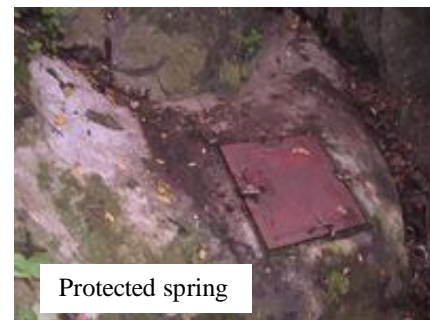


A success story from Kagando, Uganda

In the early 1980's Tear Fund were helping support a mission hospital at Kagando, in western Uganda, in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, close to the border with the Congo. Tear Fund provided finance and assistance to improve the water supply to the hospital. It was a simple system involving spring protection and a gravity fed supply. Small concrete walls were built over springs up in the hills, to keep the water clean as it flowed out of the ground. The water was then fed by gravity through a network of pipes into collecting tanks made of ferro cement, and on through a larger diameter pipe to the hospital compound on the other side of the valley.



I went out to Kagando in late 1985, as part of a team of short term volunteers with Tear Fund, to help extend the water supply. The work was led by Bairinga and his son Yona – the hospital plumbers. They organised teams of villagers to carry cement, sand and pipes up into the hills, and to dig the trenches for the pipes. Within a few weeks we had protected two more springs, and piped the water into the network, to boost the supplies to the hospital. We were even able to extend the system past the hospital into the nearby community, building a storage tank and tap stand close to a group of houses, providing them with clean safe drinking water.

I often wondered how well the system worked over the years. Did it keep working? Was it maintained? Did the people really benefit?



Then, after a break of 23 years, I was able to revisit. What a wonderful blessing! It was a joy to see the same protected springs, the same water tanks and tap stands still functioning, still providing clean safe drinking water to the hospital and thousands of people around. The water supply system has been extended over the years, providing water to many more communities. Some systems are completely separate, not connected to the hospital system at all, but provided as a labour of love and service by the church and hospital. One recent project/development provided a new water system for several villages, benefiting about 9,000 people, at a cost of £36,000, mostly funded from the US and UK, as the local people are very poor, barely able to buy food and clothing or pay school fees or for health care. It is amazing that we can provide clean water for just the small amount of £4 per person – not per week, or per month, but a single payment to give clean water for life.

Tear Fund have moved on since, leaving a thriving Christian community. The hospital and rural development centre are now run by the Church of Uganda, supported by a UK charity, Friends of Kagando (www.friendsofkagando.org.uk), and similar groups in the USA and Holland. Every day begins with a service of worship and prayer in the hospital chapel – we used to meet on benches under the trees! The ministry has grown, with new wards added to the hospital, an eye clinic and a dental surgery, an X-ray facility, and much more. They reach out into the community, with the gospel, and health care and education, and practical help. They provide a micro-finance facility to help business growth. They run an agricultural project to teach better farming practices. They established a primary school for 400 children, a hostel for expectant mothers, and have recently opened a Vocational Training School.

Thank you Tear Fund. Thank you Tear Fund supporters. Your giving, and prayers, and support have truly helped nurture a wonderful outpouring of God's love into that little corner of Africa.

Thank you God, for your love and mercy, so freely offered to us all.

Phil Hickling (Friends of Kagando)