



FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY, UGANDA

Social Support Project to Reduce the Vulnerability of Girls in Kitgum District



**QUARTERLY REPORT
JULY-SEPTEMBER 2007**

NEW LIFE CENTRE PROGRAM

GOAL: To empower formerly abducted young mothers and adolescent girls affected by the war in Kitgum District by strengthening their resilience through the development of their spiritual, emotional, social, educational and health needs to living New Life in Christ abundant and FREE.

REPORTS OF NEW LIFE CENTRE AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

▪ **LITERACY classes in the IDP Camps**

All literacy students are continuing with their classes in the communities according to schedule. Learning has been interrupted by the movement of the population to the resettlement camps or nearby communities and lately, by the heavy rainfall in northern Uganda. As a result, classes have been interrupted and scattered making it difficult for the teachers to reach their students. The unusual rains have also interfered with the adult learners who sit under trees for their lessons.



Flooded homes

- **INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES (IGA)**

The 13 IGA farming groups in Mucwini and Padibe are all underway in crop production. Among the crops planted by various groups are sim sim, beans, millet, ground nuts, onions, tomatoes and cassava.

Construction of mushroom huts in Mucwini and Padibe IDP camps is also underway. These will be managed by the girls who have already been taught mushroom farming. They are also charged with the responsibility of passing down the knowledge to any vulnerable girls in the community that are interested.

As well, the 41 small scale business groups for Mucwini, Padibe and Town Council are in different stages of purchasing and selling their products.

The girls in the community are happy about their businesses and have opened bank accounts in the village banks to help in saving for the future needs of their children.

- **COUNSELING in the IDP Camps:**

Counselors reported that nearly 25% of their clients in the IDP camps were having thoughts of suicide and hopelessness, but they are now seeing a bit of light in the future through the literacy, counseling, income generation and spiritual encouragement.

OUR SECOND GROUP OF GIRLS ARRIVING AT THE NEW LIFE CENTRE



We welcomed our second group of child mothers and their children at the centre on July 16th 2007. The above picture shows the girls being given a tour of the centre before they settled down for a briefing about their months stay at the centre. A total of 22 girls are presently participating in the in- house programs.

1. EDUCATION

Literacy is a major component of our training with the girls. New Life Centre has a capable Literacy Coordinator who oversees all the literacy programs at the centre. This quarter he is joined by two capable adult literacy teachers: Pauline; She is a qualified adult literacy teacher who graduated from Makerere University with a degree in Education. She loves to interact and work with the girls. Teacher Janet (as she is fondly called by her students) is a retired primary school teacher who worked with the Ministry of Education for over 25 years. She brings in a wealth of experience to the department. Her calmness and patience helps the girls to relax and learn better.

The number of girls in literacy class this quarter is twenty- two (22), with 12 of these in the remedial class.

2. IGA SKILLS TRAINING

- 1) Baking and cooking class: The girls are making 'mandazi' for their own breakfast and cakes for our visitors.
- 2) Mushroom Farming: The girls have learned how to grow mushrooms in a structure that has been constructed at the centre. Mushroom, a delicacy in this region, has been considered a seasonal crop and believed to be 'grown by ants'. The girls are now excited that they can grow the crop and sell it for profits all year round. The girls have also

had several harvests and enjoyed a mushroom meal!



Some of the girls with their teacher displaying Mushrooms grown at the Centre

- 3) Sewing class is helping the girls to be able to make clothes for their children



Girls in a sewing class

3. SPIRITUAL COUNSELING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE FORMERLY ABDUCTED AND OTHER TRAUMATISED GIRLS.

The girls are doing well in their counseling. The changes are noticeable even in the way the girls relate to one another. When the girls first arrived, there was frequent quarrels and near fighting among them. They found it very difficult to relate well to some girls that they may have ‘shared’ a husband with in the bush. But with counseling and prayer, these girls are gradually learning to live together. Every morning the girls and staff gather together for devotions using ‘Firm Foundations’ where they learn foundation for spiritual development.

