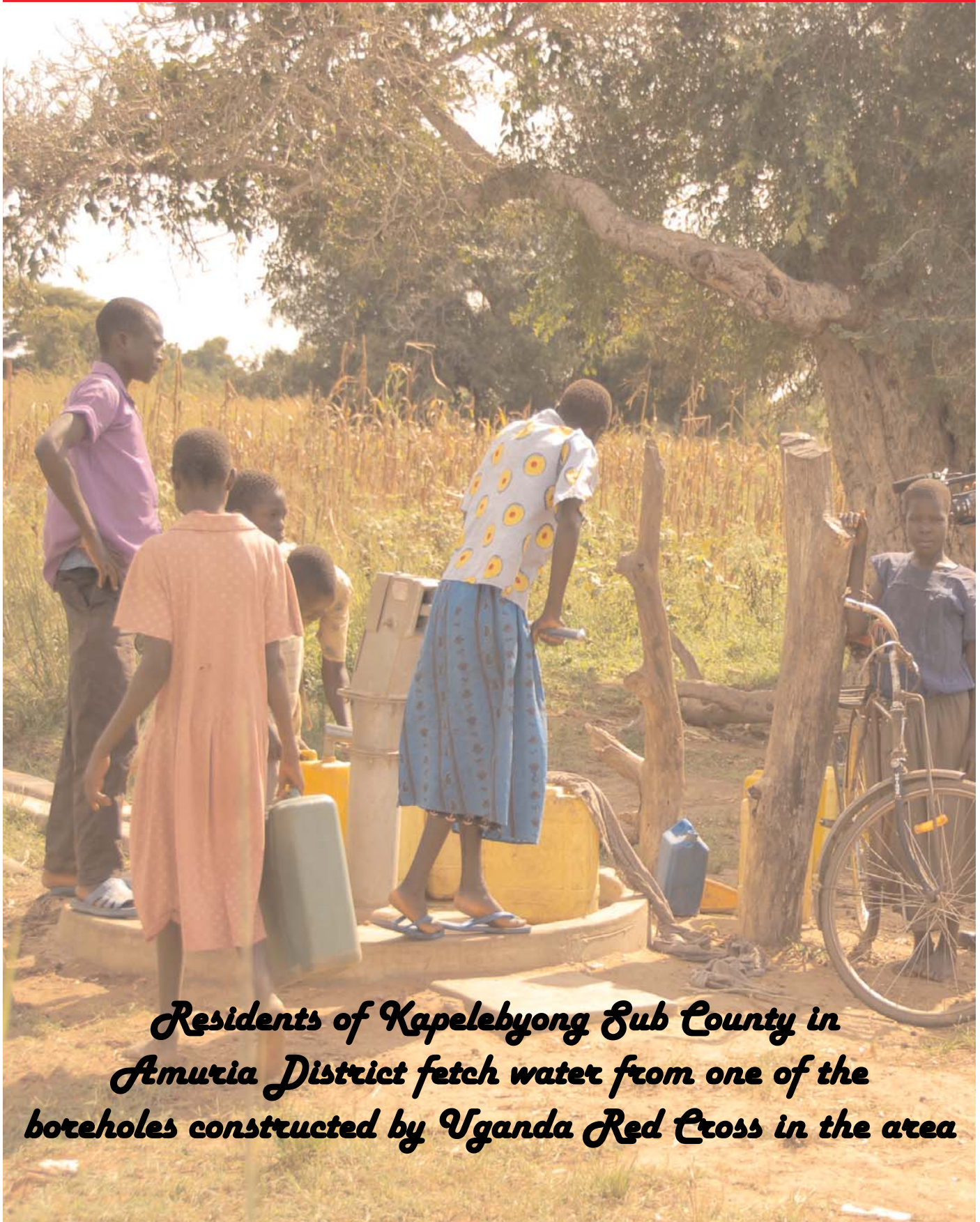




The Humanitarian

All you need to know about Uganda Red Cross Society activities

July - September 2008



Residents of Kapelebyong Sub County in Aturia District fetch water from one of the boreholes constructed by Uganda Red Cross in the area

Editorial

In July, representatives from National Societies allover Africa and the Rome Consensus met in Entebbe with the intent to discuss and commit themselves to finding a solution to the ever increasing drug abuse in the country and world over.

The Humanitarian Drug Policy in the offing is expected to be one of the tools to fight the vice affecting 200 million people worldwide. In Uganda, drug abuse has not only led to several cases of mental disorders but also economic set back, therefore it is everyone's responsibility to work with Uganda Red Cross Society to find a solution to the problem.

The Government of Uganda is highly appreciated for its role and support to the National Society toward formulating the policy. The policy advocates that the abusers be treated as patients instead of criminals as has been the case.

Road accidents also being on the increase in the country pose a life threat, therefore the URCS through its Road Safety programme in July painted zebra crossings around the city as a measure of reducing accidents. All road users should respect the signs if we are to make accidents history.

This time round we bid farewell to Mrs. Alice Uwase Anukur, former secretary general, who diligently served URCS for eight years. The former Deputy Secretary General is acting as the Secretary General and the Head of Health and Care, Dr. Bildard Baguma, is acting as the his deputy.

Editorial team:

Design and layout; Hasifa Kabejja, **Assistant Communications Officer**

Editorial adviser; Catherine Ntabadde, **Public Relations Officer**

Photos by Catherine Ntabadde, Hasifa Kabejja, Charles Nsamba, **Public Relations volunteer**

Inside the issue



Page 3

Staff bid farewell to outgoing Secretary General



Page 6

Red Cross supports Teso Farmers

Fundamental principles of the Red Cross Movement

Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary service, Unity, Universality

Our Mission

To improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable people in Uganda as an effective and efficient humanitarian organization

Our Vission

An empowered, healthy and self-sustaining community that responds to the needs of the vulnerable

Road safety - Kampala Central/North branches

Red Cross, NSSF repaint zebra crossings

By Suzan Akoth & Tina Namubiru

Many people lose their lives on roads due to poor road safety measures. Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in July partnered with National Social Security Fund (NSSF) to repaint zebra crossings in order to improve people's safety on the roads in Kampala City. NSSF contributed sh4.5 million to the project.

