

Action against poverty

Signpost

International

Annual Review 2021-2022



Children from Lomokori Primary School in Uganda



This year we are celebrating that

32,175

people benefitted from our work
across three countries



Jamie in Uganda April 2022 with some of the children Signpost walks alongside

Dear supporter,

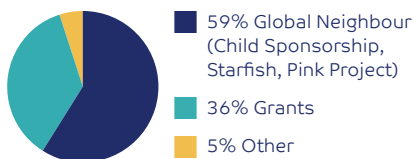
This is a significant year for Signpost International, as it is 30 years since the charity was formed by Kerry Dixon. To mark this amazing milestone you will see that our annual review is much larger than usual, as we have combined it with special anniversary material to celebrate 30 years of Signpost. You can read all about this in the other half of the booklet. Over the past three decades God has faithfully guided and provided for Signpost as we have walked alongside people throughout the world experiencing poverty and injustice and He has done so again this past year.

For me the highlight of the year has been being able to go out to Uganda to see the programmes and communities we support and to meet with our local partners. Since I started working for Signpost in 2008, going overseas, working with our partners, and meeting the people who are involved in our projects has always been one of my favourite parts of the job. Due to the arrival of our twins in 2019 and then Covid, the last time I had been out to Uganda was four years ago, so it was fantastic finally being able to get back in April.

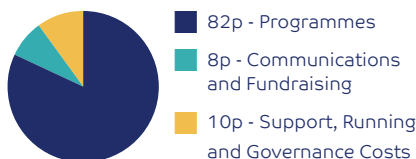
One of the biggest challenges facing so many people experiencing poverty is a lack of opportunities. At Signpost International we support communities throughout the world to be drivers of their own change. When I was in Uganda I loved being able to spend time with those that the projects have benefitted. So often the change in their life has occurred because they were given an opportunity or some support which they have never had before. It does not always have to be a big project that costs a lot of money; it can be as small as supplying a farmer in Uganda with a hand hoe which allows them to farm more efficiently and produce more crops, meaning they sell more at market and earn more money for them and their family. It is because of your support that we are able to keep walking alongside communities throughout the world supporting them to be drivers of their own change. As you read through this year's annual review I hope you will be greatly encouraged to see what your support has helped communities achieve and the lives that have been transformed as a result.

Jamie Morrison
Chief Executive Officer

Total income £346,128



Expenditure



Programmes (82p)

All the information regarding our programmes can be found on the next few pages as we go through Signpost's four main areas of work.

Support, Running and Governance Costs (10p)

Putting robust systems in place to enable and evaluate our work is vital so that we can continually learn, improve, and ensure that your money is used more effectively as a result.

Communications and Fundraising (8p)

As a Global Neighbour you are vital to everything we do at Signpost International. Your prayers, financial

gifts, encouragement, and loyal support means that to us you are an important part of the Signpost family. Our communications and fundraising are all about relationships, helping our Global Neighbours hear the voices and see the faces of those whom their generous gifts are supporting. We also want to inspire people to share in our mission and join us on our journey. In the past year we have seen a greater interest in our work and more engagement from those in Dundee. This is mainly down to the Community Kitchen at the Roundhouse which has now been running for over a year with its main mission to tackle food insecurity and food waste in Dundee.



476
Individuals supported our work as Global Neighbours



£203,613
Raised from these donations to take action against poverty

Contact us

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Registered Charity Number: SC050147





WASH (Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene)

Clean water and efficient sanitation facilities are basic necessities that everyone should be entitled to.

Sanitation facilities in schools across Uganda is an area of major concern. Many schools have been threatened with closure as the ratio of pupils to latrines is far too high. The extreme over-crowding has resulted in a high number of sanitation related diseases like Typhoid, Dysentery, and Cholera. Our local partners ARUWE (Action for Rural Women's Empowerment) have been asked by those they work alongside to set up improved toilet facilities in local communities and particularly in schools. As it was clear that this was an area that urgently needed to be tackled, alongside ARUWE, we began constructing new toilet facilities in schools in five villages in Nebbi District, North West Uganda.

