

Friends of ACET Newsletter

GO...!!

Welcome to this edition!

Happy New Year! The Christmas season was so hectic for us and our partners that we postponed writing/sending out this Newsletter. We were involved with new partnerships in the country during this period which called for continuous technical support in the field.

The newsletter presents highlights from the previous calendar year and some of the issues that are overflows into 2009.

Editor

Mixed Feelings in Northern Uganda Region ..again?

The past few weeks have brought mixed emotions and feelings in all of us. Following a lull in the fighting in Northern Uganda, a prolonged period of peace and quiet, a joint operation was launched by the 3 armies of Uganda, Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo. To them enough was enough, either the Rebel leader signs the peace pact or we 'finish him'.

There has been a mixed reaction to all these military manoeuvres.

We are committed to putting the situation before God. We want peace and quiet for the people in Northern Uganda, we want to move together as one unit – one country. We request of you that you pray without ceasing. Pray with us that there shall be lasting peace in the region – one day ... soon!

NakJus PROJECT UPDATE....

What a school Environment can do for a child!!

It's been a whole academic year now and yes, the story of their old school seems to be so far fetched, when you try to describe it to people. "It couldn't have been that bad, could it?" It's only the photos that finally help people see how bad the school environment was.

There has been a change in the aspirations of the pupils themselves! Many seem to have a more positive attitude to life and the future. Lorna Shuttleworth from Friends of ACET Uganda visited the school in the 4th quarter of the year... she was amazed at the change in the pupils attitudes. Being a regular visitor it was easier for her to notice how big the change was in comparison to the last time she had seen the children in the old school location! We folk, who see the children almost everyday had not been able to see that marked difference.

A big Thank you to all the prayers, thoughts and financial contributions that made this a reality!

Food and fuel pump prices increase!

The year has seen many challenges in relation to food prices. The prices have continued to rise, even though the situation has not been as dire as in West Africa where riots were a common sight, the problems have been acute. Many schools shortened their school terms from time to time and others increased the school fees. This will have lots of implications on orphans that ACET is assisting around the country.

The situation has been aggravated by the ever increasing fuel pump prices in the last past 5 months with a 20% increment for both petrol and diesel as well as other petroleum products.

The orphanage in Kakira has been severely affected and we are exploring alternative ideas to food security (a more long term goal). ACET has started a few partnerships with Send a Cow as a few of the first steps. Other interventions shall involve exploration with Income generation projects/activities with a strong business intention in mind. This will be piloted and lessons documented.

From Goats to Cows..

Practical lessons in Entrepreneurship!

This is the path that a number of orphans that received goats from ACET Uganda decided to take. After raising their goats, and getting technical support from the CFE (Centre for Evangelism) extension workers, the young families saw their goats ('herds') grow. With forward sightedness and putting their lessons into practice, the young people exchanged their goats for cows... 4 well groomed goats for a cow! When I first got the news I thought to myself.. "oh my God, they didn't like the goats".. our gift was inappropriate!"

Well, I was wrong, the children had been schooled so well in the school of 'entrepreneurship! They were building wealth so that they could look after their families better. They now have cows, chickens, rabbits, a garden and some had more goats as well. These needy families taught the village a number of things. We have seen the people sow seeds of self sustainability. In a recent drought in the region, many of the child headed household were places that some of the community people went for assistance! The people (young families) are closely monitored by CFE and have food security as a critical component. They have become a light in the region. We are seeking ways and partnerships to encourage growth in the 'entrepreneurship' mind. We desire to move people from dependence to independence.

ACET News Snippets:

Exploring Positive Masculinities!

ACET Uganda has been involved in a series of meetings that are exploring the whole concept of positive masculinities. Following findings of the feminisation of the epidemic, there has been a move to explore and discuss the role of the prevalent perceptions of Masculinities in the current pandemic. The term 'positive Masculinities' was coined by some theologians as a basis for provoking dialogue, dialogue that will lead to radical changes on the continent. This in one way informs our programming aspects as well as material development options.

ACET Staff in Holland ...

Paul Kabunga and Daudi Talima visited Holland courtesy of Tear Holland. Paul Kato KABUNGA was part of a reproductive Health Consultation helping to shed light with the FBO (Faith based organisations in Holland) about the Ugandan (African) response to HIV/AIDS interventions. Paul met with some Dutch Parliamentarians as well. It was a good meeting and Paul KABUNGA was able to challenge some stereotypical thinking about Gender empowerment.. it caused a stir you can imagine

Daudi TALIMA visited a few weeks later. The nature of his meeting was a strategic forum seeking to explore Tear Holland's interventions on the continent. The meeting was very fruitful and created lots of opportunities for partnerships.

Tumaini facelift ..

The work in Kakira orphanage continues. In the recent past, the home has received a roof repair and the construction of an underground tank. The presence of the underground tank has helped protect the time that the children were spending going to the well to fetch water. The home is soon acquiring an electric pump. What a transformation for the kids, from fetching water to there's water in the taps all the time.

Other developments: In related developments, ACET staff have visited Tumaini a couple of times to get a clearer understanding of the "pull and push factors"... effort is being made to document the findings of this small survey "what is causing the continuous flow of". This document shall be used as an advocacy and education tool to the community to see what role that various players shall have in stemming the flow of children onto the "streets" of the sugar estate.

Child Sacrificing causes a stir

The last quarter of 2008 saw a rapid increase in media reporting on child sacrificing. There is a lot of uncertainty among parents, as one may expect, and leaders of various schools. We embarked on alerting children to be more vigilant – as an interim measure. We are planning lots of sessions for young people on the subject with an aim of helping reduce the risks that this may cause.

The government and development agencies are working at clamping this down – through courts of law as well as advocacy seeking to see that appropriate legislation is enacted and enforced.

Prefects Curriculum...

A prefects curriculum is in place and a few trial runs are planned. January 2009 shall see an increase in activity in schools to training the young leaders in leaderships skills, responsible lifestyle choices and other competencies that the young leaders need in management of self and of those that they lead.

The project seeks to address both the push and pull factors that lead to early sexual debut, early marriage, sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

Partnership Box

Monitoring and Support Visits:

Tim Raby, Tearfund Country representative visited the country for a second time in November 2008. The new representative is keen to see the scale up of a consolidated church response in the country. He plans to return in January /February 2009 to further develop avenues that shall build new partnerships.

Jane Machira, and a Regional Team, from Christian Aid Nairobi office visited ACET Uganda among others. The visit focused on helping provide a wider understanding of Christian Aid work in the region and also explore avenues of possible expansion of the ACET –Christian Aid partnership.