

Friends of ACET Newsletter

Peace!!

Welcome to this edition!

This period has been one of the busiest periods we can remember for a long time. The Beginning of Year for ACET has often been slow. 2008 was different, we found ourselves hosting an international conference, then hosting two exposure (learning) visits two days after the end of the conference, then a few other visitors in February. It has been great to host all these people.

The Nakulabye School project has kept us very busy and we have tried to send photos regularly. We desire to open the new school on 3 March 2008.

Editor

Peace Deal with LRA!

The **Uganda Government** and the rebels of the **Lords Resistance Army (LRA)** finally put their signatures to a peace deal that is bringing an end to the hostilities that have been in Northern Uganda. This was welcome news. It is a big relief to the region and finally people can start living!

The change in living conditions is going to have implications on our work. There will be settlement issues – since many people will actually be starting life all over, while the development projects started will need to take on a different dimension to factor the geographical spread and related issues.

The ACET Uganda team will need wisdom about how to deal with the numerous issues that present themselves. Please remember to pray especially for the team in Kitgum which is directly facing the changing situation.

NakJus PROJECT UPDATE....

Phase #2 - Classrooms close to completion ...!

September saw the start of ACET's project work and the drainage channel. January was the beginning of Phase 2 – the school itself! The project took a late start because of a number of "things" – the City Council delays, the numerous surveys that had to be taken and then the natural factors – the rain!

Well, we are glad to share that since the work started about 95% of P1-P7 is done. The classrooms got painted this week and with bright colours too. The kids keep visiting the site in the evening since it is right by the well. They are eagerly waiting to get into the new school. Of course they stand a distance off since the builders are not that friendly to children. They feel that they are a nuisance rather than offering them time to answer and respond to their curiosity.

A few children have asked if "there will be a boarding section/dormitory" or "whether the school is going to have a gate so that 'not everybody sees' what you are doing". Is there going to be a swing and a slide or a sand pit?" The questions are many. The children see the school as a new beginning for them, something to finally be proud of.

The community is now getting excited too. The area where the school is located used to be a lonely place where gangs of thieves would waylay unsuspecting travellers. They are glad that the area has literally been transformed.

The relocation of the local well was put on hold and instead we decided to beautify the surrounding area. This got people excited, now we shall have a clean and safer environment at the well! We are glad for the partnership that we share with many of you – the readers. May God bless your generosity for changing Nakulabye Junior School.

The school moves on Sunday March 2nd.

Finally ... Peace in Kenya!

We watched TV and followed the Kenya elections with no passion at all – in the beginning that is. Then things started changing; the violence that erupted, the scale of death was a rude shock and a wake up call to many Ugandans.

We started praying for the situation there earnestly. We prayed with passion and genuine concern. Some Ugandans had relatives there, but when we heard of deaths in Churches we knew things were taking on a very dangerous twist.

In Uganda we started feeling the repercussions, petrol prices quadrupled, while diesel prices trebled at the peak of the crisis. Insurance on vehicles and other goods being imported went up. We were feeling the squeeze, so was Rwanda, and the DRC too.

The recent news of the peace deal being signed brought a sigh of relief. We shared in the Joy of a break through. The process was handled by Kofi Annan.. He did his best, at certain points he got frustrated and almost gave up. It's good he kept going, as the old adage goes – *it is darkest before dawn!*

One lesson we learned, we are all the same. If it were not for the grace of God, we all have the potential to be very nasty and do things that would shock all those around us.

Please pray that the peace in Kenya holds. Please pray that there is healing of the deep seated tribal sentiments and enmity – neighbours turned onto each other. How do we heal this? There is need for genuine reconciliation – and this is beyond what the politicians can offer.

ACET News Snippets:

Daudi in Ethiopia...

Daudi Talima has been offered a Postgraduate long-term course tailor-made for development workers in Africa by the University of Manchester. It's a modular structure and will see Daudi travelling frequently to Ethiopia. It's sponsored by Tearfund UK.

Rianna's Fund set to visit...

