

## Editorial



*We wish you all a prosperous 2010. We keep all our readers and friends in*

*our hearts. May the coming year be full of joy.* We are excited to present you with a new edition of our newsletter. This time of the year, is a time to reflect on the passed events. What a busy year we have behind us with a lot of comings and goings, with joy and sadness, beginnings and endings. I learned that life is in a constant state of flux. One moment you are sure things are going to go this way, then suddenly everything you knew has changed or is challenged and you have to adjust to this new life situation. It takes some work and faith to do this, but it is also exciting to experience change as it helps us to grow into mature human beings. We said "Good Bye" to Andrew Yoombe, our community leader and "Hello" to Monica Angeyo, who will lead L'Arche Uganda now sharing her gifts and dynamic spirit with us. I had the privilege to interview both of them. We also welcomed new assistants and had to let others go. We are with you on your journey through life's jungle. There are so many interesting stories and testimonies in this issue that I had to dedicate an extra page to it, so 5 pages full of inside into the heart of L'Arche Uganda. We always welcome your comments and suggestions. Enjoy reading it. Blessings from L'Arche Uganda.  
Mandy Liedke

**My highlight in 2009 in L'Arche Uganda**  
**John Bosko Wasike (houses coordinator/ deputy director):** This was a very busy year,

full of changes. John Sargent our reference person from L'Arche International handed over to Chris Bemrose, the community leader of L'Arche Bognor Regis. He helped us in the discernment for our new community leader and she will start in January. The new house is finally getting renovated thanks to donors from Europe. We participated in "World Disability Day" on the 3. December organized by our government.

**Rehema Adams (resident):** I enjoyed the Xmas party in L'Arche and going on a trip to Kenya.

**Beatrice Masike (house leader):** I found caring and supportive people in the community, who help me in my leadership role. They helped me to grow. My grandmother was very sick, but people here prayed for her and now she has improved. We also discerned a new community leader.

**Kahima Mohamed Livingstone (resident):** I liked the celebrations, my birthday and Xmas. I got a new radio.

**Christine Namukasa Mbabazi (living in assistant):** I learned a lot from the formations in L'Arche. They are very useful. I was born at Xmas, so I celebrated my birthday with Jesus. I received a lot of presents from so many people.

**John Kakooza (resident):** I enjoyed going to Kenya on a bus and parties. I like to dance to music.

**Nakibule Lamula (resident):** Laughing together and parties, my birthday. We got new assistants and I like Richard, he is my new father.

**Richard Lubega (new living in assistant):** My highlight was coming to L'Arche being with people with disabilities and finding beauty in them. It has been a rich experience.

**Kabuye George (living out member):** I enjoyed the Xmas party and dancing in front of everybody with the entertainment group. I like to thank Herman for working with me on the farm.

## Interview with our outgoing community leader Andrew Youombe

"L'Arche is a place of fellowship, celebrations, reflection and being truthful."  
(A. Youombe)



Robert and Andrew are friends for life

**M: Please introduce yourself.**

**Y:** My name is Andrew Youombe I've been with L'Arche Uganda since the year 2000 as a volunteer giving formations to assistants and supporting the community needs. I took the mandate as community leader in September 2001 and in 2005 I took up a second mandate until then end of 2009. I am married to Rose and I have only 5 children.

**M: What has touched you in L'Arche?**

**Y:** What attracted me to L'Arche in the first place is the simplicity of life the core members live and invite us into. For example the way they welcomed me was very special. Regina was the first person to show me this. Especially in a country like Uganda there is a lot of focus on tribalism, people ask for your tribe or clan and not where you come from, so you may not feel welcome if you are not part of a certain tribe or clan. But people with disabilities do not care about your clan; they welcome everyone as a human being. Also in a world of seeking academic excellence and material success a basic healthy life style can be ignored as it doesn't seem attractive. Nakibule touched me as she was truthful with me when she saw me the first time. I wanted to greet her, but she was busy washing clothes and splashed me with water saying: "Genda." ("Go away.") Eventually our relationship started to grow and I understood her better. Now we have a lot of joyful moments together.

**M: What have you learned about yourself by being in L'Arche?**

**Y:** Life is about coming and going. When you are faced with coming there is a lot of joy. Going tends to bring sadness for example when Annett Nakya, a core member, passed away suddenly in 2007. There was so much pain and sadness. Also assistants who come to the community bring joy,

but when they leave we are sad to loose the gifts they brought to the community. And yet coming and going are interconnected, one cannot be without the other.

**M: Do you have any advice for the new leader?**

**Y:** In leadership you are always called to take initiatives which may be difficult for those you lead to accept, especially I the initiative turns out to have more disadvantages then advantages. You may turn out to be a person who makes a lot of mistakes, but we can learn from Moses from the bible. He led the people of Israel to Egypt to the Promised Land constantly meeting challenges, but staying focused and having faith that they will reach the Promised Land. Whenever there is a challenge keep your faith and stay focused.

**M: What are your plans for the future?**

**Y:** I am going to continue to be a member of L'Arche Uganda, because it was more then a job. I became part of the L'Arche family. Also my doors at home will always be open for members to visit me and stay. At the moment there is a discernment going on, if I can continue to be the coordinator delegate for the English speaking African L'Arche communities.

