young people to gather in groups to learn essential life-skills. There are now groups in more than ten schools in the District, which are supported by a *little bit of HOPE*.

When Phil caught up with Christopher again in 2013 he had completed his schooling and was now selling chapattis on the Busolwe High Street. He had got a small loan from his Pastor, and was determined to work more than 12 hours a day. He said, "I'm running this business so I can raise money and one day go to

university to study a diploma or a degree. I don't mind how long it will take me to raise enough funds, but I know that one day I'll get there."

Phil says, "I've never met someone with as much hope for the future as Christopher – hope and determination to make hope a reality."

Despite Christopher's best efforts, he struggled to raise money to take himself to university. Firstly, the local Government can make life very difficult for entrepreneurs, with very unclear rules for businesses! Secondly, his father was taken ill, and much of the money he had saved was spent on healthcare.

It was then that a *little bit of HOPE* decided to award Christopher a scholarship so he could study for his diploma. "When I heard the good news, I was speechless; I thought it was a dream. I wondered how I, of all the students in the District, had been chosen for the scholarship programme". Christopher was accepted onto a two-year diploma in Business Studies.

Christopher threw himself into college life as soon as he arrived. Not only working hard, but getting involved in positions of leadership in the college, and soon becoming the Guild President. In his words, "I knew this would give me the opportunity to share with my fellow students and encourage them with

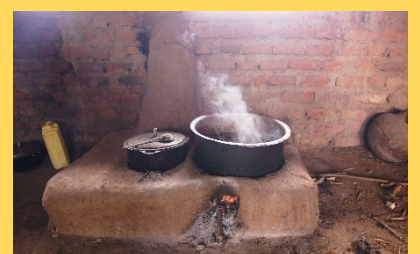
Safe drinking water

The members of Bugona village community went seven months without a nearby source for water, as their village borehole had broken. This changed when, through our borehole fixing programme, we helped them to get it up and running again. "We are so happy now our borehole has been fixed! We had to walk long distances to fetch water, or draw water from nearby swamps, which was unsafe and risky, especially during evening hours. It is now safer and easier for our children to fetch the water they need. You have brought hope back into our lives now that we can access safe drinking water for our home and our children." Since then, our team have been liaising with the local water committee to ensure the borehole doesn't break again.



Smokeless stoves

60 families have been trained how to build smokeless stoves. We know that 50 households have already put their new knowledge to use and built a stove in their home, which will reduce the time it takes to collect fire wood and cook meals – and it's also much better for their health.



messages of hope, reflecting on my own life experiences. I reminded them that, however hard life becomes, there is always a better way to live". He also continued to do everything he could to earn money while he was studying, so he could cover much of his living costs himself.

Christopher completed his course in 2015, and decided that he wanted to get involved with the work of *a little bit of HOPE*. "I wanted to give back to the organisation that supported me when I had little hope of furthering my education after school. When I was granted the opportunity to volunteer with a little bit of HOPE, I knew it was time to use the skills and knowledge I learnt from college to benefit my people in the district".

This year, Christopher has become an *a little bit of HOPE* intern. He has been able to apply some of the things he learnt in

college in a practical way, through our projects. Christopher oversees the StraightTalk programme. He is also putting his accounting studies to good use, helping Grace keep the accounts up to date and preparing tax and revenue returns. Christopher has also been busy helping Fred with the school farm project, by analysing quarterly data to enable efficient monitoring and evaluation of the project.

We are always challenged by Christopher's hard working attitude and passion for transforming his community. It's amazing that he has chosen to "give back" and invest into the life of a little bit of HOPE, something we are as excited about as he is.

Thank you for your support that has enabled Christopher to fulfil his dreams in education, and to now sow back into his community.

a little bit of HOPE: at the heart of the community



UK Trustee Angus, and his wife Eliza, visited the *a little bit of HOPE* team in Uganda. They tell us about their time in Busolwe.

Having been involved with the charity for a few years and heard about the impact *a little bit of HOPE* has made, we felt it was time to go and see first-hand as many projects as we could and experience a good dose of Ugandan culture. We did not quite know what we were letting ourselves in for; two weeks, 14 project visits, three churches, one traditional Ugandan Introduction Ceremony and hundreds of handshakes later, I think we can safely say we achieved this and more!

During our short time in Butaleja District we were overwhelmed by the deep sense of community ever present in the work of *a little bit of HOPE*. Whether it was the whole village gathering to watch and help as their borehole was fixed, or seeing how the parents, teachers and students come together to make the school farm project a success, it was evident that despite the hardship of rural Ugandan life many people were willing to share the burden and help beat poverty together.

We particularly loved visiting the small loans groups, and hearing from members about the difference this had made in their lives. With the start-up capital and ongoing support and training provided by *a little bit of HOPE*, these groups encourage individuals to save money on a weekly basis and can take out a loan to fund their small businesses. The loan is repaid with interest of 10% and so the profits can be shared out between the whole group. In one session at Namanda Village Group we heard how the group had purchased a plot of land and two oxen to plough it in order to benefit the whole community. This kind of interdependence between neighbours is very rare in the UK and it was refreshing to experience.

We could see that what makes *a little bit of HOPE* special is that it isn't an external organisation coming in looking for results, it is a thriving hub in the centre of the community working in partnership wherever possible to give many people the resources and hope to lift themselves out of poverty.

Ivan's visit to the UK

Earlier this year we had the privilege of welcoming Ivan Kaibo, Director of a little bit of HOPE (Uganda), to the UK. We asked Ivan to share a few highlights from his trip with us:

The first thing I have to tell you about is my first ever experience on a plane! I was so excited, but also scared because of all the unknown experiences awaiting me at the airport. However I loved the journey and watched films all the way there, because I didn't want to miss anything by being asleep!

I really remember the warm welcome I received when arriving at the airport, and during all of my time in the UK. I was overwhelmed with happiness just because I was able to stay with so many families and get to know them. There wasn't one moment that I felt isolated or like a stranger. I felt at home wherever I went.

I particularly enjoyed the tour around London, being a true tourist and experiencing all of the sites there. It was so special to be in England while the Queen was celebrating her 90th Birthday, and it was very interesting to see her palace when we were in London.

The times that stand out are the many conversations I had with different people, especially about the work of *a little bit of HOPE*. They all inspired me to open my mind and think bigger, always looking for new opportunities. It was encouraging to meet many people that support the work of *a little bit of HOPE*, and share with them how the work is going.

Another very interesting moment was the wedding that I attended. It was a different experience to weddings in Uganda, but I really enjoyed the dancing and the celebrations.

I loved my trip and would love to return one day.

