

Engineering Sub Group

Summary Report to Main Committee Meeting (28/11/05)

Visit to Mbale November 2005

Howard Smith

I. Water Projects

We are intending to work with Jenga, an NGO in Mbale, to implement the water projects. Jenga took us to view various Water projects during our visit to Mbale. Some of the Medics (Geoff Lloyd, Cathy Taylor and Eryl Hicks) also accompanied Howard Smith (Engineer) on some of the visits. The visits were very worthwhile. Vincent was particularly knowledgeable and helpful to our understanding of the projects. We were all kept fit by the amount of hill climbing involved!

First we viewed a project that had been completed by Jenga. This was a project installed previously by another charity, but had fallen into disrepair. It had been restored to full working order by Jenga. Jenga had used local people to do the work. They had also organised a form of cooperative to look after the ongoing maintenance of the system, involving a small payment from people in the villages being used to pay someone from one of the villages to do the maintenance. Regular maintenance is essential to keep the filters clean etc. The water source was not clean enough to provide safe drinking water and the design did not allow the addition of further filtering to achieve this. As a result the people still have to boil this water. However the water is supplied to taps close to their homes.

We viewed a second water project that was in also in need of refurbishment and improvement. This, when fully operational, would supply 6000 people. The dam needed improvement to allow more water to be caught. Various parts of the system required refurbishment and repair. An additional water source could be added to the system to expand its capacity. This would allow the system to be expanded downstream to supply a further 6000 people. The water sources had been tested and found to be good. The filtering in the system would enable the people to drink the water without boiling it. The cost of implementing this project would be around £5000. It is proposed that PONT seeks to fund this project by seeking support from local businesses.

A potential project to supply water to 66,000 people was discounted as this was considered to be beyond the funding resources of PONT.

We met with the local authority head of water services. This enabled us to ensure that the proposed project fitted in with the overall strategic water development plans for the area.

We also saw rain water catchment projects. These consist of fitting guttering to homes with tin roofs which discharge the water into large butts. This water is clean and safe to drink. The cost of these is £25 per household. This would provide water for a typical household of around 8 people and last 10 years. These systems also work well in conjunction with unclean piped systems. The piped systems are contaminated by animal waste being washed into the streams by heavy rain. Thus after a dry period when water butts begin to run out, the piped water becomes cleaner as less contaminants are washed into the supplying stream. It is proposed that PONT seeks to fund these projects by seeking support from individuals as the cost for a single project is relatively low.