



NEWSLETTER - April 2012

Uganda Concern UK mission statement: the prevention & relief of poverty in Uganda, in particular by supporting Uganda Women Concern Ministry, a Christian charity working in communities around Mbale in the east of the country.

Mudslides

In our last newsletter we reported on the mudslides that devastated two communities on the slopes of Mt Elgon in August 11. UWCM were appealing for funds to help provide families with basic needs such as shelter, food etc. Huge thanks to everyone who contributed to this appeal—particularly to Christchurch, Clevedon, who donated £1,000. We were able to send out £1,650 which was used to buy iron sheets for 7 families; farming tools for 30 families; 6kg of maize flour & 4kg beans for 100 families; mattresses & blankets for 10 families.



UWCM distributing the items with the help of members of Sowesi Church of Uganda.

In Jan of this year we were able to visit some of the communities who had received support and they asked us to thank everyone who had contributed to the appeal.



2012 Annual Children's Conference : 9-14th January. The theme was 'Light your World', Matthew 5:14 and 60 orphaned or disadvantaged children (primary & secondary) attended. They enjoyed Bible teaching from SU leaders including drama, music and dance. Bridget led sessions on bereavement & memory work and we also led various craft activities including tie-dye T shirts, painting & games. The children also had 3 good meals a day; learned about HIV/AIDS; Self-Esteem; Rights & Responsibilities and each child received a pair of new bed sheets and 12 exercise books as a leaving gift. For many, this is one of the highlights of their lives and is a chance for them to simply enjoy 'being children'. They also benefitted from sharing their experiences with others and making new friends.

Read the amazing story of Margaret and Olive. We first met these two women in 1995 and they are both an inspiration and a fine example of UWCM's mission – **To holistically empower the most vulnerable people living with HIV/AIDS to realise their full potential to live a dignified life.**

When their husbands died from AIDS, both women were left in a very vulnerable position. Treated as outcasts, lonely, no income, no rights to their house/land, children to feed. Margaret saw no hope for the future and bought poison for her children and for herself plus bark cloth to wrap their bodies. Her 4 year old son knew what she was planning and pleaded for her not to do it – he said he would go and pick up maize from in the flour mill floor to eat. The young boy's response changed her mind and so she and Olive then walked for hours to visit their Mothers Union chairperson to ask for help. The MU referred them to UWCM and Edith Wakumire visited the women and encouraged them to be strong, prayed with them and gave them some money to start an IGA (income generating activity). They were very grateful but cried as it was such a small amount of money and their needs were so great. They prayed and knew that they had to think long term, rather than just meeting their immediate needs. Margaret used the money to buy small items like salt & sugar and sold them at a profit. Over time she earned enough to build her own market stall, took a course on book keeping and has been able to pay for her 9 children to go to school and university.



This is Margaret and her youngest son today!

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Olive, too, knew it was important to think long term and she used the small amount of money given to her by UWCM to buy seeds and tools. She grew maize and provided for her family and sold the surplus. She continued in this way, eventually making enough profit to buy a larger plot of land to grow wheat and even hired a tractor.

She used some of the profit to buy a heifer which produced calves which she sold and the heifer is still alive today!

The small amount of money from UWCM enabled Olive and Margaret to provide for themselves & their families – put their children through school and have hope for their futures. **But, more importantly, it gave them dignity and they were able to encourage others to see that it is possible to live positively with HIV/AIDS. They were 2 of the first volunteer counsellors for UWCM and their faith shone through then, and still does today.**

Margaret is now involved with AIC (AIDS information and counselling); she is a member of a Village Health Team (a government scheme) and is a Trainer on malaria prevention and parenting skills. Both Margaret and Olive are now very active and highly respected women in their communities. Neither of them could have imagined, 16 years ago, that their lives would have turned out like this and it was a very uplifting experience for us to meet them again.

PRAYER & PORRIDGE Program: This project was founded in 2004 when Edith Wakumire introduced two Canadian friends, Dr Sydney Sparling and Brigid Peer, to Sarah and 40 destitute children in the Sakiya district which was stricken by AIDS. The aim of the project was to provide the opportunity for these orphaned children "to be children" for 2 hours a week. They met weekly and, under Sarah's guidance, were helped to feel loved and cared for and were also given a bowl of traditional porridge. Over time, a community committee became responsible. A child centre was built by the community and named The Sydney Price Child Centre. Today, 120 children are supported through this project and are given teaching & guidance on spiritual issues and lifeskills; counselling; porridge during fellowship; provision of home basics and Bible studies.

The churches in Canada have had to withdraw their financial support and we are very excited to be able to take over the funding of this worthwhile project. At the Children's Conference in January we were able to meet some of the young men and women who have passed through 'Prayer & Porridge' and whose lives are now living testimonies to the huge value and impact Sarah and her team have had on their lives.



We have committed UCUK to provide £100 per month to fund Prayer & Porridge and if you would like to specifically support this project financially, please do let us know.

Sarah who runs the Sakiya Prayer & Porridge Club

Some of the ways our money has been used to support UWCM in Jan-Dec 2011: Womens' Groups:

formation & training of 2 new groups (62 women) on HIV/AIDS, hygiene & sanitation, starting up individual & group income generating activities (IGAs); monitoring & encouraging existing groups & noting improved family relationships; encouraging savings schemes; giving start up grants to 2 groups. Burukuru Group was supported to represent UWCM in the district celebrations of International Women's Day. **Community Mobilisation Teams:** 4 families given 100,000 UGX (approx. £30) to start up own IGA—they have reported improved quality of life and have used profits for further investment. 3 CMTs were given funds to buy iron sheets, nails, doors & windows to build 3 shelters for needy families (other resources eg labour and wood were provided by the community). 294 CMT members from 14 CMTs were given raincoats. PLUS funding the Children's Conference; responding to the Mud Slide Appeal and an individual donation for a new church building for Bunambutye Church.

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*Uganda Concern UK trustees would like to express sincere thanks to all our supporters for their support, prayers and gifts. Any donation is gratefully received and passed on **without deduction** to UWCM. Cheques should be made payable to 'Uganda Concern UK' and gift aid forms can be obtained from one of the contacts/trustees below.*

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"Working to support Uganda Women Concern Ministry"

UK Charity Number 1133440

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