

Friends of ACET Newsletter

Hope !!

Welcome to this edition!

For a long time now, Northern Uganda has been in a period of relative peace and calm as the government and representatives of the rebel Lords Resistance Army have been in peace talks for the past 4 months. We are grateful to God for this lull and are praying that we shall get full peace.

This newsletter combines 2 periods. For one reason or other we missed a whole quarter. Please accept our apologies for that. The emphasis here is on the updates on the construction work. We are seeking ways of sending you photos as well.

Camp Decongestion... rolls out

The decongestion of camps has been rolling out slowly. It has received different responses from various groups and some stories have been exaggerated. We got a panic button pressed when international media carried a story about a crisis in the North. We cross checked the story with UNICEF and the Government (Central and local) and our fears were allayed.

There has been a cholera outbreak in the wake of the decongestion. Local leaders say it's because of children being left on their own unattended as parents have rushed to prepare and construct new homes.

The focus of ACET shall involve a paradigm shift from relief interventions to a more development mode of operation.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATE

1. Nakulabye Junior School

The Nakulabye school project had experienced a slow down due to lack of funds and some technical hitches. Things are on the roll again and caution is needed to ensure a balance between the expectations that could be created in the community based on the speed at which we do things!

The Kampala City Council graders came and made the road/access to the school. Following that, a few neighbours erected walls and some placed some stumps into the road to limit access. Before widening the roads (to allow big lorries to access the land!) they want money from NakJus

The Nakulabye Parents are embarking on the digging and relocating the water channel that was in the school. The local stand pipe is to be moved but only after a thorough geotechnical survey has been done!! A geotechnical survey maps out the soil texture, water tables and suitability of where buildings can be located on the site, among other things.

Progress:

- Access Road constructed;
- Clearance certificate received from the National Environmental authority;
- A surveyor has been appointed;
- An architectural firm has been selected;
- Concept paper developed and shared with Board and stakeholders;
- Preliminary discussions held between the ACET Uganda Board and the NakJus administrators;

It is hoped to start preliminary work on the site in January 2007. The initial building work should take about 12 months and there will be an update in the next newsletter.

Next Steps (Dec 2006):

- Geo Technical Survey
- Architectural drawings
- Formation of Projects Committee
- Master plan
- January 2007 - Fundraising Plans and targets

2. Kitgum Resource Centre

The Kitgum Resource Centre can clearly see the finishing line. Dates have even been set for the official opening of the building! It has been an interesting journey but the last lap still needs to be run.

Progress:

- Roof has been completed
- Windows and door frames being installed;
- Compound grounds being cleared
- Drainage and sanitation systems been cleared and
- Preliminary electrical work been completed

Next Steps:

- Office floor screed to be put in place
- Purchase and fitting of glass panes;
- Planting grass;
- Resource centre move slotted for 2nd week December.

Camps...:

Two sea containers have been procured and taken to the camps. The play materials will be erected and set in place by end of November 2006. The containers shall be painted and made to look child-friendly. These shall be centres where children come and play. Each Centre shall be manned by a counsellor and peer educator selected by the community.

3. Mbale – Sports Centre

Frustration is still brewing as we deal with Mbale. The hiccups facing the Mbale project continue. Following the purchase of the land, the completion of the drawings, there were some new developments. The local community members came up and started claiming compensation. At a certain point things got violent and pangas (machetes) were wielded.

Compensation with the locals has been agreed; the team is now waiting for the grader to clear the road so that there is access to the site for big lorries.

ACET News Snippets:

Moses Zzimbe Visits the UK...

Moses Zzimbe, the head teacher of Nakulabye Junior School, visited the UK for a period of about 2 weeks. This connection came through Phil Stephenson, the Head teacher of Silverdale School in Hastings. He in turn had got to know of NakJus through the BBC website and the 2 schools are now involved in a school project.

Visitors from Rianna's Fund UK...

