

## On the Right Track

Dr Joseph Odeke and committee members Keith Goodall and Ian Windebank along with his wife Kaye, have recently returned from an eye opening and vitally successful 20 day trip to Uganda.

The million dollar question that was on every committee members lips on their return was, 'are we doing the right thing?' and you could hear that relief and satisfaction in the air when the reply was a definite, YES.

A fundamental key in the success of the 'three wishes project' the visit was as much a fact finding mission as an education for the Ugandan farmers in the use, maintenance and safety of the machinery and implements that arrived in their village a few weeks previously.

Keith and Ian are confident the farmers now have enough knowledge to get started.

"They are as keen as mustard to work the equipment and especially to drive the tractors which is the ultimate," Keith said.

"They have learnt enough to get started and a select group will be running the tractors so they can keep control and keep them maintained."

The group was soon able to determine which equipment was most useful and suitable to the country, conditions and job at hand, hence compile a list of other equipment that will be necessary for the success of the project, with off-set discs, ploughs and an angle grinder coming in at the top.

Keith and Ian said it was glaringly obvious to them that the way out of poverty for the Ugandan villagers was definitely through agriculture and improvements in farming practices and production.

The time-saving for one is huge; what would take three days to plough with oxen, takes the tractor just half an hour.

The highlight of the trip for Keith, was watching the plough go into the ground for the first time.

"To see the expressions on the faces and hear the comment of the people was amazing," he said.

"They think we are going to save them and kept saying, 'our troubles are over'."

Keith said he found comments like that quite daunting and difficult to comprehend.

Dr Odeke couldn't thank Keith and Ian enough for everything they did and achieved.

"They did a fantastic job," he said

"I can't thank them enough. They are amazing hands-on people who wanted to fix everything that is wrong with the place. I am very, very happy."

Chairperson of the Joseph Odeke Community Development Fund, Mig Brookman said she too was extremely thankful to Keith and Ian for their commitment to the project and travelling to Uganda.

"They have made a considerable personal financial sacrifice in going, but I think it has been really worthwhile," she said.

As well as guiding the farmers, the group also spent time distributing clothing, educational supplies hospital beds and bicycles.

Most of the school children in the area walk up to seven kilometres a day to school and they were all extremely keen for some wheels! Dr Odeke gave bicycles to students who have been achieving good marks in their classes as encouragement to continue. .

The group was moved to tears on visits to primary schools in the area with students performing songs they had written especially for the visitors.

Phrases such as 'we wish you happiness when you are with us' and 'congratulations, we thank you for your coming and helping with our future,' came from the heart and further cemented the belief that the project is making a difference in the lives of so many.

The feedback brought back to the Dr Joseph Odeke Community Development Fund has been invaluable and as a result the planned medical centre will now go ahead at a later date. It was clear to Keith, Ian and Joseph that improvements in agriculture must be the number one priority as success in this area will have flow on effects throughout the village in terms of improvements in education and medical facilities as well as living conditions.

Accordingly, the next container will be packed to the brim with more agricultural machinery and implements and will be sent as soon as funds are raised to pay for the shipping.

"The main thing we need now is money," Chairperson of the fund, Mig Brookman said.

"I have no doubt we can get everything else together, but there is no other way we can manage to send a container over there without more money."

The committee plan to continue fundraising and donations can be made to any branch of the Commonwealth bank.

"It's going to make a difference, no doubt about it," Dr Odeke said of the agricultural equipment already received and that organised to go next year.

For further information please contact Heather Cozens 8756 6075 or 0438 566075 or Ian Windebank on 0417 389167 and take a look at the website [www.josephodeke.com.au](http://www.josephodeke.com.au)



Ian Windebank of Padthaway, Dr Joseph Odeke of Keith and Keith Goodall from Coonalpyn had a very successful trip to Uganda



Ian Windebank is pictured with a group of Ugandan farmers and a heartfelt letter of thanks to Australians who are giving them a helping hand  
*"Congratulatory Message. Dear Visitors, We are grateful for the knowledge skills and guidance offered to us. We also deeply happy with wonderful support rendered to us. When you go back send our regards to your home people and our dear friends all at Australia. May the Lord Almighty escort you back home. We wish you safe journey. Goodbye goodbye."*



**Odeke03** Ian Windebank teaching a Ugandan farmer how to drive the tractor and use the implements