The re-painting exercise was officially launched at the main Post Office on Kampala Road by the URCS Secretary General Mr. Michael Nataka and the NSSF Managing Director, Mr. David Chandi Jamwa.

Staff members of both organisations participated in the painting of the zebra crossings. The repainted zebra crossings included that at the main Post Office along Kampala road, Makerere University main gate,

Makerere College School gate and along Ben Kiwanuka Street near Old Taxi park .

“Promoting road safety is a corporate social responsibility and we will work together to ensure that the zebra crossings are rejuvenated,” said Mr.

Nataka. He further mentioned that last year NSSF supported URCS in assisting the Northern flood victims.

The NSSF Managing Director, Mr. Jamwa, pointed out that police reports showed that 9,144 accidents occurred in 2006 with over 310 people losing their lives and this greatly called for action. He said the use of



URCS Acting Secretary Michael Nataka and NSSF Managing Director Chandi Jamwa paint the zebra crossing at Post Office on Kampala Road.

high quality paint for the zebra crossings will make them to stay longer. Re-painting zebra crossings is part of URCS' Road Safety Programme. Mr. Nataka promised to continue working with NSSF and other organisations in promoting the well being of the society particularly on the use of the roads.

Soroti Branch

URCS trains volunteers in HIV/AIDS, domestic violence

Hasifa Kabejja

Uganda Red Cross Society in July trained 40 volunteers from the camps of Amugei, Adepar and Ajeleik in Soroti district and Amuria Sub Branch in basic facts about HIV/AIDS and



A volunteer coordinator disseminates during the training.

Gender Based violence (GBV).

The trainees included camp leaders, women representatives and youth. The training that run from 10th-18th July was aimed at exploring and clarifying the basic facts about HIV/AIDS and GBV and to guide volunteers to improve their skills and attitudes toward conducting awareness sessions.

It was also aimed at sharing experiences on health matters affecting different camps, improving participants' awareness about the Red Cross Movement and establishing performance requirements of volunteers who will be implementing the HIV/AIDS and GBV activities in

the selected camps.

Topics tackled included the Volunteer Policy, Dissemination of Red Cross movement and basics facts about HIV/AIDS like the HIV and immune system, the modes of transmission, biological risk, opportunistic infections, STD/STI and ARV therapy. Under gender based violence, the volunteers were taken through the definition of Gender, violence, human rights, the types, causes, effects and prevention GBV.

The trainees are expected to conduct HIV/AIDS and GBV awareness sessions in their respective camps. They are also expected to form drama groups in the camps.

Farewell party

Fare thee well Alice

By Hasifa Kabejja



Mrs. Alice Anukur

Career progression is vital for person's development; no one should stay at one workplace for more than five years, the Chairman of Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), Mr. Tom Buruku, advised staff in his farewell message to the outgoing Secretary General, Mrs. Alice Uwase Anukur.



The National Treasurer, Mr. Stephen Mutenyo, shares a light moment with Alice as the URCS Chairman, Mr. Tom Buruku (L), and Alice's husband, Mr Luther Anukur, look on.

The function that was graced by the URCS Goodwill Ambassador, also a daughter to President Yoweri Museveni, Mrs. Natasha Karugire, and several corporates, took place at Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala on 21st July.

Mr. Buruku said Mrs. Anukur's regime had realized several achievements for the National Society. "During Alice's regime, the URCS budget rose to Shs21 billion up from Shs15 billion. We were also subjected to an SGS audit test in 2006 in which we scored impressively with 90.7% hence receiving a certificate of compliance for 18 months effective January 2007," he said.

Other speakers of the day who included the outgoing chairperson of the Great Women of Charity (fundraise for URCS), Mrs. Cecilia Lwanga, and the Inspector General of Police, Maj. Gen. Kale Kayihura, praised Mrs. Anukur as a committed, hardworking and focused person. The URCS President congratulated Mrs. Anukur upon her new appointment and cautioned staff to continue performing their duties diligently to further uplift the image of the Red Cross.

In her farewell speech, Mrs. Anukur said she was impressed that URCS had attained its objective of being the leading assistance provider in the country.

"This has been evidenced through the capacity and experience of the National Society to mobilize assistance for vast and diverse sets vulnerable people that require external intervention like the numerous victims of road accidents; families and institutions affected by fires; households affected by floods and storms in Eastern and Central Uganda and families affected by drought," she said.



The Fundraising Taskforce Chairperson, Mrs. Cecilia Lwanga (L) delivers the groups farewell message as other members look on. (2nd L-R) Mrs. Fancy Ogweng, Mr. Peter Kore, Mrs. Ajman Khan and Ms. Grace Obua. Turn to page 4

Mrs. Anukur said URCS had continuously provided relief assistance and resettled and rehabilitated the people of northern Uganda who have for nearly two decades been internally displaced.



Mrs. Anukur (C) and Mr. Anukur (R) share a moment with URCS staff.

URCS bids farewell to outgoing Secretary General

From page 3

“There are tons and tons of memories and testimonies by people of how Red Cross made a difference in the lives of others. Each time I introduce my self as working for the Red Cross (RC), someone comes and says I know what RC has done; the beauty about all this is that great work has been accomplished,” she said.

Mrs. Anukur commended organizations and individuals who she said gave off their time, financial and material resources to support Red Cross work. The organizations and individuals

include the URCS board members, the Great Women of Charity, the volunteers, the Goodwill Ambassador, MTN Uganda, Barclays Bank, the government of Uganda, donors like USAID, DFID and SIDA and the Red Cross family (ICRC and IFRC).

Mrs. Anukur said when she joined URCS as Deputy Secretary General in 2000, she found the National Society strongly committed to serve the vulnerable and this remained her motivation throughout her tenure.

“I am happy that at this point of exit there is even greater potential to maxi-

mize our strength and experiences for a stronger and greater Uganda Red Cross,” she said.

