



## AFRICAN UPDATE 2012

### UGANDA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND VISIT

#### **UGANDA**

##### **REVIEW OF BEST PROJECTS IN UGANDA AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION TO IMPROVE SERVICES TO CHILDREN**

The primary purpose of the visit was seeing some excellent projects for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Uganda, learning from their practice and methods and collecting ideas, methods and training manuals to disseminate to benefit other children elsewhere; as well as disseminating to them successful ideas and methods already collected from elsewhere which will help them further their successful work for children.

With only 3 weeks in Uganda due to financial and time constraints, we booked a tight programme. As well as liaising with the relevant government department, we saw the work of a different carefully selected, 'best organisations' every day, leaving only a few days at the end for tying up ends and revisits to partner organisation projects and families to identify projects for funding, (which we also did at weekends). In the evenings we tried to keep up with the recording of the information and communicating on the details of future visits and follow up communication. We saw some excellent work in 12 different organisations, and collected ideas and training manuals to aid dissemination of methods. They were also pleased to collect ideas and manuals from us.

##### **FEEDBACK COLLECTION**

We collected feedback about our work and were encouraged by their positive comments and in particular the consistent view expressed that our work as catalysts disseminating successful ideas and methods to benefit more orphans and vulnerable children is so useful and much needed.

##### **FUNDING INCOME GENERATING PROJECTS**

In addition we funded carefully selected income generating projects, which when combined with the successful methods could potentially set whole groups on their feet economically, enabling them to continue to take in and care for, support and educate their relatives orphans and vulnerable children. Once again we met some inspirational local people, both in the organisations and also in families caring for children, and doing effective work for children at grass root level, despite the immense pressures of poverty they faced themselves. It was a privilege to be able to help some of them to continue and develop the work they do. (For details of projects funded see appendix.)

##### **DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS AND LINK ORGANISATIONS**

A secondary objective was identifying some of the best of the best projects we saw who it would be beneficial for CAN to partner or link with and were much encouraged that these excellent,

organisations were so pleased also to partner with us, despite being a small new charity just getting off the ground in the work that we do.

Our partners and link organisations range from excellent large and well established Ugandan organisations doing effective work over most of Uganda enabling the good care for orphans and vulnerable children within their communities, such as TASO, (The Aids Support Organisation), and UWESO, (Ugandan Women's Effort to Save Orphans); to small newly developed organisations who are pioneering the development of exciting new ideas and methods, or developing needed services. Examples of these are Net for Hope, who are piloting their ideas for rebuilding communities in caring, and at the other end of the scale Childs i Foundation developing adoption in Ugandan families for abandoned babies, who despite attempts they are unable to rehabilitate in their own families. They also range from implementing organisations such as those already mentioned to facilitating organisation more similar to us such VIVA Network, (our link organisation) which facilitates, coordinates and trains a large number of organisations mainly in Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Many of our partners have requested that we return to Uganda to provide specific bits of training and with many children traumatised by the violence in the north of Uganda or deaths of parents by AIDS, they are particularly interested to be trained in treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

I envisage that our partner organisations will be hubs of excellence in the countries concerned, with whom we will cooperate in exchanging ideas and methods which really benefit children and spread these further. Community groups, families and children they work with will also be some of the first of our priorities for funding of income generating projects etc when we have raised more money for this. Our partners are the organisation best placed to oversee the successful implementation of what we fund and will try to overcome the very real internet and communication difficulties between here and Africa and send us feedback on the progress and results of our funding.

#### **PURCHASE OF CRAFTS GOODS MADE BY FAMILIES CARING FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN**

Finally we purchased craft goods made by carers of orphans and vulnerable children or people living with Aids. These can be offered in return for donations to CAN's work.

#### **LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND**

In Lesotho and Swaziland we followed up on my previous visit to best projects, renewing contact with those in the Government and with as many as we could of the best of the best projects, This was appreciated and we learnt of new developments since the last visit and of particular needs of some of the smaller organisations which we hope to be able to advertise for on our website.

We updated them on the progress of CAN's planned work and passed on some ideas, methods and manuals collected elsewhere to assist them with their work for children.

