

## **WAIT UK in Uganda (4-17 July 2007): a report by Ikki Sato and Kathleen Moloney**



### **Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> July**

After 25 hours of travelling we landed in Uganda and were warmly welcomed by Reverend Isaac. After freshening up, we met for orientation. We had introductions and were meant to eat at 7pm but that didn't really happen until later (African time!) After food and a lot of sharing it was time for the WAIT team to catch up on their rest in preparation for the long days ahead of us!

### **Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> July**

After taking the whole morning for travelling to Peace House in Kampala, the UPF headquarters of Uganda, we were introduced and testimonies were given as an opening to the two day trainer's workshop. The WAIT youth left to visit the zoo, an educational centre of Uganda. Uncle Marshall and Connie explained how the WAIT team is organised and gave a larger picture as to how the country of Uganda could create their own team. In the afternoon the team prepared for their first performance, which was to be after the Blessing ceremony. We were asked to perform for the newly Blessed couples, and afterwards to attend their party.

### **Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> July**



We travelled back to Peace House and ran through our first full performance so the trainers could see how the WAIT team performs. The brothers were performing their new break dance act for the first time ever! (They had stayed up half of the night practising!) After we performed, some of the audience members performed, including a Christian boy band of five singers called 'Back to Calvary' and one of our main trainers Tadeo offered an energetic dance! We had two hours of workshops. Then, we were honoured by the presence of the MP for Rakai District (where AIDS was first detected in Uganda), who attended our certificate ceremony. He gave a short testimony which was followed by the national anthem, and a performance of the newly trained 'Save Yourself' singers! After lunch and a 2 hour journey to Masaka, in which we were delayed by a burst tyre, we managed to stop at the equator, to visit some tourist shops, full of beautifully hand crafted items. We arrived at Nserester, the orphanage created by Peace Ambassador Rev. Isaac. We were greeted by scores of handshakes and hugs, then we were whisked away to have a quick introduction and

history of Nserester over a meal, after which we attended the welcoming performances of Nserester which had been in the making for months.

### **Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> July**

We started our one day training with a short introduction by Uncle Marshall, testimonies from Sean and Kathleen, followed by a full performance. The break dancers had to be careful as the stage was quite weak! Kathleen managed to speak slowly and clearly enough for the whole audience to understand her British accent! We had a training workshop in which everyone got a taste of each element of WAIT. But having to do the training workshop three times over, as there were three large groups, the WAIT team's energy was really stretched. For lunch we were invited to the birthday party of Rev. Isaac's adopted son, as guests of honour. After the party we returned to Nserester where Kenta gave a power point presentation on the Facts, Myths and Options of HIV. As we were asked questions like, 'Can you receive HIV from a virgin?' we realised the education we had received in England was something we took for granted, and was not shared by all countries, even the countries worst hit by HIV. Kathleen and Connie went carefully through the rules, to make sure that everyone who was to sign up for WAIT clearly knew what they were signing up for!



### **Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> July**

This was our last day in Nserester. The day started with offerings from each of the faith groups, a beautiful sight (Muslims, Christians and others praising together with no prejudice). We had our final meal with the students. We travelled for 2 hours to IRFF UK's 'Operation Feed Yourself'. We were welcomed with performances from the orphans and offerings of corn from the fields. By the end of our time there we had given each child a note book and pen - a small offering from the UK. Project Manager Robert urged some of the WAIT members to come back to teach at the school, and some of us are still considering his proposals!



### **Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> July**

We changed our activities from sightseeing at the Mburo National Park to visiting 'The AIDS Support Organisation' (TASO) due to the budget. We had a discussion about the HIV/AIDS situation in Uganda and how WAIT might be able to help solve it. We had a tour around the centre and met children who were at the day centre for medication. The children were between 2-18 and all HIV positive. We were surprised to see one young girl called Perus who had been at the church service at Nserester on Sunday.

We passed a woman lying ill on the grass and were told that people drop their relatives off here without registering them so they have nowhere to stay. We donated some money to her and then prayed for her. This experience was quite overwhelming; then again our whole time there has been quite a shock. We had lunch before travelling to Mbarara,

and that evening we visited a very busy shopping Market and after a brief case of losing two of the adults (!), we went to our next accommodation.