“As a person, the Red Cross has built me and exposed me to other parts of the world and given me experience to contribute to issues beyond the national level at Africa regional level and at the global level. I am also happy that the opportunity to serve the Red Cross which is the largest humanitarian movement in the world has been fruitful and a step for me to move to Oxfam the World’s reknown advocacy agency for the poor.

Branch news

Kampala central trains schools in road safety

By Charles Nsamba

Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in partnership with Arrive Alive Uganda in July launched a three-month road safety awareness campaign in schools in Kampala.



The campaign that was launched in 10 schools, was aimed at creating awareness about road safety among school children. The children were educated on how to save lives of road accident victims and the importance of using safety gears while on the road.

URCS officials address students from Kampala schools.

The schools are Kampala High School, Kireka Primary school, City High School, Kibuye Primary School, Kyambogo College School, Buganda Road Primary School, Mengo Senior School, St. Peters Primary and St. Peters Secondary Schools Nsambya and Lubiri Senior School.

The campaign is expected to end in October 2008. Participating schools were given safety gears like helmets, and visible road signs were planted along the roads around participating schools. URCS together with Arrive Alive also distributed information, educational and communication (IEC) materials like T-shirts and posters with road safety messages in the participating schools. URCS was in charge of the sensitization exercise while Arrive Alive distributed the safety gadgets.

Birthday



The Acting Secretary General, Mr. Michael Richard Nataka, made 40 years on 17th July. Wish you many more happy years

Obituary



Victor Nandyose passed away on 2nd July, 2008. She served the URCS as a volunteer for three years. May her soul rest in eternal peace

Wakiso Branch



Teachers and pupils of Kasangati Education Centre compete in a football match.



Pupils of Kasangati Education Centre compete in athletics.

Red Cross school celebrates sports day

By Catherine Ntabadde

They say work without play makes Jack a dull boy. Indeed this was witnessed on July 26, 2008 at Kyaddondo County Grounds in Wakiso District as pupils of the newly opened Kasangati Education Centre participated in a variety of games during a sports day.

Kasangati Education Centre is a school run by Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) through its Wakiso Branch, thanks to UBS Optimus Foundation that provided funds to facilitate the opening of the institute.

Apart from having fun and keeping fit, the pupils had to play hard to win a bull and trophies. After the football match, the bull was displayed in the middle of the playground to ensure that pupils continue competing while having a glance the winning prize. And the winner was? Nataka House with 300 points. Nataka house is named

after URCS' Acting Secretary General, Mr. Michael Nataka. The second House was Simbwa House with 293 points. Simbwa House is named after the Wakiso Branch Field Coordinator. It was followed by Schmocker House 264 and Roger House 256 points. Schmocker and Roger are named after two representatives of UBS Optimum Foundation.

Kasangati Education Centre caters for 400 vulnerable children. Clad in a red track suit, Wakiso Branch Field Coordinator, Mr. Khalid Ssimbwa, told guests that the school caters for all education needs of the pupils. He said under the same project, there is a farm with 350 pigs and 1, 500 birds for income generating purposes. "We are also undertaking agriculture. We grow various crops like maize, matooke and cassava. Some of the food is for feeding the children while the rest is for income generating for the school," he

explained

In addition, the school has tents, chairs, a band, disco which are rented out to support it. According to Mr. Ssimbwa, the school owns 20 acres of land and construction of the school premises is ongoing.

The guest of honor, Mr. Robert Ssebunya, URCS Board vice chairman hailed UBS Optimus Foundation for its contribution saying it will go along way in alleviating the suffering of those vulnerable children who cannot have access to education. "Our focus as Red Cross is to improve the lives of those in need. Today we are witnessing one of the ways through which we reach out to those vulnerable people," Mr. Ssebunya said.

He called upon parents, district and sub county leaders and community members to protect the project saying it does not belong to URCS but the community.

Agriculture

Red Cross supports Teso farmers

By Catherine Ntabadde

They have been engaged in farming but mainly for food consumption. Much as they could have some food to eat, they do need income to meet their other needs. That is why Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) has come in to cluster them into groups to achieve these objectives. These are farmers based in Amuria, one of the districts heavily affected by floods in 2007.

As part of URCS' food security programme, 60 farmers groups have been formed. Each group has 15-25 farmers. In order to boost their produce for food consumption and marketing, 30 farmers groups on July 19, 2008 received 60 oxen and 15 ox ploughs. These equipment were handed over by State Minister for Disaster Preparedness Musa Ecweru and URCS Acting Secretary General Michael Nataka in Urungo sub county, Amuria district.

The function was also graced by the Central Governing Board regional representative for North Eastern, Mr. Martin Otuba.

URCS has embarked on an income generating programme that will see farmers have access to food but also increase their income through commercial farming. This project, which is part of URCS' food security programme, is targeting 60 farmers groups. In May 2008, URCS launched a food security strategy that aims at ensuring food availability, accessibility and utilisation. The income generating programme will enable farmers increase their

income through group farming on large scale production and growing of high value crops with careful under-



Residents of Amuria District wait to receive Oxen and Ox-plough from URCS officials.

standing of environmental changes.



The Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness, Hon. Musa Ecweru tries out an Ox-plough during the distribution exercise in Urungo Sub County.

- The objectives of this project are:**
- 1.To organize communities in groups for block farming with modern agriculture practices.**
 - 2.To make demonstration gardens with the help of Arapai Agriculture College students for developing high value seedlings.**

The Acting Secretary General, Mr. Michael Nataka, said the project which has been on for three years is also meant to complement the nutrition of the internally displaced people (IDP). "We are here to witness

our prolonged assistance to this area. URCS is every where in Uganda. Our presence in the country is an indicator that there is a humanitarian need or problem," he said.

Mr. Nataka explained that in the last four years, URCS has distributed 60, 000 seed kits in Amuria & Katakwi districts. In 2008 alone, 10, 000 seed kits and seeds have been distributed in the Teso region. URCS further intends to distribute 11, 000 seeds in the same region for 2nd planting season. Mr. Ecweru commended URCS for its continued operations across the country, adding that the organisation is different from some humanitarian organisations that don't deliver what they pledge.