Work then began to create five Ventilated Improved Pit Latrines (VIP) blocks and ten handwashing facilities

in the schools. The toilet facilities have recently been completed and are now in action at five schools in the area. The headteacher of Pacaka primary school said, **“The improved toilet facilities will encourage girls in school because they now have a secure and safe place to wash up in.”** The lack of suitable toilet facilities for girls to use when on their period significantly decreases school attendance, with many girls unable to attend school during this time. In many areas of Uganda there is still considerable stigma surrounding girls menstruation. It is therefore crucial that training is carried out on educating everyone about menstruation. In the schools that received the improved toilet facilities, pupils were trained on principles of good menstrual hygiene management and in making re-usable sanitary kits and liquid soap. This training was delivered by Days for Girls Uganda and addresses the stigma around menstruation.



The new toilet facilities at Pacaka Primary School

What we learned:

The mountainous and rocky terrain in the villages which are located in Nebbi district made the pit excavation challenging as there were large bedrocks that were difficult to break through. To address this issue, more members of the community were needed to participate in the project.

Clean water in Adhwongo

In the village of Adhwongo in Nebbi district, community members were forced to use water from a nearby stream as their only water source; for drinking, cooking, and bathing for themselves and their animals. With no other water sources available waterborne diseases were very common in the village, and sadly often led to death. Signpost and ARUWE began working in the area and contractors discovered a site for a water source in the village.

The borehole was completed quickly and is now in operation meaning those in the community are now drinking clean water for the first time. As a result, the incidence of waterborne illnesses in the area has decreased. The borehole has a very soft pump that can easily be operated by children and produces clear, clean, and odourless water.

Peter Kennedy, Head Teacher, of Adhwongo Primary School shares how the new borehole has resulted in a better school day for pupils and teachers. **“The nearest water source to the school was two kilometres away. This meant that children needed to walk four kilometres each day to collect water before attending class. The water collected was then used to make meals and for hand washing, this meant it needed to be used sparingly.**



A school pupil accessing water from the new borehole in Adhwongo

The daily task of pupils, mainly girls, having to go and fetch water at a great distance meant that they missed many classes. On the first day of the new borehole there were great celebrations. The borehole has greatly reduced the burden of fetching water at our school. Our handwashing facilities are now filled up all day and we can encourage pupils to embrace handwashing and good sanitation and hygiene practices. We no longer need to worry about pupils and teachers regularly being ill due to diarrhoea and typhoid caused by the unclean water. Pupils are now able to attend classes regularly as a result of the new borehole.”



4,444
children benefitting
from improved
latrines at schools



22,062,425
litres of safe water
pumped from
new water sources



Hunger & Nutrition

One of the biggest issues for people in the UK is not having enough money to access food for them and their family.

Last year we shared about our first food project in the UK, The Community Kitchen at the Roundhouse, which operates out of our building, the Roundhouse in Dundee. Its mission is to transform surplus food destined for waste and turn it into freshly cooked meals which are distributed to foodbanks and larders across the city and given to those in need. The Community Kitchen has now been running for seventeen months on a largely voluntary basis, meaning the two staff members overseeing this project need to be responsive and flexible to the schedules and preferences of those who give up their time to help. In the past year, thirty five volunteers have been involved with the Community Kitchen together contributing 1,784 hours to the project.

What we learned:

Setting up a project from the start involves a huge number of decisions. There is only so much that can be tackled, and only so much time in a day. We've had to strike a balance between the food that's available, what we can store and produce, the time and people-power we have, and what is needed by local projects.

The volunteers come for a variety of different reasons: some to gain experience, some who want to help those less fortunate, some who want to meet new people, and some who want to keep busy. We could not run the project to the same level without our wonderful volunteers.

What has become apparent this year is that the cost of living crisis has seen a large increase in people using foodbanks and food larders. This has meant we have been asked by these groups if we can increase the number of meals that we produce for them. We have been able to increase our offering to some groups but what we can make is limited due to our staff members and volunteers currently being at full capacity. A success of the past year has been strengthening our relationship with other third-sector organisations, working in partnership to best help those who are struggling to put food on the table.



Michael one of our volunteers cooking meals which were then given out

The past year at the Community Kitchen at the Roundhouse

Caroline Bentley – Signpost International’s Food and Health Development Officer.

