

PONT-ATEB Sub Group

Appropriate Technology, Environment & Business development



Summary Report on the visit to Mbale, November 2009

Sub Group members on the visit:

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Summary

The main aims of the visit were to:

- ✓ Finalise plans to implement the stage I of improvements to the Mooni water scheme.
- ✓ Complete commissioning of the machines and continue developing the Mechanical Engineering Workshop project.
- ✓ Commission the new Endoscopy suite at Mbale Hospital.
- ✓ Commence formalising Fair Trade links with UWCM, and extend to this other NGOs.

These aims were mostly achieved in full. It was not possible to complete the commissioning of the last two machines at the workshop due the electricity being off during the first days of the visit. This was due a supply fault affecting the whole of the surrounding area.

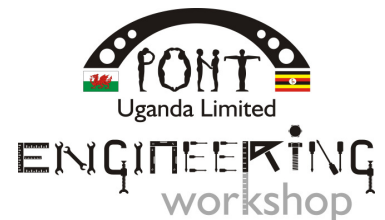
1. Mooni Water Project

The overall project objective is to improve an existing gravity flow scheme at Mooni. In stage 1 the current water source at Muyanda, which is contaminated, will be disconnected and a new source at Namiko connected. This has been tested and identified as being safe. Stage 2 will connect in a further 2 safe water sources, as Namiko cannot fully supply the system. The project will be implemented by Jenga CDO, one of the PONT partner NGOs.

The new source at Namiko was visited. The containment has now been fully completed and is ready for connection to the pipe line. The work on the source was funded by another organisation. A Rotary grant has been awarded, and once the funds transfer to Mbale the pipeline can be constructed.

2. Mechanical Engineering Workshop IGA Project

This project is to set up a mechanical engineering workshop IGA (Income Generating Activity). It will utilise redundant machines provided and shipped to Mbale by Cogent Power Ltd (part of Corus). The machines are owned by Mbale-PONT. A separate company (PONT Uganda Ltd.) has been set up to operate the facility utilising the machines. This will provide vocational training as well as operate as a business. Profits will augment the funds available to Mbale-PONT for poverty alleviation projects.



All but two machines have been fully commissioned, and some limited orders for work completed. The workshop is being run by voluntary labour until it becomes sufficiently profitable to enable salaries to be paid. All profits are currently being reinvested in the business.

The main objective of the visit was to complete the commissioning of the remaining machines, and review and further develop the business.

At the time of the visit there was a major power outage affecting the locality which lasted for a number of days. This significantly impeded progress during the week.

The UK PONT group had come up with the suggestion of making a bicycle trailer for transporting goods. Such an item hadn't been seen around Mbale at all. Many people were seen carrying large loads with them on their bicycles, or even pushing a fully laden bicycle, so, if the price was right this had the potential to be a good seller.

The concept was discussed with the workshop personnel, who then successfully designed and constructed a prototype by the end of the visit. Further work is required to optimise costs and identify an appropriate sale price. It is planned to put a notice on the prototype trailer showing 'PONT Uganda Ltd' and contact details. It will then be towed around the local area for a period to attract attention and business.

There is much scope for the design to be customised to individual needs for an additional payment.

The wider team from the UK included paramedics working on a project to implement an emergency ambulance service in the region. It was realised that a significant part of the population are in areas inaccessible by an ambulance. This led to a concept whereby patients could be transported using a specially designed bicycle trailer to a suitable rendezvous point to be taken onwards to hospital by ambulance. Initial design work was commenced for a version of the bicycle trailer to meet this need.

A grant has been obtained to enable 10 people from the workshop to be brought to the UK for a 2 week training course in business and machining skills. The practical arrangements for this were discussed.

3. Mbale General Hospital

The hospital team had shipped an endoscopy suite to Mbale. Assistance was given to the team in successfully assembling the system.

Other members of the hospital team spent time helping to improve the relatively newly formed Casualty department. Two of the department's sterilisers were not working. The engineering team attempted to repair these, but the elements had failed and it was not possible to obtain spares in Mbale. Spares will be sought in the UK and taken to Mbale when the opportunity arises.

4. Fair Trade Links

Following the success of the sale of small quantities of UWCM bead jewellery in the UK this project was extended to other NGOs. Meetings were held with FDNC, Hope Ministries, and Salem to discuss the potential for them to sell their products in the UK. A proposed MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) between PONT and each NGO was explained, and copies left with each NGO for further discussion and signature, if agreeable.

It was agreed that representatives of the NGOs would form a sub-group of Mbale-PONT to co-ordinate the work, ensure transparency and fairness, and make sure that unnecessary duplication of products does not occur.