He hailed URCS for catalysing recovery in the region. He however noted that hunger has struck in the country. "There is hunger in Teso region. It is now wider and goes beyond areas that were affected by floods," Ecweru noted. He warned the beneficiaries of the URCS' income generating project against using the bulls donated for marriage. The Minister further said URCS is a very credible institution and that is why most donors want to associate with the organisation.

The income generating programme will also include provision of seeds, training of village based volunteers on better agriculture practices, establishment of seed fare centres and mobilisation of the beneficiaries and provision of bicycles to parish based volunteers to monitor the project.

Branch news

Jinja celebrates youth day

By Hasifa Kabejja & Charles Nsamba

The International Youth Day that falls on 12th August every year is one the annual events that various branches of Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) engage in to show commitment toward serving the youth and to test the youth's knowledge about the National Society's activities.

The international theme for this year's celebrations was Youth and Climatic Change, Time to take Action, but Jinja branch that held the fifth annual youth day celebrations on 12th July adopted a theme "You and I in partnership to serve the vulnerable" to train the youth in ways of addressing vulnerability since climate change also leads to vulnerability.

Activities conducted to mark the day included tree planting, blood donation and drama competitions among the youth links in the branch. Tree planting was done in commemoration of the international theme. The trees were planted at the branch offices by among others the URCS Acting Secretary General Michael Nataka and the Society Vice Chairman, Mr. Robert Ssebunya.



Jinja youth perform during the Youth Day.

Fifteen youth links including Jinja College, Jinja SS, Good Heart SS, Masese Girls SS, Nakanyonyi SS, Busoga College Mwiri, Holy Cross SS, Wailaka College and Wanyange Girls participated in the drama competition under the theme "You and I in Partnership to Serve the Vulnerable", with Good Heart SS emerging winners. The links displayed skills of helping the vulnerable including provision of first aid services, food and non food items to the needy.

Speaking at the function, the Escom Managing Director, Ms. Nokwanda Mngeni, said she was deeply touched by the vulnerable serving the vulnerable. "Today's youth is bombarded with unemployment, absent or unable parents, as a result they have to fend for themselves to get educated. All kinds of abuses are directed at women and youth. So the young person has every right to be angry at life, but you have chosen to help the vulnerable and this is very encouraging," she said.

She said those who engage in serving the vulnerable may seem like they are just volunteering and helping, but the fact is they are building in themselves the capacity to be considerate and responsible citizens.

Regarding environmental protection, Mr. Ssebunya said the youth from 85% of the URCS volunteer force can play a vital role in addressing climatic change by sensitizing communities on the importance of green vegetation and encouraging them to plant trees. He appealed to the Escom MD to consider increasing power supply in the country, saying it is one of the ways through which the environment can be protected from degraders.

Red Cross improves sanitation in Amuria, Katakwi

By Leah Nabunya

Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) continues to act as a major player in provision of safe water and sanitation services in Uganda.

URCS has constructed 145 bathing shelters in Atiri and Torama camps in Katakwi district. Latrines have also been constructed in the districts of Katakwi and Amuria. Twenty institutional latrines have been set up in 18 primary schools while 450 family latrines have been erected in various sub counties in the two districts.

In order to provide safe water to the community, the organisation has taken a centre stage in constructing boreholes for the community. Twenty boreholes have been rehabilitated in Katakwi and Amuria and the community has been sensitised on proper usage.

Sixteen contaminated boreholes have been disinfected with chlorine. The organisation also procured and distributed five repair pump kits to five sub counties in Amuria and Katakwi. URCS has trained 35 volunteers in effective water source management.

The organisation has also been influential in promoting hygiene in the community by sending out awareness messages through radio spots and talk shows.



Serving humanity



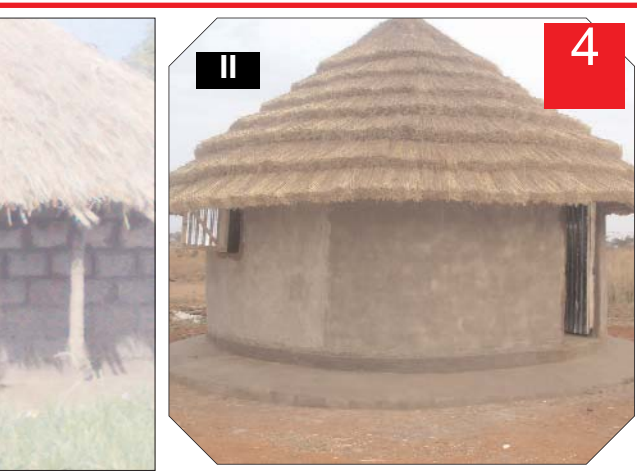
1. URCS Vice Chairman Robert Ssebunya (in gray suit) washes his hands after planting a tree at the Jinja Branch office. This was during the branch youth day celebrations on 12th July. Looking on are the Entebbe Branch Field Coordinator, Mr. Shaban Mawanda (R), the Acting Secretary General, Mr. Michael Richard Nataka (2nd R) and a member of the Central Governing Board, Mr. Godffrey Kaganda (in red).



2. Staff during a URCS central planning meeting at Tal Cottages in Kabusu, Kampala.

3. Mr. Frank Dewez, Head of the Ordina team with other ordina members and URCS staff try out Ordina t-shirts after a consultative meeting at the URCS headquarters in August. The Ordina team was contracted by the Netherlands Red Cross to help URCS in the regionalization process.

4. (I) A sample of the huts that internally displaced people used to live in before the floods. (II). One of the modern huts that the URCS has contracted for the flood victims in Katakwi and Amuria districts in Eastern Uganda.



5. Residents and URCS officials welcome a British consultant on risk reduction at the Rukungiri branch office in August.



6. The staff of UNMONUC pose for a photo at their offices in Entebbe. This was after their final assessment in first aid training by Musalaba Mwekundu Ltd, a company that mobilizes resources for URCS.



Drug Abuse

Humanitarian drug policy in the offing

By Hasifa Kabejja

A humanitarian policy to curb drug abuse worldwide is in the offing.