**M: Thank you for all the effort and work you put into L'Arche Uganda. We will miss you.**

**Y:** I give my gratitude to all and I am glad to be part of L'Arche Uganda.

## Interview with our new community leader Monica Angeyo

"He just smiled at me..." (M. Angeyo)



Monica feeding Danny

**M: Please introduce yourself.**

**A:** I am Monica Angeyo. I come from Gulu, the northern part of Uganda. I am an Acholi by tribe Luo speaking . I come from a decent Christian family. My parents passed away in 1993, so the "White Fathers" started taking care of me, particularly Brother Nick Murphy. He supported me whilst I lived in various Christian foster homes. Eventually we had a community living together in Hoima and Mubende. I lived in both

communities. When I was 17 I started taking responsibility in our community in Hoima being in charge of our up keeping and important community matters. Brother Nick supported me emotionally and spiritually when I went to school and later to University in Kampala, where I studied Community Psychology.

**M: How did you come to L'Arche?**

**A:** I came as a volunteer and was touched by the core members in L'Arche. Soon I was appointed as community psychologist and eventually I was discerned as the new leader starting in January 2010.

**M: What has touched you in L'Arche?**

**A:** Seeing the different disabilities and knowing that the core members don't pity themselves, they accept themselves the way they are and have a good sense of humour. On my first day in L'Arche I wanted to help Nakkanjako to go to rest. I saw her laying on the floor. She told me, that she wanted to compete with me to reach her room. I was wondering how she would do this as she has cerebral palsy and can't walk. But she started moving on her back laying down. I stood up and we got ready for the race both of us moving in our own special way with Nakkanjako leading the way to her room, because I didn't know where it was. I also like to tell the story of Tom Onyango, whom I met first in the house. I greeted him, but he kept quiet and looked away with a smile in his face. I told him, you have to say something before I leave today. When time came I sat with him again, but he just smiled at me this time looking at me. Eventually when I started to walk away he called me and said in Luganda: "Wange" ("Mine/You are mine.")

**M: What are your gifts you bring to the community?**

**A:** The biggest gift I bring to L'Arche is unconditional love for the community. I am a creative, open minded and ambitious person as well as God fearing.

**M: What are the challenges you will face?**

**A:** This is a special community, different to the one I grew up in. Here we have different disabilities, different needs, age groups, cultures and believes. And we all have to live together.

**M: Thank you for making this commitment to be the new community leader. We wish you well.**

**A:** I like to thank the "White Fathers" and L'Arche and I asked for your prayers, so God's spirit can guide my leadership in L'Arche.

*(Monica A. and Andrew Y. were interviewed by Mandy Liedke)*

## We love to party

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2009 we had our annual Christmas party and this year it was a very special one as we combined it with the handover ceremony for our new community leader.



Andrew Youombe handed a symbolic walking stick over to our Board member Matilda

and she passed it on to Monica Angeyo . All three gave thanks to the community and the discernment team, who had worked hard in search for the new leader. There was a lot of joy and sadness at the same time as we welcomed our new leader Monica and said bye to Andrew, who had served the community for 8 years as leader. The entertainment group had prepared beautiful dances with the core members and made everyone get up on their feet to join them getting us in the mood for Christmas. We also got a special treat by a life musical performance by the "Roots men", who had composed a Christmas song for the community. All community members received little gifts handed out by Andrew. Many people attended: parents, friends, families, and children. We were one big family this day as we all ate, danced, talked and celebrated the spirit of L'Arche together.



**Handover ceremony  
Andrew, Matilda, Monica & Kakooza**



## Poetic Corner

In all his creation, God created man last always full of new ideas and with hope burning in his heart

Final destination comes our way, a journey starting with one step, only to be ended with a step  
our virtues leading to eternal life and our vices leading to eternal destruction  
There is a light shining in the right direction  
*By Rebecca*

## "You are a gift"

On the 12th November some members of our community 2009 went on a 12 hour journey to Kenya starting at 5 am. It was a long way. Eventually we arrived at the St Martin community, where we spent 4 days and we also visited L'Arche Kenya. It was a short visit, but we had a great time and we had the privilege to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of St. Martin and the 1st Birthday of L'Arche Kenya. Different groups entertained the guests, but the performances by L'Arche Kenya and Uganda were outstanding. We experienced the theme of the celebration: "You are a gift." first hand. Indeed all the L'Arche communities in the world are a gift to this world not to forget the founder of L'Arche Jean Vanier, who started the first community in 1964 in France. He brought light into this world. God bless him.  
*By Rebecca*

## This is my story

*Nakanjako Maimuna shares her story and thoughts about life in L'Arche*



**Nakkanjako with her fellow Moslem sister Jahlia**

My name is Nakanjako Maimuna coming from the "Monkey Clan". I am talking about the monkey which stays on top of the tree. The clan leader is called Mugema, his responsibility is to welcome the queen of the Buganda kingdom. By tribe I am a Muganda, My father is called Salongo SSezibwa Mustafa. We are a Moslem family and I have many brothers and sisters. My mother's name was Namusoke, she died a long time ago. My father being a Moslem had many women and did not stay with us. During the war, when mum was still alive we were forced to run away from our home and unfortunately my brother died as we were running from all the fighting in the war. We could not carry him home and left him in the bush. Dad stayed in the city. We lived in a remote place in the

village, Mum had no phone to call dad during the war. The war was bad. It was the time when our president Museveni was fighting Obote liberating the country. Afterwards we went near Kampala where dad stayed bringing him the sad news of my brother's death.

