



The Humanitarian

All you need to know about Uganda Red Cross Society activities

April - June 2008



A URCS volunteer in Kitgum providing bicycle ambulance services to an Hepatitis E patient for referral

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Editorial

The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement once again celebrated the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Day 2008. In Uganda, Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) climaxed the celebrations in Tororo branch under the theme, "You & I in partnership to serve the most vulnerable."

The 2008 theme was chosen at the time the National Society is using all avenues to sustain and create new partnership with the local community. This move, it is hoped will reduce URCS' dependence on the donor community but strengthen its partnership with Ugandan stakeholders like the corporate world, government agencies and the community it serves.

Since the launch of the floods appeal in 2007, a number of stakeholders within the country have joined hands with URCS to bring services nearer to those who are in need. To this, the National Society expresses gratitude to all local & international organisations, individuals, agencies for their continued support to URCS.

During the Red Cross/Red Crescent Day celebrations, URCS celebrated a milestone by launching a long term Food Security Strategy which aims at ensuring food availability, access to and utilisation. Since 2004, URCS has been actively engaged in short term initiatives to reduce food insecurity in areas affected by insurgency. Over 75, 000 households benefited from the initiatives.

The purpose of the long term strategy is to scale up URCS efforts in national food security programmes by providing at least 20% of the most vulnerable populations with longer term food security support to enhance their resilience by 2012.

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2, 500 mothers to attain safe delivery

The 7 fundamental principles of the Red Cross Movement

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

Development Assistance to Refugee Hosting Areas (DAR) DAR Project changing lives!

By Catherine Ntabadde

As you approach her compound, you could easily notice that it is well swept. You could hardly see a leaf on the ground.. The bathroom, toilet, hand washing facility, kitchen, drying rack are all neat. Inside her house, it is sparklingly and the beds are well laid with mosquito nets hanging over.

This is the home of Mary Mbabazi in Kehembe village, Kabwoya Sub County in Hoima District, one of the 64 Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) hygiene promoters trained under the Development Assistance to Refugee Hosting Areas (DAR) programme in Hoima, Masindi, Nebbi and Arua districts.

DAR is a three year programme implemented by Uganda Red Cross Society with funding from Danish Red Cross. The PHAST hygiene promoters go out in the communities to train other community members and the cycle continues. "The hygiene in the communities we sensitise has greatly improved. Diseases like cholera and diarrhea are no longer a problem," Mbabazi explained.

Mbabazi says the DAR programme distributed treated mosquito nets to them.. According to the DAR Programme Officer Ms. Hellen Mukundane, the programme has so far distributed 4, 400 treated mosquito nets to expectant mothers, children below 5 years and People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV) in the four DAR districts.

The objectives of the programme are: Improving the lives of the most vulnerable in the project areas by reducing morbidity, disability & mortality caused by the prevailing diseases:

Increasing awareness and respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) values as well as the rights of the selected vulnerable groups including refugees.

The programme ends in October 2008.

DAR is supporting 32 Orphans & Vulnerable Children-out of school. They have acquired skills in tailoring and have also been given sewing machines. 700 orphans who are in schools have also been supported with scholastic materials, school bags, uniforms.

During DAR media dialogues in Hoima and Arua districts in May 2008, Ms. Mukundane said all volunteers utilized for the different components have undergone training.

The programme has also seen 800 PLWHIV receive services like psychosocial support, home visits, provision



DAR Programme Officer Ms. Mukundane talking to an out of school OVC beneficiary.

of food and non food items, referrals, income generating activities. Other services extended are voluntary counseling and testing and formation of living idols that go out sensitizing communities about the scourge. The formation of Positive Living Clubs under DAR has greatly reduced stigma among the

communities, according to Ms. Mukundane.

"We were too fearful to come out and declare our status. But the programme has given us the courage to live positively and also sensitise others to come out. We have been able to get medication," Chrisanto Ongeyowun, a beneficiary from Zeui Sub County in Nebbi district said.

DAR through its Reproductive Health component has trained 64 traditional birth attendants (TBAs). The TBAs were each equipped with a replenishing kit containing cotton, polythene sheet, absorbent gauze, bandages, cord ligature, razor blades, dettol medicated soap and a pair of gum boots. In 2007, 1, 157 expectant mothers were referred to health centers by TBAs while 135 mothers gave birth with the assistance of TBAs.

The DAR programme has constructed and protected 57 shallow wells and water springs. 80 year old Turyo Oryenda of Agole Village in Erusi Sub County, Nebbi district says his family consumes eight jerrycans of water every day, thanks to the DAR programme that constructed Agulie Oloro water source in his village.



A DAR field officer distributing condoms to a client in Nebbi District.

Emergency Health

Hepatitis E: URCS intervenes

By Hasifa Kabejja

In a bid to curb the deadly Hepatitis E disease that claimed 67 lives and infected 3,530 people in Kitgum district, Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) launched a campaign in March to sensitize communities on avoiding the infection.

The disease affected several sub counties including Madi Opei, Padibe, Mucwini and Paluga, but URCS focused on Agoro Sub County which reportedly had the worst sanitary conditions with latrine coverage as low as 3.7 % and only 23 functional boreholes. Hepatitis E is spread through contaminated water and poor sanitation.