ACET Uganda hosted a team of three people from Rianna's fund UK. The team was headed by Steve Davenport, a strong Chelsea supporter, and visited a couple of projects around the country. The visit to Iganga Centre for Evangelism left a big impression on their hearts. The Team also visited Nakulabye Junior School in Kampala.

RPI draws to a close...

The RPI project is coming to the end (November 2006). This project has seen ACET offer technical and moral support to a number of Tearfund UK partners around the continent. The results of the project, as seen by the growth in profile and work done by partners, have been a great source of encouragement to many an ACET consultant. Time will be taken to review and evaluate more empirically the outcomes of the partnership.

Enhancing Child Participation...

ACET Kitgum and UNICEF have signed a 12 months contract designed to see the increase of child participation in Kitgum district. The work shall focus on the use of different child specific methodologies, seek creative ways of getting the voices of the children heard and acted upon in as far as their development in community development activities and health are concerned. It is a pilot project and shall be under a lot of scrutiny for whatever lessons can be learned.

Jan Eagaland visits Joseph Kony..!

The UN Special Envoy, Jan Eagaland visited the venue of the Peace talks in Southern Sudan. He took time off to go into the bush and actually met the leader of the Lords Resistance Army, Joseph Kony, for 10 minutes. His mission was to get remaining women and children freed. Kony was concerned about the arrest warrants from the ICC being nullified. We await what happens next.

Prayer Request:

A Unique Christmas in the Camps

The year has been one of promise, especially the past 6 months. There is surely light at the end of the tunnel for the situation in Northern Uganda. This is the reason for our prayer request... that Christmas will surely be a season to remember, We are praying that there will be peace, that there will be true celebration and that the people in the Camps shall enjoy a Christmas like none other over the past couple of years. Furthermore.. that all hostilities will truly cease. Please join us.

Rotary - ACET Partnership

ACET and the Rotary Club of Kampala North have embarked on a project that shall see the enhancement of health seeking behaviour among the Boda-Boda (motorcycle taxis) and Brick makers in the prevention against HIV spread. The project shall also work at continuing the national efforts to decrease the vulnerability of young girls and the final outcome shall also be the involvement and equipping of Rotarians in the efforts to decrease and/or control HIV spread.

One of the innovative programmes is going to be a seminar designed to provide HIV & AIDS education, introduction to lifeskills concepts to domestic maids. This shall be done in December 2006 during school holidays. This is indeed unique and will have lessons for ACET and many other agencies in the networking loop.

A word from Toronto

Paul Kato was in Toronto for the International AIDS conference as part of the Tearfund UK team. He was also involved in the Ecumenical pre-conference advisory Committee and coordinated one of the tracks at the conference.

The experience was such an eye opener and a few thoughts are already up our sleeves.

The strong polarisation relating to the ABC approach to AIDS rages on. Uganda has gone under a lot of attack and the progress that was once heralded is now challenged. The church, which has been very pivotal in responding to AIDS in Africa, does not seem to have a voice in such a big meeting!

It is time to mobilise the church to take a strategic position, to have the voice. We need to learn how to communicate in a language that the rest of the world appreciates. We have to present a piece of work that shall not be challenged, even when it is tested against other standard parameters.

Partnership Box

Monitoring and Support Visits:

Christiana Brown, Tearfund UK, the New Desk Officer for Uganda. She has visited the office twice and returns in December for more planning! **Hilde Van Hulst**, Tearfund (Holland), visited Uganda and had an eventful trip to Kitgum. They are exploring deeper partnership opportunities. **Selina Palm**, Hope HIV, based in South Africa visited Uganda partners and went to Kitgum to see the situation there. **Russell Davies** the Director will visit in November 2006. Christian AID's **Karl** will also visit Kitgum.

Tearfund UK Regional Advisor Relocates:

Froduald Munyankiko, the Regional Advisor for Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi has moved offices to Uganda for a while. He will be stationed in ACET for the next 12 months.