Representatives from National Societies in Eastern and Southern Africa in July held a two-day regional meeting in Entebbe, Uganda to share information and challenges posed by drug abuse and to commit themselves to finding solutions. The meeting was the second conference – Rome Consensus to be organized for the African region. The first meeting was held in December 2007 in Cape Verde for the West and Central African regions.

Red Cross and Red Crescent societies all over the world find it fit to treat drug users as patients who need care and support and therefore the need for a humanitarian approach to the problem.

Why the humanitarian policy?

Speaking during the conference on 4th July, the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) Chairman, Mr Tom Buruku, said the Humanitarian Drug Policy is a result of wide consultations and sharing of practical experiences by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which have realized that despite various policies and vigorous efforts by the Police, the Ministry of Health and other government institutions worldwide, drug abuse remains a society hazard that requires change and more innovative humanitarian approaches.

Drug abuse and trafficking is on the increase with an estimated 200 million drug users worldwide.

“
The Humanitarian Drug Policy seeks to revise the traditional thinking regarding drug abusers as criminals

“Already, 110 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have committed themselves by signing the Humanitarian Drug Policy,” Mr. Buruku said. “The Humanitarian Drug Policy seeks to revise the traditional thinking regarding drug abusers as criminals. It advocates that they should be treated as patients and persons that need our support, rehabilitation and positive behavioral change.” Mr. Buruku said the Humanitarian Drug

Policy is also based on the premise that drug abuse is not only a personal problem but a social and public issue.

The policy recognizes that the dramatic increase in drug consumption has been accompanied by an increase in drug production and trafficking associated with extreme poverty and breakdown in social fabric. It therefore seeks to protect public health, security, to reduce the suffering of the abusers and their families from discrimination and to limit the damage associated with drug use to both individuals and the society. Mr. Buruku called on leaders and representatives of the different National Societies and institutions to join efforts to ratify the policy.

The humanitarian approach is timely as the government of Uganda is planning to review the Drug Policy and update the legislation. In a speech read by the State Minister for Health in charge of General Duties, the Prime Minister, Prof. Apolo Nsibambi, said like HIV, drug abuse has no boundaries because it affects the abuser and the community, and therefore a phenomenon that requires multi-sectoral approaches. “The humanitarian policy being disseminated today has all the aspects to address the drug challenges if national societies can put it into practice. I hope this policy will be a field tool to reverse the negative drug abuse and trafficking trends in our regions,” he said.



The URCS Chairman, Mr. Tom Buruku, addresses participants at the conference. Looking on are the State Minister for Health in charge of General Duties, Mr. Richard Nduhura (3rd R), the President of Italian Red Cross, Mr. Bara Emmanuel and some members of the Rome Consensus.

Bundibugyo Branch

URCS trains volunteers in fuel conservation

By Charles Nsamba

Uganda Red Cross Society Bundibugyo branch in July conducted a 12-day training of 20 trainers of trainers (TOT) in the use of renewable energy saving stoves.

The training, which was conducted in Rwebishengo Sub County in the parishes of Kiranga, Bweramure and Haibale run from 23rd July to 3rd August 2008.

Mr. Fred Wambi, the chief trainer from Energy Concern, said he trained the participants in the use of two types of stoves, namely, the rocket lorena and the shielded stove. These stoves are made from local materials like anthill or clay soil, dry grass, water, dry banana leaves and bricks.

“The materials and nature of these stoves help to conserve fuel wood which makes them environmentally friendly,” Mr Wambi said. “Compared to the three stone stove, the rocket lorena and the shielded stove save between 30 to 40 percent of fuel wood.”

It has also been noted that because the renewable energy saving stoves, specifically the rocket lorena are meant to be used from a kitchen, several homesteads have been encouraged to construct kitchens. The training was funded by Oxfam GB.

Ensuring safety at workplace

Staff acquire skills in fire fighting

By Hasifa Kabejja

Since the fire that gutted Budo Junior School in April, killing 20 children, fire outbreaks have increased countrywide, therefore, there is need to take precaution to prevent any eventuality that may cause loss of lives and thousands of property.

As a measure of preparing for any outbreak, Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) recently hired the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Mr. Simon Peter Musoke, to train staff in fire safety measures.



URCS driver Natali Ochama, tries out a fire extinguisher at the office grounds in August.

“Fire can occur everywhere at anytime so it must be everybody’s responsibility to ensure that all things that can lead to fire outbreak are in control,” Mr. Musoke told staff in his opening remarks.

He cautioned staff to avoid overloading electric circuits, to unplug electrical appliances whenever they are leaving office and to avoid irresponsible smoking habits and using candles.

Mr. Musoke said heat producing appliances placed on or near com-

bustible materials and poor electrical wiring can also lead to fire outbreak.

Other causes of fires, he said, include taking calls at fuel service stations, overcharging batteries or mobile phones, talking on phone while charging it and reckless welding.

Mr. Musoke asked the URCS management to install fire extinguishers in all offices saying they are the most effective way of putting out fire. He also said fire alarms, smoke detectors and manual call points can be very helpful in fighting fire.

“Cultivate a culture of safety and security on the premises and avoid locking emergency doors. The estates officer should ensure regular testing, inspection and maintenance of electrical systems at the premise,” Mr. Musoke cautioned.

Gulu/Lira branches

URCS offers psychosocial support to children

By Aworo Lilian

With a mission of improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable people in Uganda as an effective and efficient humanitarian organization, the Ugandan Red Cross, through its community development Programme in partnership & support from the Finnish Red Cross, has embarked on yet another of the most challenging areas, of addressing psychological challenges encountered by children and their families in war affected areas.

Pioneering the project in its branches of Lira and Gulu districts, concentration of the project activities are in the sub counties of Ongako and Bungatira in Gulu district and Aloji & Amugu in Lira district, supporting a total of 320 children plus their families.

Through a network of staff at the branch, region and national level, as well as volunteers who comprise Trainers of Trainers (TOTs), CVCs and ordinary community volunteers, leaders and CSO, interventions are carried out under the International Red Cross and Red Crescent fundamental principles focusing on psychosocial counseling, children recreation fora, psychosocial trainings, dissemination of Red Cross principles and

IHL, self help initiatives, family tracing/ reunion and referrals.