### **Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> July**

We travelled to Mbarara High School, where we went through the newly created one day training. This was the first day when the team felt like we really performed well, and were able to connect to the audience. Many students were eager to have pen pals within the WAIT team so contact details were exchanged. When we got back to the hotel we spoke about our plans for tomorrow. Our plans had changed (once again) from going to a national park to performing at the Army school.

### **Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> July**

We did a full performance at the army school. We were well received but as there was no electricity in the building and the generator didn't work, we had to move rooms. To fill the time, Uncle Ashley and Reverend Moses (UPF Leader) gave talks on purity and the benefits of keeping the body safe till marriage. The students were all very patient and the experience helped us to learn to ensure that each venue knows what we need to perform. We then moved buildings and did a shorter performance two hours later. We left shortly after so we could collect our things and drive to the next location, Kasese.

### **Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> July**

Finally we were able to visit Queen Elizabeth National Park. We saw Ugandan kobs, buffalo, warthogs and elephants, hippos, but unfortunately no lions. In the afternoon we travelled to the hot springs where water came from deep within the earth at 90°C! People believed the water had some special powers, so many people came there to bathe in order to heal themselves. In the evening we had our first public reflection meeting. It was a good move to have a relaxing day of sight seeing, enabling us to reflect, relax and compose ourselves. We all spoke about what we thought of the trip so far, what touched us, what we had learnt.



### **Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> July**

A long day of travel – to the city of Jinja! We arrived at the YMCA, in time for a lovely supper!

### **Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> July**

At Jinja Senior Secondary School we went through the one day training. The Inspector of schools was present today, but the total lack of response from the audience caused it to be a very challenging day. After the performance, the Commissioner for Education arrived. His support for

WAIT was astonishing! After the presentations, we went for a boat ride at the source of the River Nile. It was good to experience the landscape of the country before we had to leave it.



### **Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> July**

We made a complete circle of the south of Uganda by travelling two hours to our original destination, Kampala. We had been invited to perform at 'Miracle Church.' Before we arrived, we joined the 'Bright Future Brass Band' in a procession that marched to the church. We marched along with the other new WAIT members with banners reading messages such as 'You're Worth Waiting For and So Am I!' and 'Save Sex for Marriage' and 'Wait to Stop HIV/AIDS'. When we arrived at the church we were well received. Rev. Moses gave a highly relevant introduction to the WAIT message and got the audience thinking and interacting. Different schools came up and performed; Uncle Marshall introduced us and spoke about how they had WAIT t-shirts but had not seen the performances or training. He treated it as a serious matter as they needed to understand the message in order to live the right type of life. We then determined to teach them the message effectively because they were so enthusiastic about spreading the message about HIV/AIDS. Finally we gave the performance. After lunch we travelled to 'Voices of Peace' to perform at the graduation of students of the 'Alpha Course'.

### **Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> July**

We were supposed to be at City Land College at ten in order to perform from 10-12 but the driver got stuck. After arriving one and a half hours late we were welcomed with claps and cheers. All of us agreed that as this would be our last public school performance, we would give all of our energy. At this school, we got to know the headmaster and many students. When we returned to the Peace House in Kampala, we were encouraged to spend time with the second generation there. Some of us played with the kids and entertained them, while others involved themselves in deep conversation. The evening was arriving and the WAIT team were asked to do one more performance for the members.

### **Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> July**

The morning meditation was given by Hijiri. He spoke about the importance of the family and how he missed his. I think all of us were missing home but over the two weeks we had grown to love each other as family. After a small breakfast, some packed, some used this time to talk or relax. Then at 10am we had a brunch altogether with a few of the trainers and the people who had been working closely with us over the two weeks: Tadeo, Maureen, Rev Isaac and Rev Moses. After a final discussion, we said our goodbyes before leaving for the airport. We will all miss Uganda!!

### A final note from Uncle Marshall:

*The Uganda trip was amazing! It resulted from a combination of hard work from many people (the WAIT team, parents, various supporters) and generous benefactors who help us to raise all the necessary money, and put the schedule together. We thank God and everyone who were involved both in the UK and Uganda!!!*