We heard positive news of progress of families who we had assisted with income generating projects and we requested continued feedback of progress. The family in Lesotho for whom we purchased a welding machine are now doing well.

We developed some useful partnerships with selected 'best of the best organisations' and made outline plans for the future. Partnership with some of the larger organisations awaits drawing up more specific partnership agreements which is one of the first priorities for work now.

We purchased crafts made by families supporting orphans and vulnerable children to offer in UK in return for donations to CAN's work.

## APPENDIX

### INCOME GENERATING PROJECTS IN UGANDA FUNDED BY CAN

The projects we chose to fund are being overseen by three of our Ugandan partner organisations, TASO, UWESO and Reach Out Mbuya.

#### 1. PIGLET PROJECT – 500,000 Ugandan Shillings (about £140)

TASO support families affected by AIDS in various ways including forming community support groups of people affected. We saw some impressive examples of how they have enabled such struggling families who often even lacked food, to recover their health, get on their feet economically, care for support and educate the orphans and vulnerable children they care for and empower others in the group to do so. This included a man who had been bedridden for 10 years and suffered from TB and AIDS before TASO enabled him to receive



treatment and funded his first income generating project – a piglet project. Now well, he has passed on piglets to other families in the group to empower them and has expanded his work to other successful income generating projects from which he supports and cares for and educates 7 children including 4 orphaned grandchildren and is currently building with his own hands a new house for them all.



Having visited a family and worked out a plan with them for their future, we decided to fund a similar piglet project for 60 year grandmother, widowed by AIDS. Ill herself with AIDs, she is innovating and struggling to care for her children and her orphaned grandchild. She has raised 15 children. Despite being elderly and ill, she digs other's farms to earn money for food for

the children and also makes grass mats and trades in any goods she can afford to buy. Even the children innovate to help support the family looking after neighbour's animal for no wage in the hope that they will be given a chick or piglet to start their own income generating project. Despite this two of the children have had to drop out of school for financial reasons and even providing food



and water is a challenge - water has to be collected and paid for from a well in a distant village. When we visited she was feeling dizzy due to lack of fluid – she only had one cup of water left. She is unable to farm her plot of land as it needs fertiliser. She has insufficient funds to join a government savings and loans scheme, TASO has referred her to, which would also train her in productive agriculture methods which do not require financial input. Despite this she was positive and cheerful. She has reared piglets before and believes that if we funded some piglets for her she could build on this and develop her income generating businesses. She would also be able to join the government scheme and would be able to continue to care for the children and to send her sons to vocational school which would enable them to support the family for the

future. TASO will buy the piglets for them with our money and have said they will send us updates on her progress.

## **2. BRIQUETTE MACHINE FOR VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN GROUP – 450,000 Shillings (about £125)**

As well as rehabilitating street children to their families, UWESO, (now one of our partner organisations), mainly supports the poorest families in caring for the orphans and vulnerable children they take in and care for. They do this chiefly by setting up Village Savings and Loans



Support groups comprising of the neediest families. This is a very successful and well developed method of helping families to care for children in Uganda. UWESO trains volunteer support group trainers and support s them in training and supporting village groups in various methods of income generation and the village savings and loans scheme method. This has proved very successful in enabling the group to help each member to borrow and save so that they can build from tiny starting income

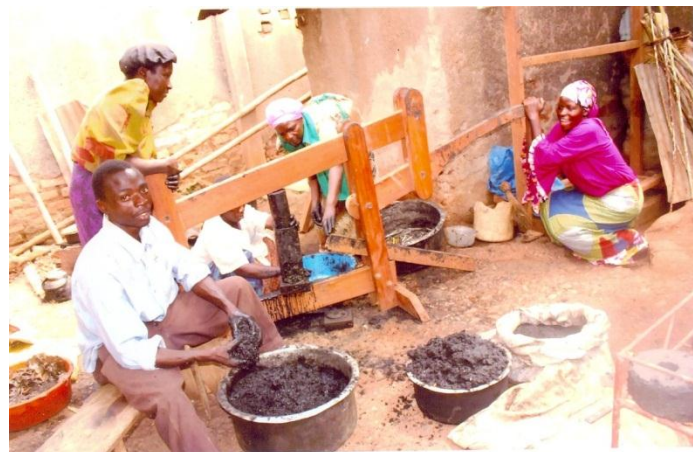
generating activities at first, to larger and larger ones which enable them to support the children they care for and pay for their education as well. UWESO also uses these groups as a forum for other training concerning meeting the needs of children including enabling child protection from abuse. We heard many testimonies from women helped by this scheme who had previously been unable to feed the children who needed their care, but now have successful businesses and are able to meet all the needs of the orphans and vulnerable children they care for. Many then train other groups in

