

JAMES McELHERAN TO UGANDA WITH THROUGH THE ROOF, AUGUST 2010



- **98% of disabled children in developing countries do not receive an education.** (World Health Organisation figure.)
- **40 million of the 115 million children who do not attend school have disabilities.** (UNESCO figure.)

THE AIMS OF THROUGH THE ROOF'S INTEGR8 INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

- For all disabled children in developing countries to be free to fulfil their God-given potential.
- This is achieved through inspiring a spirit of inclusion within their communities.
- A team equip teachers, Christian leaders and community workers with practical training to enable disabled children to participate in community life.

Objectives of Visit

To:

- provide training, mentoring, resources, encouragement and inspiration to include more disabled children in community life;
- educate teachers, parents and churches about disability from a Christian perspective; and
- demonstrate God's love for disabled people;

- It cost Through The Roof £1300 to send me to Uganda, and they asked me to pay half of that amount. People were so generous that I was able to pay the full cost, plus a little bit more!
- I find it a bit difficult to learn some things, though I nearly always get there in the end. In English law I am counted as being disabled.
- I was very surprised when Through The Roof asked me to be the 'role model' on their trip. They described me as a 'young role model with personal experience of disability and I was to be the Team Photographer.
- My job was also to speak about disability and Christian faith from my own experience and to show that disabled people can have very full lives and achieve a lot.



Tim, the Project Leader; is on the far left, you know who's next, then its Kerry - who helped me and talked about living with her disabled sister - and then we have Andrew, who is a teacher. He has a disabled daughter who had my role when an Integr8 team went to India.

Our room is actually a converted garage



Unfortunately, I haven't got a picture of everyone from Through The Roof's partner organisation, Responsive Initiative for Learning Disabilities; RILD to their friends...



...But, here is one of their team, William, who was trying to get my presentation to work on his laptop.

This is Holly, The Head
Teacher of Wellspring,
where we were based.





And this is me making a presentation in a church.
Next to me is Daniel - he is a teacher and
translated my presentation.



WELLSPRING

- > Health Centre 24hrs. Dentist
- > Nursery & Primary School
- > Business/Housing Development
- > Wellspring Christian Fellowship

TEL: 0414505771 0772310377

Web site: www.wellspring.or.ug



Oh yes, Wellspring. It is near the capital city Kampala and includes a nursery, schools, a medical centre and training for church leaders.



We lodged at Wellspring for the whole time we were in Uganda. We did some of our activities there, but travelled to other schools and churches by car.

What The Team Did In 11 Days!

- Delivered 4 x one-day workshops for 190 teachers, pastors, parents and NGOs;
- Delivered 3 x evening seminars at a church for 30 people
- Preached at two morning church services;
- Delivered mini workshops at a morning session in a primary school for 700 pupils;
- Presented at two church services and staff devotions at the Wellspring Centre

...and some more!

- Provided over £200 worth of appropriate inclusive resources and equipment such as Parachute Games, Sports/Games, Arts/Crafts, Music
- Provided skills and knowledge to RILD team-members



One very scary day, I made my presentation to a school with 700 students.
Here's some pictures of the children and the school.



This school had indoor classrooms



Here's the same class again.



...and this time, with Tim, playing a parachute game.
More about these in a minute.

These class rooms are at another school.
Are these inside, or inside out?





These are the children when they are not at school.

Ah, here's a parachute game again!

These are teachers learning all the things you can do, so that they can use them to teach all sorts of skills.



For example, with different types of parachute games, you can learn to work together as a team, to trust people, and use the right physical movements.



Here is Kerry talking about her experiences with her disabled sister and showing how some disabled children can learn more when they are stimulated by interesting things.

Kerry brought a suitcase full of things that can be used to do this.

We visited some families at home. We gave this little boy the pink feather you see here from Kerry's collection. He just loved feeling and looking at it.





Here's a church – a bit more like what we are used to in England!

Feedback received from the 229 delegates attending training all positive, and included the following:

- learnt that disability is not a weakness and is not witchcraft;
- disabled people are special and made in God's image;
- want to encourage positive attitudes from parents and teachers, for them to be patient and encouraging;
- 'want to encourage disabled that it is not inability';
- need to Increase resources for teachers;
- need to work together to produce materials;
- 'head teachers are to ensure support and assistance for implementing inclusion'.

What delegates say they will do and now feel

- “Now I can help my class to co-operate with disabled members in class and encourage them to love them also.”
- “Encourage other parents to send disabled to school.”
- “As a pastor I’m going to give more time to slow learners.”
- “ I will start preaching to those people the love of Christ.”
- “I am going to make learning material to bring in the slow learners.”
- “I will support disabled persons to engage themselves in co-curricular activities because I’ve learnt they can manage if supported.”
- “Dedicate my life to helping children with special needs.”

One teacher couldn't get over the fact that I was just 16, had learning disabilities and Autism, and had come all the way from North East England to Africa.

She asked 'how could you possibly manage that?' I just said that I didn't know, 'I guess I'm adventurous'. She said, 'you are adventurous and determined, a very determined young man'.

Joseph, the church leader who was my translator, started off thinking that he should pray for disabled people to be healed; he could not accept them just for the people they are. He and I became very friendly and, by the end of the trip, he realised that disabled people had just as much to offer as anyone else. He could accept me as me, a Christian young man who happened to have a slight disability.

A card to James' family from RILD (Ugandan partner organisation)

Thank you for sending James. He has
been inspiring and brought us hope for
many,

God bless you.

William

**Nothing to do with what we did,
but you must see these two pictures!**



Yes, it rains in Uganda!



...and these are soldier ants.
They are really huge!

We could do with some signs like this in England!

**DISABILITY IS NOT
INFECTIOUS**
Love and Play with Children with
Disabilities