ACET Uganda will host a team from Rianna's Fund from March 3rd to March 10th 2008. The team will grace an Open Day at Nakulabye Junior School on Friday 7th March in the school's NEW premises. The team will also visit different project sites around the country to see who to partner with and how to help. The team will be headed by Steve Davenport.

ACET UK Staff In Kitgum

A team of people from ACET UK, Staff and Board members visited Kitgum in January 2008. The team included Patrick and Sheila Dixon, Hazel Vinson, (Board Member) and Glyn MacAulay (chair of the ACET UK Board), and Liz Dixon. The visit was long – considering the team had just got off the plane from UK, they travelled another 5 hours to Gulu then on to Kitgum the following day. They visited the Internally Displaced Persons camps and a few other projects.

It helped the team appreciate the challenges of Northern Uganda – the children's plight, HIV in the Camps, the small projects bringing hope in such a difficult situation. The ACET Team in Kitgum was encouraged by the visit – the fact that the ACET UK team was able to take the risk to make the long journey to Kitgum. This was a bigger encouragement than the visiting team will ever know.

Thank you for taking the risk to come and understand what the team is going through and the situation in Northern Uganda.

The Fabians fall in Love with Mityana ..

Peter Fabian, one of the staff in ACET UK brought his family to visit Uganda. It was the children's first visit time and a very memorable one too. The children visited a family friend in Mityana and stayed there a while. While there they got involved in practical work and connections. Their highlight was playing in some of the local football teams. Hmm.. Boy weren't they good!

The family visited Nakulabye Junior School and gave out two balls - used practice balls from Liverpool FC. You should have seen the excitement. It would have been better for the majority of the group if the balls were from Arsenal (especially since the Headmaster is an Arsenal fan), but Liverpool was good enough for them. Our own Paul Kato is a diehard Liverpool fan – so for him, the gift was excellent. We'll leave it at that – we wouldn't want our readers to be divided (or even boycott our newsletter) over the football teams that they support! Many youth follow the Premiership, so having such a direct connection was a blessing!

St James's Church visit #2 ...

A team of 6 people visited Uganda from St James, Gerrards Cross. This is the first trip after the church's Love Africa Week. The team wants to partner with a number of projects/churches in Uganda. It is seeking to expose as many of its congregation to Uganda and Africa – so that the people have a feel and see what meaningful impact /contribution they can make.

The Church is on a spiritual journey. Clearly led by God to get involved, they are now moving in obedience to his leading. We are glad to be a part of that move of God. Of course, many do experience "culture shocks" at a number of things. Poverty glaring at them from the eyes of young children is the hardest for many of the team members to bear. The enthusiasm of the church is incredible. We shall be hosting a team in March and then another team in August, and who knows, we may host another and another.. and another!!

They should be warned however. "those that drink the waters of the Nile some day will return". In layman's terms this warning simply means that once you visit Uganda, the bug will bite you and you will come again... and again. Ask Margaret and Robert Mortimer, Lorna Shuttleworth, Sheila and Patrick Dixon, Rev Martin Williams, Peter Fabian if you have any doubts (and the list is even longer!).

The ACET Conference ...

ACET International held its Global Forum in January. It was a big gathering of Christian development workers and ministry leaders. It was good to see the number of new ACET initiatives that had started since the last forum (three years earlier) and we are trusting God that this trend may grow.

The fellowship between Eastern Europe and Africa, India and UK, Asia and the US all brought a unique mix to the event. A steering committee was elected to govern the Alliance in a more strategic manner – to foster a stronger bond and sense of family, accountability to certain standards and quality of service delivery.

There are many "Crazy People" on fire to do something – this something needs to be packaged well, that's the task.

Partnership Box

Monitoring and Support Visits:

Christian Brown from Tearfund came to visit ACET. Christian came to cement the relationship that ACET has developed as a lead Agency for the Tearfund AIDS work in Uganda. A proposal needed to be finalised before the project kicks off.

Isaac Kironde, is the Tearfund member of staff in charge of developing relationships with black majority churches and Tearfund. He came to look at projects and partners that would help illuminate possible channels of partnership – spiritual, developmental and otherwise.