“We’ve cooked so much food in the first full year of the project, lots of it quite creative. We have made meals like, Butter Cauliflower, Butternut Squash and Chickpea Curry and Carrot and Ginger Soup. I really enjoy thinking about what we can make with the random items that come through the door. We have kept even more food from going to waste by passing it to other groups or including it in recipe bags. There was even a day we took 200 kilos of potatoes and bread to the local schools in wheelbarrows and saw the lot shared out amongst local families.”

She continued, “We’ve seen some volunteers go from non-cooks to confident ones, capable of making a dish that will feed a hundred people. One of the biggest challenges of this project is cooking from scratch everyday with a constantly changing supply of ingredients. There is a lot to it, and it is not as straight forward as just cooking the ingredients we receive. Everything needs to be weighed in, and recorded, and labels for all the dishes need to be created and put on the boxes which takes a lot of time. We also have prep to do that other kitchens may not, simply because we deal with fresh foods that need a little more attention because they’ve come to us later in their life.”



Caroline handing out the ten thousandth meal to Ross from Fintry Parish Church for their food larder

Recent developments, “With a strong focus on sustainability, we’ve also come up with ways of working that minimise waste, like reusing thousands of food containers, using as much of our ingredients as possible, and freezing to preserve ingredients. We now also have a gardening group that comes in on a Monday and tends to our large outdoor space. They maintain the garden and also plant fruit and vegetables that once grown, will be used in our meals for distribution throughout Dundee. For me, the Community Kitchen is such an exciting project. We’ve transformed a dormant kitchen into a productive working zone that has seen thousands of meals made and has the potential for many thousands more.”



8,375kg
of surplus food saved
from going to waste
last year



7,700
meals distributed
to local foodbanks,
larders, and hubs in
the past financial year



Sustainable Livelihoods

We believe that every individual, especially those who are most vulnerable, should have the opportunity to be able to earn an income and work to improve their own situation in life.

In the Kapelebyong District in Uganda we support fourteen farmer and saving groups with 25 members in each group. The purpose of the groups is to effectively train farmers with the skills and knowledge to enable them to productively farm and develop their own business while encouraging collaborative working and peer support.

This has been a challenging year for groups in Kapelebyong District as they have been subjected to raids this year from the Karamojong who have raided and stolen cattle from the groups.

These are sadly regular occurrences, but this year the situation has escalated and 43 people across the district have been killed during the raids in the first three months of 2022. This has resulted in hundreds having to leave their homes and flee for safety.

Despite the challenges the groups have been successful and have benefitted the members and their families. The groups have all received training in good agricultural practices and skills in group dynamics. Farmers have already applied the learning on their farms to increase and diversify

production of crops. The training provides knowledge and skills on good farming techniques like planting in rows and inter-cropping, pest and disease management, and timely harvesting.

A large part of this project is supporting farmers to move beyond subsistence farming for their household and to grow their enterprise by selling their produce into the local and regional markets. The training that the farmers receive consists of business leadership, financial management, and micro credit training which supports members to better manage and repay their loans. Group members have benefitted from the training and are now properly utilising the revolving loans they have been given. Being offered a loan that farmers are able to pay back with minimal interest is the opportunity for them to become drivers of their own change. We have seen this as group members use their loans to inject into their business, giving them the opportunity to buy extra animals which they can then sell at market, or as an opportunity for some to diversify what they grow. Group members also received improved equipment like improved seeds which allows them to increase their harvests. The farmer groups have provided members with the assistance they needed to grow their business and increase their income.

What we learned:

The cost of living in Uganda, as in many countries, has increased dramatically in the past 12 months with essential commodities increasing in price beyond the scope of most people. The sudden rise in fuel costs has brought about additional challenges for our local partners who must cover significant distances in order to support the different communities.

Robert's Story



Robert selling his produce at a roadside market

Robert is a 62 year-old farmer and a member of the Ebumakinos Farmers and Savings group. He lives with his wife, their six children, and four grandchildren. Before he joined the group formed by VAD (Voluntary Action for Development) and Signpost International life was extremely difficult for Robert and his family. “There was no support for farmers like me. Me and my friends are self-taught farmers, we have never been trained, we have learned to farm on the job. We didn’t have many tools and couldn’t afford extra ones that would make the work easier. I had no savings and there was no lending institutions where we could borrow money from. This meant I was not producing as many crops as I could have been, meaning I was bringing in very little money from market and I was only able to feed my family one meal a day.”

