

# Friends of ACET Newsletter

# Go...!!

## Welcome to this edition!

This newsletter spans a 6-month period as opposed to a quarter. Apologies for the missing edition. This period has been characterised by new projects taking off. The drainage channel at Nakulabye school site, Tumaini children's home, new Tear Holland project in Kitgum, St James partnership discussions and so on. The newsletter highlights a few.

There is a construction project that is going on in Nakulabye and the next few newsletters will feature heavily on the progress being made as a means of giving a regular update, so to speak.

*Editor*

## Uncertainty in the LRA Camp?

There is still a lot of hope in Northern Uganda for peace, for getting an opportunity to go back to the ancestral homesteads and villages, for a brighter future with the war put behind us. The government is committed to the Peace talks, the rebels too, well until last week when a few disturbing things came to the media – uncertainty within the LRA camp.

We want an end to the situation in Northern Uganda, We need our partners to pray more than ever for this to be a reality. There is a saying that it is darkest before dawn, is this it? We are praying for the dawn.

We thank God, that the current situation of peace allows us to move freely across the region, be able to carry out activities and reach out to new areas of resettlement. May God be praised.

## NakJus PROJECT UPDATE....

### Phase #1 - Draining Channel close to completion ....

September saw ACET start work on the Nakulabye Junior school new site. The first phase involved relocating and paving the main drainage channel that passes through the school plot. The construction faced a couple of set backs from the rain – which wasn't expected since we were in the dry season! Some of the construction work had to be re-done from time to time when the builders would find that all the previous days' work have been washed away by the thunderstorm.

We are glad that the work is 95% completed. An additional feeder drainage channel had to be constructed at the edge of the school plot where a natural spring - causing a lot of sogginess in the area had to be 'brought under control'.

We found out that the local council had attempted to build this drainage channel in the past through the plot with little success. The channel kept falling apart. There has been positive feedback from this community about this first step, in their own words "...now we trust the calibre of contractor that you have brought, we thought he would fail like others have failed. Now we are willing to work with him to relocate the local well, we know he will manage..." (Local Council I chairman).

The relocation of the local well, and construction of the main school is what remains. The city preparations for the forthcoming meeting for the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) has slowed down a few of the processes in other departments. We have been waiting for a commencement letter for more than a month. We have actually been told, "... check on us next Monday.." for a long while now.

Please pray that we get a breakthrough.

## ACET DRC .. first steps

David Kabiswa visited ACET DRC in August. The office, albeit young, is already starting to make an impact in the country! ACET DRC has been involved in some high level research on gender based sexual violence and partners with the UN Agencies in Congo.

### Lifeskills Training for Churches

The training for Church leaders has seen an increase in the desire for lifeskills (psychosocial competencies) amongst the youth. The workshop was co sponsored by ACET DRC and the Evangelical Church of Christ in Congo (EEC). The field is ripe but the labourers (to harvest) are few. There is a big demand for the services and ACET will find itself having to do a lot.

### Young People's Behaviour

A presentation from the UNICEF representative present at the workshop focussed on findings from a recent study. It showed that on average some of the youth 13-17 were having sex 8 times a week! In some cases with multiple sexual partners. He brought out this statistic, among others to give the church a wake up call.. "The church must get involved, and it MUST be equipped to appropriately get involved".

ACET Uganda is seeking ways to boost the ACET DRC capacity to handle / make a meaningful contribution among the young people with the lifeskills approaches.

### Next Steps:

ACET DRC is designing an innovative programme for church mobilisation that has received high level attention by some development partners. This partnership shall see ACET DRC link with Georgetown University and others in a learning project.

ACET Goma work is to be scaled up with more lifeskills initiatives and new partners in the region are being sought.

