Mike and Julia Harley have just returned from their summer holiday in Uganda. Although primarily taking a safari holiday in the west of the country, they were able to delay their flight home by a week to allow a visit to the Vocational Centre at Lubanyi at no cost to the project. Mike reports:

We had a wonderful time in Western Uganda, visiting the national parks where we saw elephant, lion, hippo, zebra, buffalo, lions, chimps and a whole variety of antelope. I also spent a magnificent day gorilla tracking in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. After 10 days, we swapped our safari vehicle and lodges for a borrowed car and a journey east to Jinja.

As well as getting together with old friends, it was a wonderful opportunity to see the school building that we started, now almost complete. Floors have had their final surface and the walls and ceiling rendered inside. They still have no power supply but are hoping to resolve this soon.

There is limited furniture, but they do have treadle sewing machines and, of course, the block machine. There were 20 children in training when we visited. Some of the children who worked with us last summer have already left and gained employment in the construction industry. The children there now are receiving training in building, carpentry, hairdressing and tailoring.

There are still many challenges to overcome. Our target audience is children who have not previously attended school. Often, this has been due to cost of uniforms and books they need. Even our centre has to charge (very modest) fees to cover staff wages, but the £1 per week per child is still a burden to their families. I hope we will be able to help with this. Also, some of the children have to walk considerable distances to get to school. We may be able to help with the cost of providing a very basic meal at lunchtime, making it easier for them to stay for the whole day.

Our friends have been negotiating with the Jinja Council to find opportunities to market our bricks. There may be an opportunity soon to construct a large (2m X 2m) flower bed in town, which will demonstrate the quality and flexibility of our block system.

Whilst we were in Uganda, we were able to make links with another charity. It is an orphanage near Kampala, but they are in the process of building new blocks. This could be an opportunity to market our bricks, whilst also helping to provide quality buildings for the orphans.
The Vocational Centre is still only in its infancy; there is much to develop and our plans to return with more scouts in 2015 come into the medium term plan. In the short term, we need to consider how we can help them in these early days.

Nile 2010 and our scout group live on in these children’s futures. All of our Ugandan scout leader friends also send their best wishes to the 2010 team, the scouts as a whole and to all of our supporters.

**Water Containers, Books and Toys**

Last winter, we invited people to sponsor a water container or some school books for a child in the Lubanyi community. As a result of the kindness of our donors, we will be able to purchase at least 20 containers and a good number of books. The money has been left with our Ugandan Friends to purchase the containers and distribute them to children whose own containers are damaged. A message will be written on each container, explaining it is a gift from the friends of the Vocational Centre. That way, the local community will see that the centre contributes in a wider manner than just education.

We are still fundraising for the project. Members of the wider team picked up litter in Meyrick Park after the recent BSO concert. Our next main event is a hog roast at the fireworks in November. Help is always welcome at these events.

Our ‘Just Giving’ web site is still active for tax efficient gifts. You can visit the site at [http://www.justgiving.com/nile2010](http://www.justgiving.com/nile2010). We always welcome opportunities to discuss corporate or individual support for the ongoing project.

Team members are also very happy to talk to groups, clubs and societies about what we have already achieved and how they can become involved with us in the future.

If you would like to know more about Nile2010, and to share our wonderful experiences, we are always willing to arrange slides shows and talks for local groups. We also look forward to sharing the progress in Lubanyi with you through future newsletters. For more pictures, search ‘Nile2010 Group’ on Facebook.

To find out more about Nile 2010 or how you can support us or to book a slide show please contact Paul Stevens on 01202 533511 or Mike Harley 01425 655715 or visit [www.nile2010.co.uk](http://www.nile2010.co.uk)

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**Challenges Ahead**

Teaching space is at a premium. Although in good weather, building and construction can be taught outside, our one classroom has to be shared by tailoring and hairdressing. In the longer term, and as pupil numbers increase, more rooms will be needed. Furniture and equipment is very limited too. Uganda has been hit by the worldwide recession the same as we have. Indeed, it may even be deeper there as inflation hits 18%. Sugar went up from 5000 UG shillings to 7000 (almost £2) per kilo in the short time we were there. Construction has dropped and this is decreasing the opportunity for us to sell blocks. Hopefully this is a short term problem, but any help we can offer during this period will be very much appreciated.

We were also able to deliver lots of knitted toys to Lubanyi and Buwenda. Many children have simply never had a toy of their own. Most of the toys were knitted by a friend of our project, Daphne, who has since passed away. She did see pictures of children with her toys last year and I know she would have loved to have seen the joy in the faces of the recipients this year.

**Children receiving the knitted toys**

The quality was good, with darts and pleats. These children have good opportunities for employment once they have achieved skills like these.