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Oli Otya!

EIGHT MONTHS DOWN, FOUR TO GO

Two thirds of the way through my fellowship and I am definitely in the groove. It was tough to be away from home over the holidays, but I really love life here in Uganda. I am still healthy and probably the tannest ever in my life. (It's also the dry season, so it might just be all the red dust.) I feel really proud of my work recently and look forward to a productive last few months!

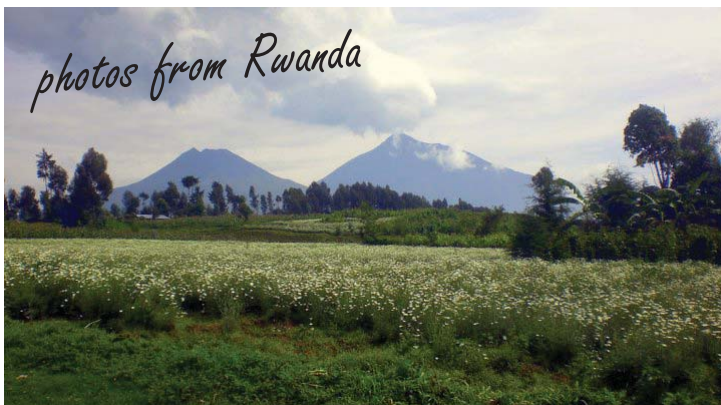
December was slightly slower at IJM Uganda. Most of our staff traveled for the holidays, so the few of us remaining just wrapped up end-of-year projects. Krista, the director's executive assistant, and I took a quick trip to Rwanda, which is probably one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. The genocide memorials we visited were devastating, but definitely worth your time if you are ever in East Africa.

The holidays were great for growing closer to our little community of NGO-worker friends. I have built some lasting friendships here and will miss these folks when we disperse all over the world. We

are currently reading Tim Keller's *Generous Justice* together, which brings out great discussions on poverty, injustice, and responsibility.

Early into January, our investigators helped arrest an evasive perpetrator who had been hiding out in Sudan. He betrayed the trust of his widowed sister-in-law, sold her property from under her, and then fled the country. His arrest – an epic midnight stakeout – was a huge victory for our team. The widow, famous in our office for her bubbly personality, is overjoyed now that she has justice. I wish you could all see how she dances around in joy.

January kept me busy, but I have enjoyed all the work I get. I helped coordinate donor visits, client stories for IJM mailers, and Uganda's portion of IJM's Global Prayer Gathering, a mega event in DC in April. This month, I have been updating the legal handbook we give to widows and helping my boss on some grant proposals. *Continued...*



"Men come tamely home at night only from the next field or street, where their household echoes haunt, and their life pines because it breathes its own breath over and over again; their shadows, morning and evening, reach farther than their daily steps. We should come home from far, from adventures, and perils, and discoveries every day, with new experience and character."
Henry David Thoreau, from *Baker Farm*

I am happy to report that the client I wrote about in August's update letter, a young man who stood up for his mother's property rights, was accepted into an accelerated adult education program. He is now 21 and had four more years in the traditional school system; this program will help him complete secondary school in one or two. He seems very excited for this change of pace. If you have been supporting me financially, know that you are also paying his school fees and we both thank you!

I have a lot on my bucket list left to accomplish in these next four months. There's a stack of client profiles to write, long-term marketing projects to plan, and lots of sights around Uganda to see. I had a great trip last weekend to Jinja, the source of the Nile and "Adventure Capital of East Africa." I will probably make another trip to the orphanage in Kenya in March and to visit friends in Tanzania in April, if my budget allows.

REFLECTIONS

I have had great conversations with friends from home recently about how this experience has affected me. I rarely reflect that seriously on my own, so I am thankful for those excuses to really explore how I feel.

I have definitely changed since being in Uganda. I feel more independent in my daily life, more decisive in my work, and more deliberate in my relationships. I have learned a ton about development and human rights. I have also learned great lessons of confidence (I am talented!) and humility (I am not as talented as I thought!) that have inspired me to work harder at everything I do.

These conversations with friends have pushed me to think critically about what I will do next, but thinking ahead has been much more difficult than I anticipated. I recently booked my return flight home (June 10) so now that date hangs heavily on the horizon.

I am definitely not done with Africa, but I look forward to spending some time back in the States with paved roads and mom's home cooking. If you have ideas for my next step, I would love to hear them!



Prayer Requests:

1 Uganda's presidential and parliamentary elections are this Friday, February 18. With recent unrest around Africa and the Middle East, it is unclear how Uganda's elections will go. Please pray for safety at the polls and security over the next few weeks.

2 Please pray for our office. The year is off to a frustrating start – no cases have closed, several major cases have been further delayed, and some donor and expansion initiatives have fallen through. Pray that we will start to see more success in 2011 and that everyone keeps up their spirits.

3 Continue to pray for me as I start planning for my return to America. Pray that I find a great new opportunity that builds upon my experience in Uganda.

QUICK HITS

If you have time this month, check out my blog (onewhiteguy.wordpress.com) for Foto February, where I attempt to post one new photo of Uganda every day. I have also linked to tons of other IJM blogs, so you can read about our work all over the world.

To get more involved with IJM's work, head to the website (www.IJM.org) and register for the 2011 Global Prayer Gathering or sign a petition asking President Obama to fight slavery.

Thanks again to everyone for all the support and encouragement. As usual, keep me posted on your lives and let me know if you have any questions!

Scott