

# tearfund

## The churches shining their light in Kitgum Uganda

---

Report for Christ Church, Surbiton Hill April 2020 to March 2021



Members of the Nimaro Irwot Village Savings and Loans Association and farmers group are working together to change the land about them, nurturing it in a way that improves life now, and protects the environment for the future. Here, the team weeds a field of beans that they have planted on the church's land.

Source: Angwech Pido/Diocese of Kitgum

## Results

- In Uganda, the Diocese of Kitgum has a vision. They want to see the communities they serve living full and flourishing lives. Where people, their livelihoods - and the environment they live in - thrive.

It is a vision the Diocese hopes to see realised in all forty of their parishes. And to achieve this, they are helping local congregations become the image of the Church described by Jesus; as 'salt' and 'light'. People who bring joy, life and hope to others.

Over the three years of this project, the Diocese aims to equip 60 local churches in this work. During this reporting period, they were able to envision and equip more than 120 church leaders in the process, who will be involved in supporting the implementation of the program in their local churches.

## Thank you

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

**Matthew 5:14-15 NIV**

In March 2020, just a month before the start of a new phase of work for the Diocese of Kitgum, the World Health Organisation made an announcement, declaring the coronavirus pandemic. In the months that followed, communities around the world experienced its effects in devastating ways. Lives were lost, social restrictions implemented and economies put on pause.

In Uganda, restrictions were brought in to limit the number of social contacts people had, to prevent the spread of the disease. This presented the Diocese of Kitgum with a number of challenges. With community movement restricted, training sessions had to be postponed, reviewed or revised, with only a few people able to gather at one time. Project staff became restricted in their movements, having to stay in the office, where they worked at a reduced headcount, on a rotational basis, as guided by the government, rather than visiting with the local communities they would usually be working with. And with the restrictions and the effects on people's health and work, community attention had to shift towards health and food aid.

But thanks to your support, the Diocese of Kitgum still managed to achieve many of its original plans for this year. In fact, in some instances, even more was achieved than had been planned. So, thank you. Thank you for standing with the diocese in a difficult year. Thank you for helping them support the local communities they serve, wherever their needs have been greatest, and for standing with them as they work toward their vision of a brighter future.

## Shining their light

Leaders from St Philip's Church in Matidi Parish are just some of those who caught a vision for Church and Community Transformation this year. Excited by the potential of the approach, they returned from their training sessions to set up a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). The group, Nimaro Irwot, expected to save money together on a weekly basis, in order to create a joint savings fund from which their members could request loans - as most VSLAs do. But the church's leaders had something bigger in mind for their VSLAs. They wanted to use them to foster church growth and development.

This saw Nimaro Irwot doing a range of new things. One of these involved taking part in training on climate-smart agricultural techniques, using 'Farming God's Way'; an approach that is designed to help farmers use a minimum amount of resources to maximise their yields. It is a method that can improve and secure livelihoods and protect land, especially as the climate of the region continues to change.

As part of their Church and Community Transformation training sessions, St Philip's Church discussed the resources they might have - the skills, talents and things around them that remained, as yet, untapped. They recognised that they had quite a substantial unused resource - a large piece of land. So they made a plan to open the land up, so it could be used for agricultural work. This is how Nimaro Irwot ended up with oxen and an ox plough...

Where previously people would have used hand hoes to till and prepare the land, Nimaro Irwot's ox and plough, provided by the Diocese, is helping St Philip's Church expand the work that can be done. It is an investment that should save people time, and allow them to sow more seeds - changes which will hopefully lead to more of a variety and a higher quantity of crops at harvest time. It is a change in technique that is expected to double the amount of produce they have, and which the church hopes can be used to support their priest and further the church's work.

**This year, thanks to support like yours, 240 people, like the members of the Nimaro Irwot Village Savings and Loans Association, have been directly impacted by this project, while another 1,680 have benefitted indirectly. With your support:**



**The Diocese ran a baseline survey, to understand the current situation in the areas they plan to run the project.** This survey had a sample size of 124 people, who live in the area. The data gathered is information that the project team and communities will be able to refer to time and again. It should help them define what the situation is like now and what areas they could prioritise to bring about change - for example, determining what the greatest needs are. And it provides a measure against which subsequent change can be monitored.



**120 local church leaders were invited to take part in envisioning and reflection meetings about the Church and Community Transformation approach.** This was 20 more church leaders than originally planned for, in which the leaders had space to learn how the approach works, and how they can support their local churches and communities in this work.



**19 students from Bishop Lee Leadership and Theological College were introduced to and trained up in Church and Community Transformation approaches.** The students, who are catechists, will be able to return to their ministries with the tools to support their churches and communities in ways that bring whole-life transformation - support for physical, spiritual, economic and social 'fullness of life', as described in Bible verses like John 10:10<sup>1</sup>.



