

## Looking back on 20 years in Uganda



After ministering in Uganda for almost 20 years, I returned to Germany in December 2019 and now I live in Kloster Mülhausen, Grefrath.

In the remote bush area in the Kibaale District, I established schools together with 6 American co-sisters, starting from kindergarten up to the first graduation from high school in 2019. Many generous people of good will like those of St. Benedikt parish, Grefrath, supported us financially. My special thanks go to them. Thanks to these donations, we could give many poor children a good solid education.

Although Uganda has developed during these last years, the people in the Kibaale District are still poor. There is no infrastructure, no industry, no transport system, and roads were only built in 2019. At least we have electricity since 2016 and since 1 March 2019, there is running water. With the help of American and German donations, the Sisters of Notre Dame have been able to drill a well and to lay a water pipe which is available not only to our houses but also to the people in the village.

Except the kindergarten, our schools are pure boarding schools because we are situated in a remote bush area where the ways are difficult and dangerous. That means that all the children must pay school fees. That money is used to pay the salaries and the supplies for about 900 students and employees. Compared to other private schools, our school fees are not high, however, some parents cannot afford the amount. Then we often allow them to give a contribution in kind, for example potatoes, tomatoes, corn, mangoes, papayas etc.

Meanwhile, our educational work shows a lot of success. In the state ranking of the best schools, our co-educative St. Julie elementary school takes first place in the district and our Notre Dame high school for girls the 6<sup>th</sup> place in all of Uganda.

Sr. M. Bernarde Derichsweiler, SND