

Friends of ACET Newsletter

Visitors!

Welcome to this edition!

This quarter saw ACET receive a number of strategic visitors from both within and without the country. We hosted a team from Tearfund, St James Church, Gerrards Cross, a visit from a representative of Friends of ACET Uganda and also hosted a Board member of ACET UK.

This newsletter takes on a general information layout to give a little more detail about the wider contextual things and not only ACET programmes. We hope it encourages you to think about the HIV pandemic with a view of what else we could do about it.

Editor

Decongestion - roll out

The mood within the camps has continued to improve as more and more people see the *light at the end of the tunnel*. The decongestion of camps to smaller camps, referred to as satellite camps, with a 6th of the population and closer to people's original geographical areas, has been rolling out smoothly. As always there are different opinions and reactions. A few people feel that the life in the camps has been easier (social services, piped water, toilets, security) and have expressed a hesitation to go back to their villages where water sources could be as far as 3kms away. There are issues of land that are starting to cause concern. Children who have lost their parents are at risk of losing their land, since they do not know the landmarks that reflected their boundaries. These issues call for wisdom, insight, advocacy and prayer if ACET is to have a meaningful contribution. (Inheritance rights of children, unsurveyed land, and greed are all part of the issues at the fore).

NakJus PROJECT UPDATE....

Nakulabye Junior School

Nakulabye Junior School's plans are rolling out. In the past quarter we saw a growth in the number of individuals and institutions that want to help the school. This, in part is due to the websites that carry information on NakJus. As its profile grows, so has the need to develop systems and mechanism to handle multiple stakeholders.

- The architectural plans and drawings for the school were drawn and circulated to a couple of partners including Friends of ACET.
- The initial response to the drawings was good but the costings that followed threw many of us into a slight panic. Further analysis revealed that the dimensions of the new school were too large. The architects were using international recommended sizes (ratio of pupils per space). Forty five students in a class would need about 12 x 8 metres! Those of you who have been there would probably agree that such a replacement of the school would have been a complete misfit, to say the least.
- The plans have gone back to the firm and the dimensions are being readjusted. The site plan is also going to change slightly to allow more room for playing fields.
- One of the office bank accounts has been designated for the project and can receive direct payments from wellwishers and donors. Further details may be obtained from Robert Mortimer or Cilla Oldfield of Friends of ACET Uganda.

Adjusted timeline:

- Submission of Papers to the Kampala City Council - June 2007; Approval of plans - August 2007; Construction commences - August 2007;
- Completion of phase # 1 - December 2007;
- Relocation of school to the new Site - Jan 2008 (for first term);

St James Church visit:

ACET Uganda was visited by a team of officials from St James Church in Gerrards Cross, UK. The team was in Uganda for 7 days and it was literally a flying visit - from Kampala (central) to Jinja, Iganga, (Eastern Uganda) to Soroti (North East), then to Gulu (Northern Uganda). Wow.. it was a schedule that ... well..., all is well that ends well.

The team were touched about the HIV situation in Uganda, saw first hand the effects of the long war of Northern Uganda and went away with a lot to chew over with the church mission group which had sent them. We anticipate a tripartite partnership with them, ACET and Tearfund UK once all the synthesis has been done.

ACET UK Board visit:

Hazel Vinson, a member of the Board of ACET UK came for a three day visit. She had the opportunity of visiting the Kampala office, and then went to Mbale and Kapchorwa. The drive was long but she enjoyed every bit of the journey and exposure to various HIV interventions within the region. Hazel, we found out, is a regular visitor to Uganda thus fulfilling that old adage.. "*those that taste the waters of the Nile some day will return!!*" (Don't get them wrong, I suppose it refers to the bottled mineral water and not the river.. ha

New Staff:

ACET has got new blood to replace the staff that left. We are grateful to God for these new additions. They are a Godsend. They are on a steep learning curve as we desire to quickly help them assimilate and be able to make their contribution.

The Staff are: *Clare Nakyanzi*, Office Manager; *Brian Lubwama* Admin Assistant; *Rose, Janet* and *Sara*, all Field Officers.

ACET News Snippets:

Paul and David to Visit the UK...

