

AUGUST 2023

Walter Okidi talks about EI's work in Uganda

Jesus Film Ministry



Walter shared that “in Uganda, almost everyone is a Christian but, when you ask them about their faith, they cannot talk about it. Christianity in Uganda is a mile wide, but less than an inch deep.”

The desperate need for discipleship in Uganda leads to one of EI Uganda's projects called the Jesus Film Ministry. The goal of this ministry is for church leaders to be discipled, so that they have the capacity to make more disciples. It includes training on how to follow up with new believers in small groups and accountability pairs, which has been extremely beneficial.

The Jesus Film ministry has consistently been identified by our partner churches as the EI ministry with the greatest impact in their churches! We believe that Christians rooted deeply in the word of God strengthen churches, families and entire communities.

The Jesus Film ministry helps churches become stronger by equipping leaders and church members in evangelism, follow-up and discipleship.

This accountability pair will then go back to their local church and disciple twelve more individuals who will further walk with the people in the church who decide to follow Jesus (after the Jesus film is played sharing the Gospel message). All new believers will enter into a year-long

Bible study program and celebrate with a graduation (which includes the gifting of Bibles, certificates and the sharing of testimonies). Disciples are surely being made and encouraged in Uganda through this ministry, and we praise the Lord!

Child Discipleship Project



Walter shared that his team recognises the need and further emphasis on the discipleship of children through their children's ministry. 77% of Ugandans are young people (0-25 yrs old), and there is a hunger within young people in Uganda for the growth of the Church. However, the issue surrounding a lack of discipleship is apparent within this age category as well, so El Uganda is working to partner with the local church to encourage Christian maturity for children. This project includes the equipping of Sunday School teachers through a week-long training program. This program includes topics surrounding pastoral care, abuse protection, lesson planning, fundraising skills, and more. They also work to train church committees and parents to understand the importance of discipling children.

The Child Discipleship ministry recognises the need to help churches reach and disciple their children. Too often children are marginalized in the church, treated less as a blessing and more as a source of distraction during the Sunday service. So in 2018 we began working with churches across different denominations to equip their Sunday School teachers with the skills and resources they need to disciple their youngest members. As a result of this work, many churches now have a Sunday School.

Pads Project aka Acholi Girls' Fairer Future Project



Another ministry that EI Uganda is hard at work on is the Pads Project! Walter shared that on average at the start of primary school there are more girls than boys in each class, but by the start of secondary school the boys outnumber the girls significantly. This is because many girls drop out of school, and difficulty managing menstruation is one of the major causes. The Pads Project works to provide sanitary pads and underwear to girls, along with washing stations in schools. These are accompanied by a six-day lesson on health, the worth we find in Christ, and the Bible.

Though the provision of physical materials is helpful, the EI Uganda team is searching for a more sustainable solution to keep girls in school when they begin menstruating. They want to involve district leaders, educators, and parents alike to advocate for girls' education. The major hindrance that the project team is encountering is the response of parents, as most do not believe that the purchase of sanitary pads should be their responsibility. Currently, the project team is trying four different models to teach parents, these include:

- Asking parents to pay for sanitary pads as a part of the girls' school fees
- Teaching parents how to make the reusable pads
- Teaching the girls how to make the pads
- Mixing the girls and the parents and teaching them together

Walter asks us to all join him in thanking the Lord, as all of these models have been successful so far. May we join in praying for the team as they decide which model (or models) to utilize as they move forward.

The goal of the Acholi Girls' Fairer Future project is to help girls remain in school and to help girls know the love God has for them. Since 2022 we have been piloting ways of helping parents and schools to provide these pads, rather than distributing them for free, and we have expanded our teaching to six lessons that cover puberty, menstruation and hygiene, relationships and true love, reasons to delay marriage, and their identity in Christ.

Mission Mobilisation



Walter finally shared about EI Uganda's project working to mobilise the Ugandan church to engage in the mission of Christ. Walter shared that previously, only foreigners were considered missionaries in Uganda, but EI is working to change this understanding by empowering the Ugandan church to reach people in the 10-40 window. The activities in this project include education courses on mission, field preparation, and exposure trips.

Walter shared that “we want a sending church in Uganda. We want people that think about lost souls every moment... because that’s the heart of God”, and “the Church who doesn’t reach out to the lost souls is a lost church”.

The team wants this to be the centre of all the projects, as all people need to hear the Good News of Christ!

May we all rejoice alongside Walter and the EI Uganda team for the work that God is doing in and through each of their projects. Let us additionally be constantly in prayer for the Lord to give them wisdom as they make project decisions and continue to share the Gospel to those who have not yet heard of God’s transforming power.

Through the Mission Mobilisation ministry we are seeking to help the church in Uganda to recognise and take up their role in the global, cross-cultural mission of God. We have organised prayer meetings for missions, have facilitated the MissionMode course, organised a Kairos course for church leaders and have sent teams on cross-cultural exposure trips.



Walter Okidi is in his sixth year working with Emmanuel International Uganda, and he is currently the General Manager.

*Interview by Brittany Ratelbrand
EIC Intern Summer 2023*