

# Friends of ACET Newsletter

GO... !!

December 2009

## EDITORIAL:

World AIDS day is just past and Christmas is round the corner. As we think of the two events, one of sadness, illness and disease and despair (a pandemic) and yet another of hope, celebration, a season of giving, it's always a challenge to bring the two themes together.

In this edition, we share a story of Jacob, and the stark reality of the life circumstances that he lives in - a pointer to many other situations that we may not be aware of.

As we seek to solve Jacob's problem, may we be reminded of many others that may not yet have had an opportunity to be helped.

May the season of hope galvanize our strength and desire to help many more people during this season and long after it is gone.

*Editor*

## NAKJUS PROJECT UPDATE:

### A Christmas dream that needs rebuilding ...

Many of you, our readers, are familiar with Nakulabye Junior School, commonly referred to as NAKJUS. What many are not aware of however, is the roots that led to its founding. Moses Zzimbe, the current Headmaster, was touched by the number of deaths in the community. Many had been people that he had known and some were his peers.

## NAKJUS PROJECT UPDATE:

### A Christmas dream... Cont'd

Being a community leader, he could not ignore the problem nor could he wish it away – 'perhaps somebody would do something'. One of his close friends died, and Moses supported the family. His friend's brother, "Ed" (not his real name) decided to go to Rwanda, abandoning his children to his elderly mother.

Everything changed in October.

Jacob, (not his real name) was looking forward to Christmas; the year had been good, and NAKJUS was good and drowning in its reputation in the community. But all this changed for Jacob when his father, Ed, returned from Rwanda. Ed was a nuisance; he came home every evening drunk and would even soil his clothes. Jacob was shocked. His school work deteriorated and he started dodging school. His grandmother was so overtaken by her son (Ed's) behaviour that she had no time for Jacob... things started changing and the grandmother could not cope.

In trying to cope, the grandmother decided to take Jacob to his mother, a woman with whom Jacob had no close relationship. This devastated Jacob. The last we heard was the grandmother's own narration, "I feel like I betrayed Jacob... I can still hear his voice in my dreams... *'I'm sorry grandma, I will not do it again, I want to stay with you'...*"

This experience was a rude awakening about the rehabilitation that needs to continually happen as one works with the children in the Nakulabye area. Can we create a Christmas dream for this boy? Yes, we can...collectively we can! Efforts are underway to help this family reunite and regain ways to support itself in a holistic manner.

## ADVOCACY- FAITH BASED RECOGNITION:

As part of this year's World AIDS Day Celebrations, the Faith Based response, coordinated by ANERELA (Africa Network of Religious Leaders Living with and /or Affected by AIDS) hosted a joint event seeking to highlight the role played by the religious leaders in the fight against AIDS.

There is a growing concern that in many of the national functions, all that is asked of the religious leaders is the opening and /or closing prayer! This situation needs to be redressed – hence the organizing of events that seek to do exactly that. It was an advocacy event, not a complaint but rather one seeking to put credit where it is due.

## YWCA - NKOKONJERU:

YWCA Nkokonjeru branch is a small initiative of widows that ACET Uganda has supported for the past 8 years. The initiative was started by widows in their 50s (plus) and only recently was it joined by younger women. They were concerned about what AIDS was doing in their midst. They struggled to mobilize resources to help the needy. They started off by rearing animals and selling off the produce to buy land. On this plot of land they intended to put a nursery and a vocational school (tailoring and carpentry). They have managed to do two things – the nursery and the tailoring school.

They have struggled to raise resources to construct a carpentry facility. ACET Uganda has supported the payment of salaries for the Nursery school teachers with some of the resources it gets from FAU. There is need for more strategic advice and input to facilitate them as they look to the future – "which way should we go and why?"

## **NEWS IN BRIEF**

### **Rev Martin to ride to East Africa - Feb 2010**

The dates are set, yes, Rev Martin Williams, Rector at St James Gerrard's Cross will be biking across East Africa with 2 other people. Talking of "love Africa"... Martin and Team shall start off in Mombasa. Details of the route will be available soon. The bikes are already on their way to Africa by ship!

### **Rianna's Fund Trustees to Visit Uganda in Jan-Feb 2010**

The Rianna's Fund Trustees will visit the projects they support in Uganda and Kenya. They will visit ACET Uganda as they review and seek to add to the number of projects they support in Uganda.

Rianna's Fund contributed financial support for school construction in a location about 40 km North West of Kampala, generously supported the rebuild of NAKJUS and pays the tuition fees of 10 children at NAKJUS.

Rianna's Fund has also contributed support for the feeding of children at Tumaine Children's Home.

### **Construction of Primary School at Bikka...**

Rianna's Fund has also contributed resources to the construction of a primary school class room block at Bikka, a village North of Kampala. This is a project that has been supported by Action for Children, a child focussed non government organisation that has a mandate to address needs of vulnerable children. The structure has 6 class rooms which have been completed to the roofing level and 2 of them have been made ready for use.

### **New Church Partnership:**

Tear Netherlands is exploring opportunities where it can be a link between churches in the Netherlands and churches in Uganda. The pilot experience will seek to create added benefit on both sides.

Peter Trommel from Tear Netherlands visited Uganda in September to discuss this concept. A few churches in the Mbale area were visited to test out the feasibility. ACET and Tear are now working out a basic framework that would yield positive results, based on a model of how ACET has worked with St James. There will be a few modifications based on the learning needs of the churches in Netherlands and Mbale. We see a move of God – the growth of linkages between North and South.

### **Comprehensive Approaches to HIV/AIDS Prevention**

Tearfund UK and Tear Netherlands organized a workshop for their partners in early November to explore ways of improving the work done (effectives and evidence based). The workshop saw elaborate discussion of the SAVE model (an acronym for Safer practices, Access to treatment, Voluntary and routine counselling and Empowerment). The public health approach seeks to take HIV /AIDS prevention to the next level - beyond what ABC (Abstinence, Be Faithful and Condom use) could achieve on its own. The discussions were lively and not free of debate. A follow up workshop shall be held next year.

### **CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' (Isaiah: 9:6).

### **St James Partnership News:**

#### **Visits:**

Paul Kato and Daudi Talima visited the St James community in October, further cementing the relationship between ACET and St James. Daudi had been at the helm of organizing many of the exposure/learning visits so we all knew that he would be a star of sorts... and he was.

The two were hosted in a number of homes and were able to share news about the various church partnerships in Uganda.

Paul and Daudi also managed to find time to spend an evening with members of the FAU executive, sharing and discussing various issues of concern, including NAKJUS.

They were also privileged to participate in a Willow Creek leadership event hosted by St James. It was a great time of renewal and energizing. Since their return, Paul has been able to share lessons learnt with his local church leadership!

Pastor Paul Lubaale, overseer of CFE (Centre for Evangelism) and Moses Samanya, a local Pastor and social worker, were also invited to be part of St James awareness week this November. It was from an event like this, 2 years ago, that St James was able to raise interest in Africa and the church started a spiritual journey. Many peoples' eyes have been opened and hearts and thoughts changed towards what they now see as their role/partnership with Africa, an expression of their faith.

\*\*\*\*\*

Jacky Hughes, Nigel Young and Andrew Laughland, visited Uganda in a capacity building support visit. There were a couple of activities done, HR and technical discussions held.

This is seen as a backbone to many support visits that seek to position ACET as a Centre of Good Practice.