Most of the time we lived with my mum's sister, when my mum passed away, her sister took care of me. I called her Mama Margret Nakibuka. We used to rent a small place. They collected bottle tops, locally known as "chokolo", for me putting holes in them and I helped to put strings through them. We sold them. That money helped to pay the rent.

## L'Arche Uganda

I went to school to Ggaba. One day a lady called Jane saw me there telling me about L'Arche. I was invited by Auntie Anne, the former director, for an interview and I passes that is why I am here today. Anne asked me: "Do you like this place?" I answered: "Yes I like it." Jane left me here. We used to invite her for parties, but I have not seen her for long time. At the moment I have a cough, but I want to thank all those who have helped me and ask God to bless them.

In the morning I wake up and go to the bathroom, if I am weak I ask the Aunties to assist me. I tell them "I tried myself to move and I don't want to trouble you much." I am dressed up by the aunties and I crawl slowly to the sitting room to have breakfast with everyone. We don't watch TV at this time. After that we go to thank God, because our life was given to us by God. Then we are brought to the veranda, sometimes we do nothing, which I don't like, because if you don't work, there is no money given to you. At times I like to wash clothes, but they told me that we have only a few basins to use. We like listening to the radio after finishing the house work. We take tea and we just sit on the veranda, sometimes I play games with my friends until we eat lunch. After that we go to rest until afternoon time and then I move slowly to the sitting room. I like to sit with Danny and Rehema. I sit in peace, I don't like to fight, if someone disturbs me I get annoyed. We always get visitors, I like to welcome them and teach them my local language Luganda. Some bring donations to us and we spent time together. I have many friends, for example the wife of Augustine, who invited me to their

house. In the evening there is prayer time followed by supper and then it's time to sleep. At night I rest well. I accept Suubi who makes a lot of noise. She sleeps next to me. We should find a way to help her.

### **About religion**

I enjoy the prayer time in L'Arche, were we all sing together and praise the Lord We have catholic prayers. My mother was a Catholic, so I like this religion; I have no problem with it. My father is a Moslem, which is my faith and I like to practice it as we have Jahlia here, who is also a Moslem. I like her to help me to pray in the Moslem faith. It is good to know your faith, because when you die, people burry you according to your faith. Moslems fast at certain days and don't eat pork.

### **My tasks in the community**

I like to be with others and take care of other's. When I take care of other people, it gives me strength. In the community there are many types of work I do, I help to wash clothes, I stop Kakoza from beating others and I stop Emma from making the chairs dirty, so that visitors find them clean. The house leader is called Beatrice and I have a good relationship with her. I just welcomed her back from her leave.

### **More about my life**

My birthday is in October I like to buy a new dress to wear at my birthday party. I will invite my friend from a shop nearby, who is my fellow Moslem sister. I also invite my sister and my brother, who always brings me back to L'Arche after the holidays. I forgot to mention that I always go home at holiday time to be with my family in the village. We stay in a very small old house, which is leaking, when it rains. My dad is only there on Sundays, because he spends the other days with his other wives. My sister shares a room with me, but when it rains everything gets wet, because of the damaged roof. I like to buy an iron sheet for the leaking house. I would prefer to stay with my brother during my holidays, who is building a house near to the L'Arche community, but I don't know when he will finish building it and if he will inform me. Sometimes he forgets about me.

I like L'Arche, because it is my school and home, when I return after my holidays to L'Arche I always feel happy. I also like to say that Uncle Augustine told me that we are

looking for a new community leader and I would like to say that we will elect on the right day the right person to lead our community.

### **My dreams and wishes**

I like to ask my brother to join me to buy a gift for L'Arche Uganda thanking them, but I am waiting for him to come. When I am moving on my back to the sitting room I have to use my head, which often hurts me, so I like to have a protective head gear to reduce the strain on my head. I wish that God will help me to sing a song recorded by people from a TV station and everyone watches me to sing it. I like to sing "Jesus Beera Nange" ("Jesus be with me"). When people watch me, they will support L'Arche Uganda with the little they have. I like to help. I also like to have new clothes as mine are old now. I thank everyone in L'Arche Uganda. May God bless everyone. "Amina" (Amen)



Tom, Namakula & Nakanjako

**We like to thank you for reading the newsletter and supporting us on our journey. Thank you for giving us hope by being our friend, praying for us and blessing us with financial and material donations. If you like more information about the newsletter or the community, please contact:**

**[boscosjohnw@yahoo.com](mailto:boscosjohnw@yahoo.com) or  
[mandyriedke@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mandyriedke@yahoo.co.uk)**