

Weekly Log Questions

What went well?

(The progress I made; what was achieved and done)

My final week here, I finally made strides on the Mama Ngina partnership! On Friday, Thomas and I stopped by the centre for a quick meeting, but could not stay long due to a tragedy at the centre (one of the small babies passed away); Tuli had to handle all the arrangements for that quickly. Thomas and I returned the next day to sign the MOU on August 10th. On August 15th and 16th I returned to Mama Ngina's, bringing Sally Oppenheim with me (a volunteer from Australia). After the two introductory sessions I unfortunately had to return to Canada on August 16th but I debriefed the Better Me staff and volunteers about next steps. On August 20th Sally along with two new volunteers returned to the centre. I am immensely proud of and very excited for this new partnership as it continues past me and makes a sustainable and meaningful impact on the community, helping the understaffed orphanage.



Left to right: Hellen (Tuli) Apiyo, Mama Ngina Centre Manager; Jake Barton (me), UofT Laidlaw Scholar; Mama Ngina witness to the signing (I missed her name); Thomas Ogalo, Better Me Program Coordinator and my project (LIA) supervisor.

What could have been done differently?

(Things that did not get done and/or could be changed)

Ideally I could have spent even more time at Mama Ngina's during my last week in Kenya, however, it was such a whirlwind and it all worked out in the end. I apologize this section is not longer, I usually keep a journal of each day's events as well as what worked and what could have gone better, however, due to the busyness of this final week I was unable to keep one and am having difficulties remembering what could have gone better.

What did I learn about myself when working with others?

(Contributions, behaviours, and [values](#) I exhibited)

I believe the ultimate success of my LIA lies in my *determination* (a Laidlaw value) as I was *committed, focused, insistent, and resilient* to see this partnership through. I was able to contribute to the beginning of the partnership, attending the first two sessions, and brought Sally with me so she could continue the transition after I left. This week was one of great determination as it was very go-go-go, as I made my final contributions to Better Me's initiatives, wrapped up my LIA work, and said some tearful goodbyes. Something I didn't realize until the last day is just how invested I became in the Better Me team (staff and volunteers) and the children we work with. On my last day, August 16th, I spent the morning at Mama Ngina's before heading to the Remand Home to say goodbye to the kids there. Rushing to the airport at the end of the day, saying goodbye to the team was one of the most difficult things ever! I'm not an emotional person but I'd be lying if I said I didn't cry while saying goodbye. I think this shows just how much I value my colleagues, who truly are friends first, and the work we did.

What did I learn about leadership?

(Leadership [attributes](#) and insights I developed)

This question was more or less answered in the above.

What do I want to develop or focus on next?

(What I still need to develop)

I still need to develop my time management skills. It would be dishonest to say that all the delays towards signing the MOU and starting to work with Mama Ngina's were out of my control. The ability to stay disciplined and complete all my goals in a timely manner as well as maintain a work-life balance is a skill that I seem to be getting worse at, not better – surely this is due to the increasing responsibilities and complexity of life. When I return to Canada I will look into various strategies to help rebuild this skill and take my leadership abilities to the next level.