As the girls prepare to leave at the end of their three month stay at the centre, any who continue to struggle in some areas of their lives, will be referred to the counselors in the communities to continue working with them toward total recovery. All the girls continue under the care of the community counselor who referred them to the Centre for follow-up.

4) HEALTH AND DISEASE CONTROL

A healthy body leads to a healthy mind, and we at the New Life centre have a qualified Nurse who is on call whenever the girls need medical attention. With the help of friends and donors of FH, we purchased medicines and medical equipments to help take care of the girls at the centre. They normally come with their children being so malnourished but after de-worming they begin to gain weight and grow normally. Our nurse, Susan, works in close consultation with the Medical Superintendent of the District hospital for referral of difficult cases.



Nurse sorting through some of the meds

Celebrating the birth of.....

God has been so good to us in that this quarter; we have had three mothers give birth to three healthy baby boys!!
Emmanuel, Joshua and Isaac! Praise be to God!

Baby Emmanuel and mom resting



5. CHILDRENS PROGRAMS

The children who accompanied their mothers were introduced to the learning classes and have made tremendous progress. They play games, sing songs and learn Bible lessons and how to follow simple instructions.

Nursery Teacher and Kids

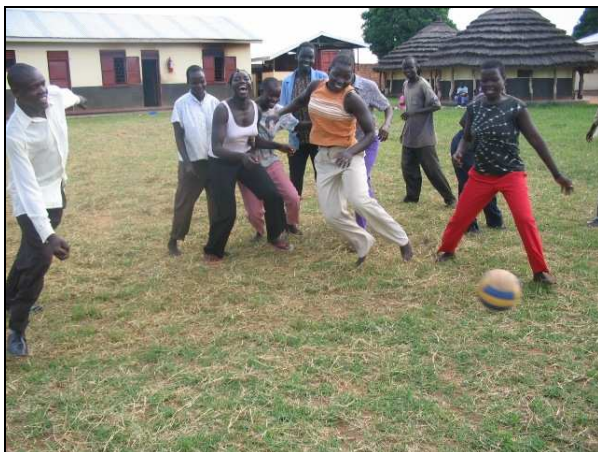


The smaller babies remain with their mothers in the class as they are still nursing. They sing songs, dance and are involved in organized play. The kids own space was recently set up so the kids can learn and play in a safe environment.



The New Nursery tent to shade the children from the sun and rain

RECREATION NLC STYLE:



Playing football



Skipping rope

BENEFICIARY STORY

Betty is one of the formerly abducted Child mothers who stayed in the bush from 1994 to 2004. She was given as a wife to one the soldiers and had two kids with him. When she escaped from the bush, the father of her children was left behind.

During FH initial assessments in the communities, Betty was one of the people we talked to and her forms showed a severe form of depression and suicidal tendencies. Betty was brought to the New Life Centre and started working with a counselor. During her initial counseling sessions, Betty had laid elaborate plans to destroy herself and her three kids (the third child was conceived at home). She consistently had nightmares and behavior other girls at the centre would consider strange- as she never slept much at night, and this started scaring other girls. Her relationship with other girls was also quite strained.

The counselor continued working with her. Slowly by slowly, she has started noting changes in her life like being able to sleep longer hours in the night, her relationship with other girls is also improving and she no longer plans to kill herself and her family.

At the New Life Centre, she is surrounded by prayerful friends and staffs, daily devotions encourage her to stay strong in the Faith. Betty continues to learn the good plans that the Lord has for her and her family, it is a daily struggle but with continued prayers, Betty is being transformed, one day at a time.

CONCLUSION:

“Ebenezer!”- This far the Lord has brought us! A great work is done among the girls and their children as well as the staff that tirelessly serve them every day. We have witnessed fewer quarrels among the girls compared to when they first came in. They are learning about the love of Christ and applying this in their daily lives.

There is still much more work to be done, the wounds are deep and very sore, but with God these girls will emerge victorious. We at FH, New Life Centre are committed to these girls to see them overcome these adverse challenges and be role models not only to their families, but the community at large.