## ACET News Snippets:

### FAU members Visits ACET Mbale...

**Rosa and Francis Hunt** visited ACET Mbale and spent time with Silver, the Manager in Mbale. The visit was very fruitful and there were areas of mutual interest between ACET Mbale and PONT. The church mobilisation work that encourages communities to run small income generation projects was of particular interest. The discussions explored a number of other areas of the work in Mbale

### International Conference for Jan 2008...

Plans for the International Conference are moving ahead. Please make space in your diary if you have not already done so. There will be two aspects – an ACET Leaders Forum and then a Global forum. For details please contact **Sheila Dixon/Robert Mortimer**.

A number of development partners have made commitment to attend and have also committed resources to support/sponsor some leaders working in the HIV field to be present. It seeks to be a time of renewal, and also charting out a new strategy for engagement through exploration of a couple of new models and avenues – such as inspired individuals.

### Paul Kabunga Visits ACET Eastern Cape!

Following a series of phone calls, the link was finally established. Paul Kato travelled to meet with Raymond and his team in South Africa in the Eastern Cape Region. According to Dr Patrick Dixon “..*The operation is growing fast, there is a big opportunity to exploit,..*” Paul travelled to meet and get acquainted to another sister in the ACET family.

### Tumaini gets a facelift and other support ..

Pastor Nicholas of Kakira Tumaini Children’s home received a couple of visitors in September to help with the plastering of the orphanage. The team spent 10 days with him and did what they could. ACET helped provide a few additional resources to help with the completion of the work. ACET Uganda has provided a water tank and the basic materials to facilitate electrical installation. ACET has also provided the salary for a matron at the hostel, rent and furniture for the counselling centre. Kakira is an area of great need. The level of poverty in the area has left many families surviving from the sale of local alcohol.

Pastor Nicholas has been introduced to other Pastors and development workers that are working among children to help share experience and seek better ways of working with children. A training workshop for his staff and key stakeholders was also carried out.

**Plans:** In partnership with St James Church, Gerard’s Cross, UK, we seek to get electricity in the orphanage. Training in systemic counselling and project management by March 2008. Other outstanding needs are tables, and benches.

## Tearfund – Uganda Strategy

Tearfund UK held another meeting with its partners at the beginning of November. The Uganda strategy has been formally approved and the meeting focussed on setting up a mechanism of working through a new approach – a consortium approach. A second meeting shall be held at the end of November to concretise the plans & approaches. ACET has been asked to play a special role in the HIV cluster – it will be the lead agency among all Tearfund UK partners in Uganda. The new programme is expected to commence in April 2008.

## The Tamar Campaign ...

Following after the story of TAMAR in the bible ACET Uganda is launching a campaign amongst the young people and their schools designed to address issues of gender based sexual violence. Work among the young people has revealed increasing societal pressure for young people to get involved in sexual activity especially girls. Recent focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in school reveals low level of skills among young people to assert themselves in the content of gender based violence and/ or sexual overtones. This needs to be reversed.

The approach shall be multifaceted. It will be training peer educators per class, training all Prefects in selected schools in leadership and lifeskills issues, training teachers in child specific counselling, and developing support materials (youth readers, activity booklets, bible studies). We also plan to involve men in the project through a listening survey and training of educators in advocacy and positive male image.

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:

**Russell Davis**, HopeHIV Director came to Uganda with a team of potential partners/supporters from HopeHIV from the UK. The team was around for a week and visited a couple of HopeHIV projects in Uganda. (Sep 07)

**Karl Hughes**, Project Manager Christian Aid visited the Kitgum project. He was very impressed with the project and said that ACET had been the best performing project in the CA partnership under the PEPFAR Grant. (Sep 07).

**Alice Fay and Simon** visited ACET to ascertain its capabilities to be a centre of good practice from which other organisations could learn. The team visited Kitgum, looked at the strategic plans and were also briefed on the plans to build a Drop-in centre in Mbale for young people. (Oct 07)

**Christian Brown, Rachel Carnegie**, from Tearfund came to Uganda to conduct child participation and protection workshops for Tearfund partners in Uganda (Nov 07).