

# Australia Bringing Hope Inc

## Annual C.E.O. Report 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2024

Hi everyone, because of your prayers and support, ABH has had another good year. I spent from April 2023 until September 23 in Uganda. Looking back at our plans for this year gone I can report that the new web site is up and running, [www.abh-inc.org.au](http://www.abh-inc.org.au) although some further updates are needed soon. Our plans for a shop to sell hives and honey has not happened due to funding and supply issues. Meanwhile a small farm I have personally bought has become our main base, bee project and workshop. After building a new bee house on our property, a 20x30 shed which is our house and workshop, a drying shed or barn and a small nursery for our vegy garden, a big storm came and damaged some of our buildings and blew our bee house into the forest. This has since been rebuilt better and stronger.

Our little farm of nine acres has also been extended to include a property joining ours of approximately eight acres. This has been leased from Bishop Elizabeth from South Sudan. She is finding it difficult to run, plus needs funds for her daughter that has kidney failure. She has asked me to purchase her land but I do not have the funds but would be keen to do so when funds come available. The land must be in the name of a Ugandan as foreigners are not permitted to own land. Our block is in my wife's name which gives her some security also. I would suggest that a future purchase would be in Saul's name, who is our general manager. He is the one that I hope will continue our work when my time comes to an end. Passing on the batten to the next generation and in fact to a local Ugandan is essential for our project to have maximum long term effect.

### **What is the farm for you may ask?**

1. First of all, it is the only place we have some ownership of. This gives us some certainty with our future work of bee keeping and farming projects and gives us accommodation and a place to build a workshop.
2. Our new electric fence along the forest restricts the elephants and baboons entering ours and neighbours crops and destroying them.
3. **Research and development.** We are currently planting our forth crop, Kibimbya, which is in the mid north of Uganda, has rain for almost eleven months and two dry seasons. The main dry is January and February while the other shorter is in July. So we produce at least two crops per year but do have issues of harvesting in the rain. We are hoping to find the most productive ways to maximise subsistence farming, helping people out of poverty. We can experiment with different crops while the locals cannot afford to experiment as failure would lead to starvation and increased poverty. Currently we are looking at chia, maize, sesame seed, linseed, sunflower, cotton, coffee, citrus, mango's, avocado, cashews, hot peppers and eucalyptus. We will also look at chicken and goat rearing and of course continue improving bee keeping to improve pollination, honey production, queen bee production, propolis and pollen as a health food.
4. Part of our research will also include finding simple machines and methods to improve production while reducing the back breaking work women and children do while planting, weeding and harvesting by hand. We have already introduced a small five row combine to improve the fertiliser and seed placement, while reducing labour.
5. Another need, which will need increased donations from Australians to start, is to build bulk grain storage facilities to help store our own crops and if successful offer locals a chance to have their own or perhaps a shared facility.
6. We are also helping five local families offering them a share of our crop in exchange for their labour. Unfortunately grain prices have dropped below production costs so we endeavour to look at higher value crops and also a bigger mix to reduce risk. We also have

- stored a little over one ton of maize which we will mill into flour and donate to schools as well as for our own use. Maize flour and beans are 90% of most peoples diet.
7. Upon my return in April, I hope to involve more local people and local councillors by inviting them to our property for a meeting where I can explain what we are doing and invite them to have their say on what we should look at.
  8. **Conservation and Sustainability.** Due to lower grain prices, locals have turned to illegal tree cutting and charcoal burning in the adjoining forest. This will further degrade our local environment and reduce honey production, which is one of the main reasons we bought land there in the first place. We need to work with these local people to find a better solution to this very serious problem. On one hand we have forest clearing which is unsustainable and the other is possible starvation and the inability to have money for education and medical needs.
  9. The location of our farm is remote thus we have the opportunity to work along side of people who have little or no outside help. We have already helped locals with employment, funding for medical treatment and school fees.
  10. We also need funds, around \$3,000 to give books to local schools which were donated by the Blyth Primary School. These need to be shipped to Northern Uganda and distributed. Schools there have zero library books and teachers have the only text books. When I say schools, you probably have a picture in your mind, please change this picture to class rooms with dirt floors, no windows, only a few desks and modern technology which only includes a blackboard and chalk. The students probably number 50 to each small class room, picture their smiling faces and their enthusiasm while maybe only having one school uniform, no shoes and even no nickers.

So we also hope to continue our work in Kaihura. Apart from welding our honey plant and workshop has only been open for a few weeks every few months. I hope to increase this, in the future, we still have Deus keeping the place in our absence. Our support to Faith and Bringing Hope to the Family is very limited but our web site still directs people to her and the many projects she has running.

We still continue supporting Pastor Fred of Gidco in the east and Pastor Patrick in Kyenjojo. Our support is limited but when funding increases so will our support. I wish to thank all our supporters and our board members who continue to fund and pray for our work. One donation meant we could buy Claire in outer Kampala a new stove and oven and also give school fees to help her bake to provide a source of income.

In about four weeks I head to Uganda again for ten weeks where I hope to reunite with my wife Irene after seven months then later check out the projects. No major new projects will be started just maintaining the current programs.

Meanwhile I still plan to be employed as a bee keeper in Australia but also start running a friends bee keeping business. He is now restricted to being connected to an oxygen bottle as he hopes and waits for a lung transplant. His property and business has been run down due to poor health and the determination not to give up for about 14 years. Our hope is to get him some money for his transplant as well as providing myself and ABH funding.

Also I need help with that Australian challenge so I hope to get Saul here for six months, to help me plus earn him some better income to boost him and his family. It would be good training to see how beekeeping and farming is done here which would prepare him better to run future projects in Uganda. My sick friend has been making his income from collecting pollen rather than honey and I feel it would be a good area to pursue in Uganda.

Well that covers most things, our AGM is this coming Sunday 2pm, 45 Strickland Street Clare, please let me know if you wish to attend, thanks and blessings, Phil Grigg. 0428844885