Robert was invited to join the farmer and savings group which has supported members financially by offering access to a low-interest loan. “Being invited to join the group was a great opportunity for me because I was able to learn about the best way to farm for the first time in my life. The biggest blessing for me was it allowed me to access a loan that I would be able to pay back very soon. With the loan money I was able to buy new tools which allowed me to produce more crops. I am selling more at market and now my income has more than doubled. I have paid back the loan and my family now have two full meals per day and we are even able to make some savings! The knowledge and skills I have attained from the different training has meant I have been able to share them with other farmers and they have benefitted too and all members of the group now know much more about effective farming methods than we did before.”



A training session for the farmer and saving group members in Aturai in Kapelebyong



1,400
acres under
agricultural production
by farming groups



425
people received
training in enterprise
development
and management



Global Citizenship

Global Citizenship recognises everyone's rights and responsibilities as citizens of the world, it is all about education and this will look differently throughout the world.

In Uganda children's rights and responsibilities is not an area that has been prioritised by the Government, meaning in many areas of the country child rights are not implemented in society. As a result of this many children are subjected to abuse from their parents or carer who are trusted to protect them.

In Jupangira sub county in Nebbi District, the importance of ensuring that children are protected has never been shared with the community. Sadly, early marriages and teenage pregnancies are a deeply woven part of culture and society in Jupangira and across many parts of Uganda. In cases of wrongdoing, often many in the community do not know how to deal with the situation and the process and procedures to follow. Even those that do, such as the Police, often do not follow up on reports of child abuse due to a lack of budgets or private deals being agreed. Action needs to be taken to educate adults in the community on child protection and children need to be aware of their rights so that they can start to learn that they should not be suffering abuse.

We have therefore partnered with Action for Rural Women's Empowerment (ARUWE), in running training seminars and organised community dialogues and awareness sessions on child rights, child safeguarding and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR). A variety of training sessions have been conducted for parents, teachers, school management, and local leaders. These sessions have emphasised the effects of child neglect, physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal abuse, and the role of everyone in the community to prevent these incidents.

We have worked closely with Jupangira and Goli primary schools educating pupils about their rights. In each school a health club with 35 members has been created to train pupils in child to child advocacy approaches. The pupils expressed an interest in knowing where to seek help when they feel at risk. The pupils acquired the skills to apply their rights in their daily life and knowledge on how to report a safeguarding issue and to who. As a result of the discussions and training, members in the community have committed to working with the local leaders to ensure children grow up in a safer environment and have pledged to report any safeguarding concerns.

What we learned:

As children's rights is an area that has virtually been ignored in many areas of Uganda, it is essential that community leaders are involved in community dialogue in order to begin challenging culture and society. If local leaders are trained on child protection and then begin supporting the implementation of children's rights in the community then barriers will slowly begin to be removed.

Trinity's story

Trinity is a member of Jupangira Health Club. "Before joining the health club I had studied the rights children have in Uganda, but even after having learnt about our rights in class, it never crossed my mind that these rights were applicable to us, the rural children. Nobody took time to share with us in detail about these rights not even at home. In my community we have been brought up not to ask questions, to obey whatever the parent says, and that a child's opinion does not matter. So as a girl growing up it has been hard as I've had many questions about my body changes, but I wasn't able to ask my parents about this. The only people I could talk to was my friends but they didn't know any more about my body changes than I did. Me and many of my friends were confused and sometimes frightened and we had nobody older to talk to about this as we were told we were not allowed to ask adults questions."

Things then started to change, "ARUWE came to our school and talked to us about SRHR and safeguarding issues, I was eager to learn more because I was hearing much of the information for the first time, especially about SRHR. This pushed me to join the health club along with my other friends. We have had a number of seminars where we have been taught about SRHR and child safeguarding. I did not know I was entitled to the rights we were being taught in class."

Going forward, "Health club members have been tasked with passing on information to other pupils. I am also happy that our school has started engaging our parents on the same issues. I really hope that more health clubs are set up in other schools and that other girls are able to receive training on SRHR, so they are able to understand the changes in their body."



Members of Jupangira Health Club



Local leaders meeting to discuss child rights



5,172
people reached
through safeguarding
and child rights
projects



One
replica East African
roundhouse constructed
in Dundee as part of an
immersive educational
experience