Beneficiaries' accounts

Ojok Emmanuel aged 13 years, a Primary 5 pupil in Gulu town primary school, is one of the project benefici-



The psychosocial focal person, Gulu, Ms. Lillian Aworo, counsels an ex-abducted child.

aries and shared his life story with the focal person and community volunteer counselors while on a visit at his school and home.

"One morning in 1997, [at age of 3] my parents had gone to the garden and left me at home alone. They left some food at the fireplace, which was burning, hoping to return and find it ready for lunch. Out of curiosity, I reached out to the fireplace and accidentally fell into it! All my bottoms got burnt and I sat screaming and helpless until some people from the

neighborhood heard a child screaming. They ran to my rescue but I was already burnt. My parents returned from the garden and found me in a completely pathetic state, I was rushed to Lacor Hospital where I received medication, unfortunately for me despite the medication, the burn left me in a state that has caused me denial and discrimination among other children at school, I defecate all the time without control and the smell is unbearable!

Unfortunately for me also, in 2004, my father was murdered by the LRA rebels in an ambush, leaving me with a mother who decided to neglect me and abandoned me since 2005. I understand she got married to another man. I

am now living with my uncle who has tried to take care of me alongside his children.

At a certain point I dropped out of school, my classmates used to despise me, that I am very poor, smelly, don't have shoes for school and many other insults. The thought of going to school was unbearable.

Thank You very much for caring for me, for coming to see me at least now other children will see that there are people who like me" the young boy said

Turn to page 13

Kisoro Branch trains community disseminators

By Mahoro Goretti
& Mwizera Gerald

Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in August trained 10 volunteers from Kisoro District with the aim of empowering them with knowledge and skills to increase awareness about the Red Cross in

the district through dissemination.

The five-day training that was conducted at the Kisoro Branch office was facilitated by among others the Mbarara Regional Programme Officer Organizational Development, Mr. Kyomukama Johnson, the Mbarara Disaster

Management Programme Officer, Mr. Francis Byaruhanga and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Cooperation Assistant, Ms. Faith Akiror.

Topics covered included the

Turn to page 13

URCS provides psychosocial support to children

From page 12

before breaking down to tears. Emmanuel's class teacher appreciated the idea of visiting him at school saying that he hates coming to school because other children insult him, but the visit was a great encouragement.

URCS psychosocial project therefore is out to reach out to all persons facing different sorts of psychological challenges, particularly those at the verge of losing hope in life.

Aromorach Eunice aged seven years; a primary one pupil in Bungatira Central Primary School, Gulu, also a beneficiary shared this with the project focal person and community volunteer counselors while on a home visit at her household. "I came here [Owak - Agonga] early this year in March 2008, together with four of my brothers and sisters plus our mother who is HIV+ and very weak. We lived in Atiak with our father until early this year when he died and left us under the care of our mother who is very weak. Life became so different and difficult, rela-

tives of our late father and the community around Atiak resented us and kept insulting us since we always had to beg for food and other support from our neighbors. Our mother is very weak and



can hardly do

Ms. Aworo prepares some of the children under the URCS psychosocial project in Gulu for a match.

anything to earn an income to keep us in school, feed us, and take care of other household chores. The community described us as a nuisance and wished we left the place. Our grandmother decided to offer us a hut at her homestead here, where we are now. We had dropped out of

school, life became meaningless, we all seemed to hate each other especially our ill mother who keeps falling sick.

Thanks to the Red Cross volunteers who paid us a visit during their assessment exercise and accepted to comfort us. Ever since you came to this home we have regained hope, mummy now knows how to handle her sickness and feels she has friends to share with in the group "you formed", she normally meets with. I have come to like school more because of your guidance and counseling and look forward to weekends when I can interact with other children through the sports and drama activities.

Children and caregivers reached testify and greatly appreciate each moment that the URCS Volunteers take time off to spend with them. Psychosocial support has proven to be one of the ways that the URCS will empower communities and create self-sustainability among the most vulnerable persons.

Kisoro branch trains disseminators

From page 12

History of the Red Cross, principles, the Red Cross structure, URCS activities, the International Humanitarian Law, ideals and membership recruitment.

The training was reinforced by the fact that the majority of Kisoro residents are ignorant about the Red Cross. At the end of the training, the trainees were given an opportunity to disseminate in two higher institutions of learning under the assessment of the trainers. Speaking at the closure of the train-

ing, the Branch Governing Board Chairman, Mr. Nturo cautioned the participants to diligently perform their duties to improve the image of the National Society.



He commended the International Committee of the Red Cross and URCS for facilitating the training saying it would

The Mbarara Regional Programme Officer, Organizational Development, Mr Johnson Kyomukama, trains Kisoro community disseminators.

boost the image of the National Society through the awareness created by the disseminators.

HIV/AIDS

Red Cross scales up fight against stigma

By Sam Mugisha

The Red Cross society is greatly committed to fight HIV/AIDS at all levels.

It out of this commitment that the Red Cross and Red Crescent+ (RCRC+) was formed in Geneva mid this year and it is to funda-

mentally fight stigma and discrimination right from the Federation to zonal level as well as national society level. It will also trickle down to branches of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

RCRC+ are to be the champions of masambo fund and as a network has to ensure that more staff

and volunteers of Red Cross in need of this fund use it appropriately.

As a national society we are challenged to embrace this idea if the fight against HIV/AIDS is to be successful. "HIV/AIDS is with us so it is us to take the lead in the fight against the epidemic.

Apac Branch in AIDS prevention drive

From Apac

Within the next one year, URCS intends to reach over 250,000 people with messages on HIV/AIDS Prevention. This was revealed by the Branch Field Coordinator (BFC) of Apac while addressing 45 clients being supported by the Home Based Care Project funded by the Civil Society Fund.

According to the BFC Simon Peter Anyanzo, the branch will under the Home Based Care Project roll out prevention services to the eight project sub counties, Landing sites in Akokoro and UCC Aduku amongst others. He revealed that already the branch has facilitated the creation of 130 condom distribution outlets in areas that are hard to reach in an effort to promote safe sex.