Paul KABUNGA and David KABISWA will be visiting the UK at the end of June. They will have the opportunity to meet with some members from the Friends of ACET. They are looking at this as being an opportunity to share some of the development plans for Nakulabye Junior School, NakJus, and have an opportunity to share prayer requests and general fellowship with the group that has been special in its supportive role. We are grateful to God for this group, its wisdom, support and enthusiasm.

International Conference for Jan 2008...

ACET International is organising a Conference in January of 2008. The event shall be hosted in Uganda by ACET (U). We are glad to play host, albeit this time in a more background role. We shall be glad to be of service and the preparations have already begun! For full details, please contact Patrick and Sheila Dixon and/or officials at ACET UK offices.

Nakulabye Junior School – new term update

Moses Zimbe, Headmaster, reports that the new term has started well with good attendance. In the previous term some children were not going to school because they did not have pens and exercise books. The scheme funded by the Friends to provide scholastic materials to the most needy children, is working well. The programme to provide small gifts and prizes to mark success is proving to be successful and the enhanced maize porridge now with sugar and rice is much appreciated. There are training plans in place for the Headmaster and other staff. Thanks to internet links donations have been given by schools and colleges in UK and Canada. The headmaster concludes - *It is still raining the whole place is almost muddy. We are lucky we can't spend the day without sunshine.*

Pastor Nicholas...

Pastor Nicholas won the focus of ACET Uganda. Pastor Nicholas is a Pastor in Kakira, Jinja near the sugar plantations. He ministers amidst very difficult circumstances. It was there that ACET came across the term "contract marriages". Contract here doesn't mean a formal agreement based on an understanding per se, rather we found out that many of the men come as workers on contract. They leave their wives behind but pretend to be single men. As a result they marry 'new' wives. When their contracts expire they get up and go. They leave behind women that are oblivious of the situation and the reality dawns on them when they are asked to leave the company houses! There is untold misery that comes to women whose husbands have abandoned them when the contracts expire - hence the term "contract marriages"

Pastor Nichols has found himself in the midst of this reality. To respond, his church started to help the orphans by meeting their scholastic and tuition needs. This expanded to feeding. The church then set up an orphanage since a number of these had nowhere to stay. They are struggling with it and ACET wants to walk alongside them and develop appropriate responses under the circumstances.

Tearfund – Uganda Strategy

Tearfund UK held a consultative workshop in Uganda. The meeting involved all Tearfund partners and members from 4 other organisations that where consider resource organisations.

Some of the decisions from the meeting were that Tearfund support should be channelled to the areas that were poorest and where people are more vulnerable and susceptible to marginalisation and a vicious cycle of increasing poverty. The analysis explored the cause factors of these situations and shall seek to have these addressed and not just the presenting problems.

Pastors for the HIV Test

It always is easier to talk about HIV and AIDS from the pulpit than for Pastors to empathise with the AIDS patients, offer non judgemental counselling and advice and /or take the HIV and AIDS test! This was Daudi Talima's experience when he took three pastors for the HIV Test.

The mood changed as the people got closer to the testing centre, and even quieter still when they were welcomed and the protocol explained. They were ushered into a waiting room which had a television as they awaited counselling. One by one they were called and taken to various rooms. Daudi stayed there in the waiting room, himself a little tense. *What would the results be? What will the mood be? In case they get disturbing results, how will I be of help?* He pondered as he himself wondered what the outcome would be.

The Pastors emerged as they had gone. Each with a smile – a smile of relief but also one which showed, "I didn't realise that people went through such a difficult journey emotionally. One exclaimed, "Now I can help others".

It is to this end that ACET is helping more Pastors understand the HIV test protocol, the emotional journey, if indeed they are to help reduce stigma and denial in the church circles.

Partnership Box

Monitoring and Support Visits:

Christiana Brown, Tearfund UK, the Desk Officer for Uganda has visited Uganda about 4 times in as many months. She was back! She came with a bigger team to conduct a Strategy Workshop for Uganda. **Russell Davies** the Africa Director of Hope HIV, and **Selina Palm**, based in their South Africa office, visited our Kampala office. They were unable to visit Kitgum.

Changes in CA - CBCO Gets New Head:

ACET Kitgum continues to get support from Christian Aid under the PEPFAR grant. The Head of the Programme has been transferred and has handed over to Karl. We congratulate both Karl and William upon their promotions and we seek to continue our fruitful relationship.