

From Millionaire to Mud Hut

Jon Pedley is making a big change. He is giving up his life as a businessman for a life of helping others. He is trading his beautiful farmhouse in England for life in a mud hut in Uganda, East Africa.



Pedley admits that he has not always led a very positive life. At times he drank too much and got in trouble with the law. "I've lived a very selfish life," says Pedley. "I've always put the pursuit of money in front of everything else. As long as I was all right, I didn't care who I was hurting."

But a visit to Uganda in 2007 gave Pedley a new outlook on life. He was amazed at what he saw and how much the people there appreciated the work he was doing. "I worked there for a few days and these people who have nothing were thanking me by giving me sacks of potatoes, which is a fortune for them," he said.

NEWS WORD BOX

positive pursuit
appreciate fortune
organization facilities

Now Pedley is selling his business, his \$1.5 million farmhouse, and his expensive car -- and moving into a hut made of mud and boards in a small Ugandan village. There he will help run an organization that hopes to improve the quality of life for people in the village of Kigazi. He will help to build schoolrooms for children and tanks to hold clean water for villagers. Today, people in Kigazi must walk two miles to a hospital, so Pedley will help to build doctors' offices, too.

Pedley's organization will also work with English teenagers who are in trouble. The teens will be sent to a "camp" in Uganda that Pedley will run. The teens will live in mud huts and help to build water, health, and education facilities for kids in Kigazi, many of whom have lost their parents to poverty or disease. Pedley hopes the teens will see a side of life that might help them turn around their own lives and set them on a new, more positive, path.

FACTS ABOUT UGANDA

- Uganda covers an area about the same size as the state of Michigan.
- Uganda is home to 27 million people. (The state of California has 36 million people.)
- It might surprise you to learn that English is one of the main languages in Uganda.
- On average, a person in Uganda is expected to live about 53 years.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Jon Pedley is giving up everything to help improve life for people in Kigazi.
Could you ever picture yourself doing something like Pedley is doing?
Why or why not?