Calling for the need to boost awareness, the BFC further revealed that the branch will be supporting PWLH groups in the eight sub counties for drama and talk shows on HIV within the branch and project areas.

In yet another event, Apac branch has stepped up efforts at providing care support and prevention activities as its contribution to fighting HIV/AIDS in the two districts of Oyam and Apac. The branch carried out over 30 community awareness sessions and radio talk shows on HIV within different sub counties reaching over 60,000 with preventive messages.



A Red Cross volunteer sensitizes residents of Akokoro about HIV/AIDS.



Community members of Atopi Trading Centre read HIV awareness materials after a sensitization session.

Floods recovery programme

Federation of Uganda Employers donates to URCS

By Catherine Ntabadde

The Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) has sunk sh8b in Teso and Northern Uganda districts formerly hit by floods, the Acting Secretary General Mr. Michael Nataka has said.

The sh8b has been spent on the Floods Emergency Phase and Floods Early Recovery Programme. Mr. Nataka said the sh8b was raised from internal (local) and external partners. Sh1b was raised locally in Uganda.

He was speaking during a ceremony to receive sh3m from the Federation of the Uganda Employers (FUE) at their offices in Ntinda on Thursday (July 30, 2008). FUE's contribution will go towards the Floods Recovery Programme.

Of the sh8b so far spent, according to Nataka, sh5b went to Floods

Emergency Phase which ended December 2007 while sh3b is towards the Early Recovery

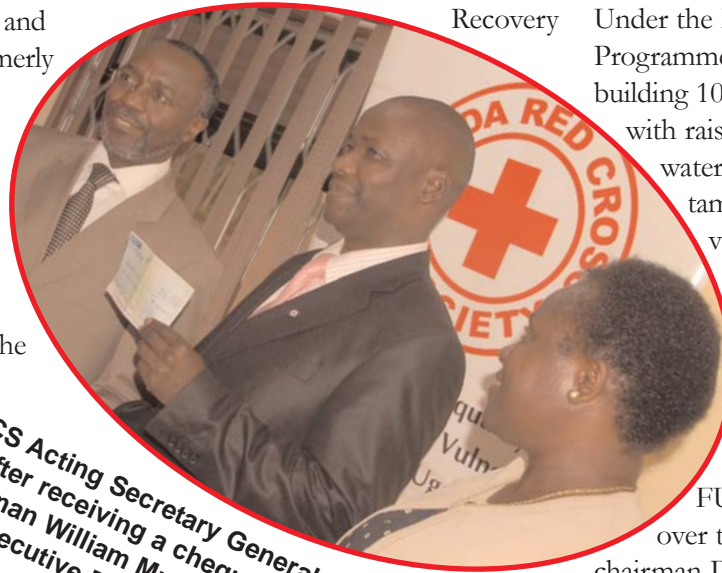
that they go back to their normal lives," he said.

Under the Early Recovery Programme, Nataka said URCS is building 10, 000 floods resistant huts with raised grounds, rehabilitating water sources that were contaminated or destroyed, providing seeds and tools.

"We are grateful to FUE for its contribution. We hope this partnership can be strengthened," he said.

FUE's cheque was handed over to Nataka by FUE Vice-chairman Dr. William Muhairwe. Muhairwe said, "This is a just a token. More support will be coming from us. We appreciate Red Cross' efforts in helping out those people."

The FUE Executive Director, Mrs. Rose Ssenabulya, also said efforts from FUE to reach out to the vulnerable through URCS are still ongoing. She pledged more support.



URCS Acting Secretary General Michael Nataka (C) after receiving a cheque from the FUE Vice Chairman William Muhairwe (L). Looking on is FUE Executive Director Rose Ssenabulya.

Programme that is scheduled to end in September 2008.

"During the emergency operation, you look at saving lives but after that, people need to be rehabilitated so

URCS holds 2008 partnership meeting

By Catherine Ntabadde

Once again they accepted to partner with Uganda's leading humanitarian organisation. They sat, listened to the Uganda Red Cross (URCS) team and made contributions to the presentations. And finally, they announced their pledges to URCS for the year 2009.

This was during URCS' partnership meeting on September 16, 2008 at Hotel Africana in Kampala.

According to URCS Acting Secretary General Mr. Michael



Some of the representatives of partner organizations and URCS staff during the meeting at Hotel Africana.

Nataka, the objectives of the partnership meeting were: To present and discuss with the URCS partners

the progress of implementation of Strategic Plan 2007-2010, to share URCS plans including resource mobilisation plans and budgets for 2009, to share with partners the success, challenges and lessons learnt during implementation, to review the cooperation agreement strategy for URCS and partners.

The Central Governing

Turn to page 17

First Aid training

Staff acquire advanced first aid skills

By Catherine Ntabadde

Fifteen Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) staff and volunteers have undergone training in Intermediate and Advanced Life Support skills and First Aid Instruction skills.

The two-week training that run from July 28-August 7, 2008 in Mbarara was undertaken by Mr. Shimon Shitrit and Mr. Yossi Kitaro, Paramedic Instructors of Magen David Adom (MDA) International Institute. MDA Institute is run by MDA in Israel, the Red Cross Society in Israel.

“Within the next four years, more people including the communities in Uganda will have benefited from this training. The 15 people trained will pass on the skills to others,” Mr. Shitrit said.

Clad in white Red Cross shirts, the trainees graduated on August 7th, 2008. Each received a certificate from URCS Board Vice-Chairman Mr. Robert Ssebunya and the MDA team. The participants were from Mbarara Region, Branches of Mbarara, Arua, Kampala West, Mukono, Gulu, Busia, Lira, Mbale, Kabale, Moroto, Kampala Central and Kampala International University Bushenyi.

Mr. Shitrit said the course involved teaching Advanced First Aid techniques and knowledge. In addition, the participants were equipped with training skills of how to teach practical skills using modern equipment. The participants also learnt about using ambulance services and emer-

gency medical services.

