



Helen Kisakye

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Location: Uganda



What I do: Bringing a message of love, hope and inclusion for people with disabilities in Uganda through leading SPLASH inclusive dance group.

Dear friends,

Firstly, I want to say thank you to all of you for your prayers and messages at the recent loss of my father. I was grateful that during this time, I was back in the UK and living with all my immediate family around. It was a unique time that my dad referred to as days of sad gladness. There was laughter and tears and time to just be. The final days confirmed in me the legacy he exemplified that carries us forwards today.

My dad's thanksgiving service was full of family and friends who had been impacted by him in different seasons of life. We thank God that Douglas was granted a visa, making it possible for him to join us for the service. As I move forwards from the recent life events, I am comforted when I think of Dad in his earlier years of ministry as a missionary in Uganda. I am literally following in his footsteps today! Dad continues to live on in our hearts.

Melina came with me for the duration of my time in the UK and joined the pre-school in the local area. At school she learned a lot and made new friends. At home she got to know, love and trust her immediate family: Granny, Grandad and her uncles and aunt. Through this experience she has grown into a girl and is aware of her English roots too. Please pray that Melina will be able to reconcile England and Uganda in her heart well as she flies between the two.

While in the UK, I also had the opportunity to visit some of my link churches: St Leonard's, St Paul's (connected with Sherborne parish) and Holy Trinity. It was good to reconnect in person with faithful supporters of nearly a decade! Each church took the time to pray for us as a family and in the work. I really am encouraged and motivated further through the partnerships I have with each of my link churches. Due to the support of my link churches and individuals, it is possible for us as a family to thrive where God has planted us.

We recently returned to Uganda. Since going back to CRANE, I have been involved in an alumni girls' training programme. We had 200 girls attend, some of whom have been in the Girls' Education project since 2015! Since joining the project, they have been able to access higher levels of education, start their own businesses and be employed in various professions. One girl in particular gave a remarkable testimony with a



Visit to one of my link churches, St Leonard's

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



sad beginning: her father died when she was young, leaving her mother with eight children. The young girl knew that to attain an education she would have to work hard and get good results to receive a scholarship, as her mother would not be able to pay for her school fees. In the holidays she would study and at 13 she was doing odd jobs for pocket money. She also joined one of the CRANE creative learning centres. After many hurdles, the girl managed to work her way up to university level and now has a job earning a respectable wage. The struggles the girls go through on a daily basis and the creative ways they navigate the obstacles, inspires me to walk alongside these girls for God's glory.

Through the training they received knowledge on best practice in the workplace as well as Christian discipleship as they move forwards from the project. I also facilitated a dance

workshop where I shared with them a song called Unstoppable by Sia. I wanted to use the opportunity to instil in the girls a strong sense of personal dignity and the knowledge that despite any barrier thrown their way, they can continue to get up. We also looked at the lyrics of This is Me by Keala Settle, as another reminder that no matter their background/ beginning, they are above any negative labels and instead are beautifully and wonderfully made. It was a joyful time that I trust we will all remember for the storms still ahead. As well as the various teaching themes and sharing of testimonies, I am also grateful to a member from Sherborne parish who knitted two newborn jumpers which I was able to pass on to two mothers who were Girls' Education project alumni.

One of the participants from the training said, "I have learned a lot of things that will help me shape my profession... I enjoyed meeting different people today, the dance, the graduates, fellow girls and mentors, it's really been an amazing day."

Please pray for all the girls that came to the training, that they will continue to thrive and be role models for other girls in their communities, knowing their worth in Christ.

While I have been back it has also been good to meet with the SPLASH dancers. They are ready and available to resume activities again. I am grateful to my dad who named SPLASH as his charity of choice. We will use the donations made in his memory to purchase a portable, wheelchair-accessible dance mat. At present we are using tarpaulin, which is too lightweight and becomes a distraction on windy days. Investing in a professional dance mat will allow us to perform/facilitate workshops in places usually deemed inaccessible, spreading further our vital message of God's love and celebration of all. We thank God for the generous donations made. Please also pray that the dance mat will be shipped safely and that we will be able to put it to use soon.

This is sent with love to you all,

Helen



Photos from top to bottom: Doug, Melina and Helen in the UK; dance workshop at alumni girls' training; alumni mother and child receiving knitted sweater; wider family photo



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Africa Conference: Friday 7–Sunday 9 October – A weekend residential with opportunity to connect online. This year's theme is Out of Africa: Learning together about mission. Book your place now at churchmissionsociety.org/ac2022

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