**10 local churches were mobilised to start Church and Community Transformation activities.** They sit within two of the Diocese of Kitgum's archdeaconries, in the Kitgum and Pader districts of Uganda. Their church leaders embraced the project, and are ready to start using the approach.



**35 church leaders were given three days of training about Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).** This is five more church leaders than originally planned for. The main objective of the training was to strengthen the church leaders' capacity to respond, prepare for and mitigate against potential disaster. To help with this, the group prepared Disaster Action Plans and learnt from a variety of experts on the subject of reducing risk, including facilitators from the Kitgum district's local government and the District Environment Officer.



**Five staff from Kitgum Diocese and 20 'Trainers of Trainers' took part in four days of training about reducing the risk of disaster, with a focus on climate change adaptation.** The Trainers of Trainers then went on to teach others what they had learnt, taking the information into Sunday sermons, helping the Diocesan team fulfil their target of relaying disaster risk messaging to 24 local churches.



**Three radio talk shows were run on disaster risk management.** This allowed important disaster-related information to be conveyed to the wider community and included input from the

---

<sup>1</sup> 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' John 10:10

District Environment Officer, Disaster Preparedness Officer, members of the clergy and of the project team.



**20 people (including VSLA members and farmers) and five Diocesan staff took part in training on agricultural practices, such as the 'Farming God's Way' approach.**



**Eight VSLA and farming groups, like Nimaro Irwot, were given a pair of oxen and a plough alongside training about how to manage them, as a way to help them increase their harvests.**

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.  
Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

**Matthew 5:15 NIV**

## A light for all

With your support, leaders, churches and communities are placing their light as lamps on stands, to bring hope to all around, even in the darkest of times. They are nurturing a vision of the future - a vision of life where people have enough food and where people feel secure, no matter what comes their way. Whether it be a disaster like coronavirus or a changing climate, they are putting in place plans to prepare now, ready for tomorrow, to bring hope and abundance for all the people they serve.

## Where did your money go?

In what has been a tough year for so many, you have helped groups like Nimaro Irwot create opportunities to ensure their local communities thrive. This is helping them provide the hope and light that allows others to grow, and is enabling the local church to become all that they can be. The final amount spent from April 2020 to March 2021 was **£65,216\*** and we are so grateful. Thank you.

ACTIVITY OR ITEM	BUDGETED (£)	SPENT (£)
Church and Community Transformation Activities (including training workshops, learning visits, community meetings)	2,181	915
Advocacy Activities (including training for church leaders and churches, and collaborative meetings with other local leaders and development partners)	1,657	1,645
Disaster Risk Reduction Activities (including training workshops for staff, church leaders, and 'disciples').	3,739	3,599
Educational materials (including physical materials and quarterly radio shows on Disaster Risk Management)	1,942	1,837
Village Savings and Loan and Self-Help Group Activities	525	525
Agricultural Activities (including training on <i>Farming God's Way</i> and learning visits)	6,217	5,933
Monitoring and Evaluation	3,271	2,160
Personnel	37,552	29,356
Administration	6,105	5,200
Additional costs, including Travel, Utilities and Office costs	7,353	4,917
UK support costs**	11,484	9,130
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>£82,026</b>	<b>£65,216***</b>

\* Using an exchange rate of £1 to 4,763 Ugandan Shillings.

\*\* This year, the UK support costs are made up of the 10 per cent UK support costs given by Connected Churches, in addition to the standard 14 per cent UK support costs. This enabled half of the total UK support costs to go to our wider international work, ensuring your money is well spent. The other half of the total UK support costs were then used to help cover running costs in the UK which includes fundraising enabling us to raise further vital resources. Any Gift Aid received from your donation went to Tearfund's general work to help where the need is greatest

\*\*\*The final spend this year includes a range of activities from the previous year, which were not accounted for in the original budget. In addition to this, a number of planned activities were delayed this year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. We hope to complete these activities in the following year.

## Please keep praying for the church in Kitgum to keep shining

- Give thanks for the wonderful work of Nimaro Irwot, and all they have achieved this year. Pray that as they continue working together, they will experience real blessing as a result of the relationships they are building. Pray that they will experience successful harvests from the land around the church, and in their further personal and group endeavours.
- Give thanks for the way church leaders around Kitgum, inspired by the Church and Community Transformation approach, are driving change to help their communities create brighter futures.
- Please pray for the Diocese of Kitgum as they continue to work around the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic. Pray for wisdom in their planning and good health as they go about their work.

## Thank you



Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, United Kingdom

☎ +44 (0)20 3906 3906 ✉ [info@tearfund.org](mailto:info@tearfund.org) [tearfund.org](http://tearfund.org)

Registered office: Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE. Registered in England: 994339. A company limited by guarantee. Registered Charity No. 265464 (England & Wales) Registered Charity No. SC037624 (Scotland)