these methods so passing on the help to others and the groups also become agents for needed changes such promoting child protection or in campaigning with agencies such as local schools for any changes needed.



One of the income generating activities UWESO train such groups in, is the making of briquettes from waste materials they can collect. Charcoal is very expensive and these briquettes sell very well as an alternative. However to make them the group needs a briquette making machine. If given funding for this, the group is set off with a head start as this raises enough money for each member to have the loans they need to develop their individual businesses from which they save as a group,

dividing the proceeds between them proportionally to the savings made by each, at the end of the period. The profits then enable larger activities to be funded in the following year. We decided to fund a briquette machine to get a new savings and loans group of poorest families of the ground. UWESO have purchased a metal briquette machine, (being much more efficient than cheaper wooden ones) with our funds, and will report to us on the new group's progress with it and the children they care for.



Members of one of the successful savings groups we visited asked if I could find pen pals in UK for their children.

**Can everyone ask their friends with children whether they would like a Ugandan pen pal please.**

### **3. FUNDING OF CLOTHING SALE BUSINESS - 500,000 Ugandan shillings (about £140)**

Our partners, Reach Out Mbuya, enable families affected by Aids in their area to receive treatment and help them to develop income generating activities to support the orphans and vulnerable children they support as well as empowering the children themselves. They also start village savings and loans groups. They help child headed families to find carers and support them by the development of income generation etc.

We visited one family they help and felt we could not leave without funding a project to empower them economically. This was a widow whose husband died in 2009. She also has AIDS and is trying to support her 5 children including her 8 year old disabled son Paul, who is unable to stand or talk, but clearly much loved by his family and appeared happy therefore. Their mother's greatest fear is that she will die and her children will have no one to care for them. She receives ART treatment from the

project, but cannot afford the food she needs and without this ART does more harm than good. Reach Out is therefore providing her with emergency food aid until they can fund an income



generating project for her. They also fund school fees for two of the children and have provided a wheel chair for Paul. He has been carried around by his family but is getting too large for that. We discussing with the mother what would enable her to support her children and fund their education. She wanted to start a clothing sales business, but would need a start up grant of 500,00 Ugandan shillings to buy her initial stock of dresses to sell to students in the area and the Reach Out

project staff, ( who confirmed that there would be a good market for this.) So we funded this business. She was thrilled and Reach Out has said they will update us on her progress.

#### **4. FUNDING COSTUMES FOR CHILDREN'S INCOME GENERATING DANCE GROUP - 300,000 Ugandan Shillings (about £85)**

Reach Out also runs children's empowerment projects for the orphans and vulnerable children they support. This includes training older children to run psychosocial support groups and education in AIDS prevention and life skills. They teach other children by composing and acting dramas for the other children to watch and learn from. Children are also trained to train other children in musical and dance skills, which will also enable income generation in the future. Children choose whether they join the brass band, pop groups or traditional dance group, all of which give performances raising income for school fees of other orphans and vulnerable children needing this. In the future they plan a career doing such performances. The numbers of children who can join the performing traditional dance groups is limited by the numbers of dance costumes, they are able to purchase the



material for and make. We therefore donated some funds to enable more costumes to be acquired so more children could participate and benefit from this.

We also bought necklaces made from old calendars from the Reach Out project – 'Roses Of Mbuya' a clothing and jewellery making income generating project for families affected by AIDS, which not only helps those working for it but raises money for school fees or vocational training of orphans and vulnerable children needing

this.