The relationship between URCS and MDA dates back in 2004 when a team from MDA conducted a Train



Mr. Yossi Kitaro (R) and Mr. Shimon Shitrit (R) from the Magen David Adom International Institute, Israel during a first aid training in Mbarara.

ing of Trainers Course for URCS staff to become first aid instructors. URCS and MDA is in negotiation of setting up a National First Aid Training Centre, the first of its kind in the region.

Mr. Ssebunya said with the training skills acquired, URCS will be able to handle challenging emergency

gencies within the communities. “With the advanced training, our staff will be providing adequate response that by the time a causality is referred to hospital, he/she should be in good condition,” he said.

Why the advanced training?

Currently, health facilities in the

country are a distance from the communities. This means if an emergency or accident occurred in a community, casualties may not access medical services in time.

In cases where the casualties are referred to a health facility, they might not be attended to in time given that the current doctor to patient ratio is high. Currently, URCS runs a community based first aid programme where communities are equipped with basic first aid skills. With the training conducted by MDA, communities should be able to administer advanced first aid emergency response.

Mr. Ssebunya said URCS is grateful for the continued cooperation with MDA, adding that the relationship will be strengthened further. In 2004 when the MDA team came to Uganda, they provided equipment to URCS.

Mr. Kitaro said the trainees were always eager to learn, adding that they will be good instructors to others.

Mr. Alex Sewalu, representative of participants said with the increasing number of accidents in the

country, URCS needs to intensify its operations in the field of first aid. He said the course content chosen was relevant to them.



Mr. Kitaro (L) and Mr. Shitrit sort items they used for the first aid training.

Uganda Red Cross holds 2008 partnership meeting

From page 15

Board Chairman Mr. Tom Buruku hailed all the local and international partners that have continuously supported URCS. He said in 2009, URCS' programming will increase to include programmes like Food security programme, Risk Reduction, Drug and substance abuse, Aviation Influenza, focus on regionalisation and general fundraising through cooperation and investment.

He also said URCS plans to com-

mence the construction of a Red Cross Plaza and a Regional Disaster Management Centre in Mbale are still on.

IFRC's Ken Odur said the Federation is proud of URCS. He explained that the Red Cross Movement is continuously being challenged to respond to their needs of the vulnerable, emergencies and disasters across the globe. He hailed URCS for its successful handling of recent emergencies and disasters in the country.

ICRC Deputy Head of Delegation in Uganda, Mr. Ali Naraghi, said ICRC will slightly reduce its presence in Uganda in the coming years given the prevailing security in the country.

He noted that in 2009, they will continue focusing on assisting the most vulnerable in the remote rural areas of Northern Uganda, support health centres in Nemule, Kitgum and Fortportal, hygiene promotion activities, water & sanitation, detention activities and tracing.

Serving the needy with passion

By Charles Nsamba

When she walked into the communication office, she greeted everyone and introduced herself as Nafula. It was with no doubt that this was the person I had been expecting. The tall chocolate skinned lady did not take a sit until she had been offered one. She looked intelligent and yet self-efficing.

"I came up with this idea because I felt I needed to lend a hand to a situation, as an individual-a Ugandan citizen," Ms. Nafula Awori, Executive Director 21st Century Capital and Consulting said. "Personally, I believe we should all find a way of contributing to the development of the nation, and to me, there is no question about that".

"I approached Uganda Red Cross, requesting them to identify an area where I could give any assistance, a decision I took from the heart because I felt I needed to do something," she narrates. "In life, one has to decide whether to buy clothes, jewellery and other fancy things or to rally-round a soul some where to have a better life." Nafula adds that

for all the years the people in northern Uganda have suffered; she has not felt the urgency of the situation among Ugandans.

URCS supports over 2,460 Orphans and Vulnerable Children from the central, north and north eastern districts.

"Initially, the children were fully supported by URCS in terms of education and psychosocial support but because of insufficient funding, the society could only provide the psychosocial support", Mr. Prosper Byonanebye, the programme officer in charge of HIV/AIDS said. "Ms. Nafula approached us and asked to take care of the education needs of 11 girls, who were selected on merit," Mr. Byonanebye added.

"I have always wanted to work with children, especially girls because they are marginalized, especially in our African setting. They are more vul-



nerable and yet some are very bright and if given the opportunity, they can produce excellent results." Nafula says that her goal is to make a difference in the girls' future and when they become successful they can also go back to their home areas and do the same for other young girls in such situations.

"I chose this humble approach because it is practical; I provide school supplies, and other basics like sanitary pads because once these children have what they need, they can be able to pay attention and concentrate while in class," she adds. "I want to treat this as a cycle; when I help one child, I expect her to go back and help others who are in the same situation." She says that she is grateful to Uganda Red Cross for its continued efforts in serving the vulnerable, but added that this role should not be left to only NGOs but should be extended even to individuals.

"I always walk with these girls in my heart, despite the fact that I have not met them, Nafula says. "When my day ends, I know I'm going back to them and that gives me joy."



The seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross Movement

Humanity

The Red Cross movement aims at providing assistance to the vulnerable without discrimination to prevent & alleviate human suffering. Its purpose is to protect life & health and to ensure respect for human dignity. The movement also promotes mutual understanding & lasting cooperation among all people.

While national societies are auxiliaries to their governments in the provision of humanitarian services & subject to the laws of their respective countries, they should maintain their autonomy.

Voluntary Service

As a humanitarian organisation, it is a voluntary relief movement, not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Impartiality

The Red Cross does not discriminate. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals being guided by their needs and giving priority to the most urgent cases.

Unity

There can only be one Red Cross or Red Crescent society in any one country. It must be open to all and carry out humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Neutrality

To earn the confidence of all, the Movement takes no sides in hostilities nor does it engage in controversies of a political, social, religious or ideological nature.

Universality

The Red Cross/Red Crescent movement is worldwide. All societies have equal status and share equal responsibility in helping each other.

Independence

Uganda Red Cross Society, Plot 28/30 Lumumba Avenue,

P.O. Box 494 Kampala Uganda

Tel: 0256-041-258701/2; 0256-031-260615;

Fax: 0256-041-258184, Website: www.redcrossug.org