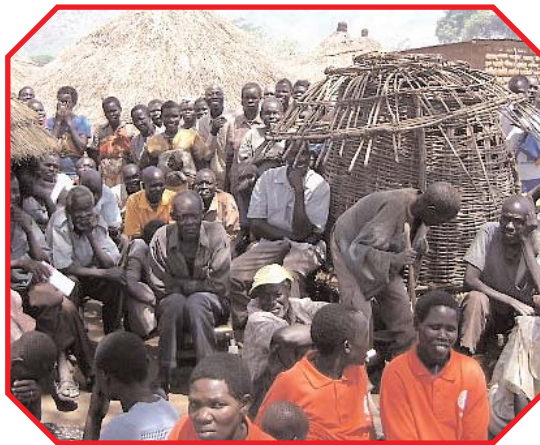
URCS trained 104 community-based vol-

unteers who conducted door to door visits to sensitize people on good hygiene and sanitation practices.

"The health education sessions were extended to churches and the army detachment,

Ministry of Health, URCS developed information materials to improve public awareness about the disease.

URCS also chlorinated water points, distributed water purifi-



One of the sensitisation meetings conducted in the communities to fight hepatitis.

reaching an estimated 12,000 people in the whole sub county," said the Branch Field Coordinator, Kitgum, Mr Opika Opoka.

With assistance from the World Health Organization and the

cation tablets to over 4,000 households and constructed household latrines in Agoro IDP camp.

Monitoring of proper use of sanitary facilities put in place continues.

Youth Empowerment

2008 International youth camp

By Hasifa Kabejja

Youth from various national societies all over the world gather in a specified country each year to celebrate the International Youth Camp.

Each year, the camp is celebrated under a different theme depending on what the youth think are the most pressing issues. Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) hosted this year's camp from 25th-30th March under the theme 'Volunteering for Humanity'.

The camp that attracted participants from Rwanda and the various URCS branches took place at URCS' National Youth Training and Social Centre Namakwa in Mukono Branch. It was aimed at strengthening the spirit of volunteerism among young people in carrying out Red Cross activities and responding to vulnerabilities within their communities. It also aimed at equipping participants with practical skills and knowledge on developing initiatives.

The Head of Organizational Development, Mr Richard Amadro, cautioned the youth to develop the spirit of volunteerism in whatever they do & also work with branch field coordinators in resource mobilisation.



URCS Driver Mr. Emmanuel Gwaya tied the knot with Bridget on April 18, 2008 at St. Andrews C.O.U Bukoto. Congs!

Mr. Seppy Wanyana wed Barbara on April 12, 2008 at St. Francis Chapel, Makerere.

Mr. Wanyama is the MD of Musalaba Mwenkundu Co. Ltd, a company that mobilises resources for URCS.



Till God do us apart!

Water and Sanitation

Rural WATSAN project launched

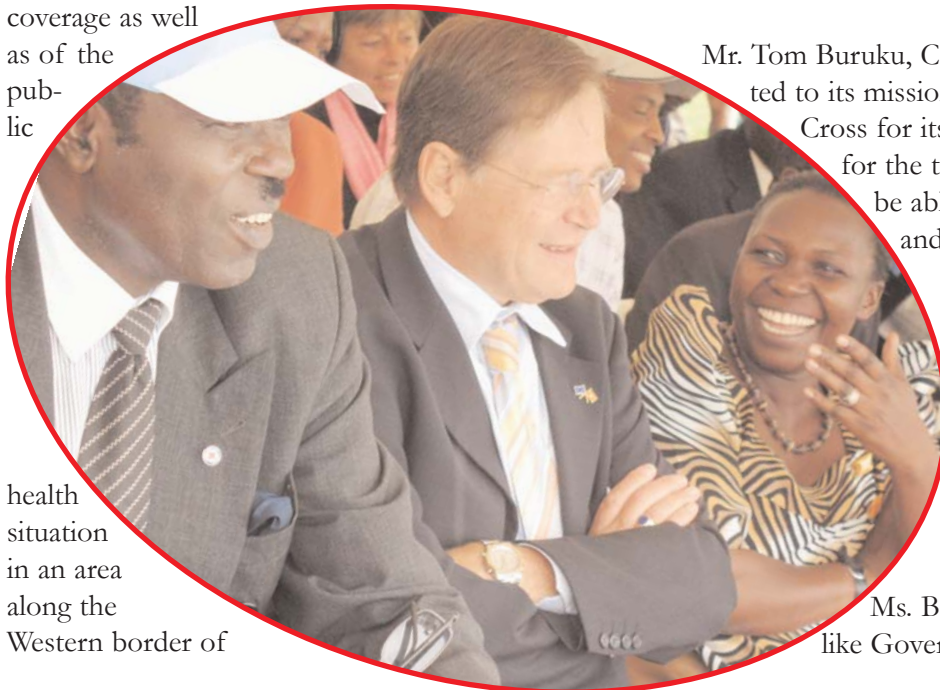
By Catherine Ntabadde

A four year integrated programme aimed at addressing the water supply, sanitation and hygiene situation in cholera-prone areas of Western Uganda was on April 27th, 2008 launched by State Minister for Water, Hon. Jennipher Namuyangu. The project will benefit about 480, 000 people.

The project to be implemented by Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) with funding from the European Union and Danish Red Cross aims at achieving a significant improvement of water supply and sanitation coverage as well

as of the public

health situation in an area along the Western border of



CGB chairman Mr. Tom Buruku, EU Head of Delegation Ambassador Vincent De Vischer & State Minister for Water Hon. Jennipher Namuyangu at the launch of the project at Boma Grounds, Fortportal.

Uganda around shores of Lake Albert. It will be implemented in 14 sub counties of the five districts of Kasese, Kabarole, Bundibugyo, Hoima and Bulisa.

Speaking at the launch at Boma Grounds in Fortportal, Ms. Namuyangu commended EU for its continued support to Government. Ms. Namuyangu informed guests that the countrywide sanitation coverage is at 59% while water coverage is at 63%. She appealed to communities benefiting from the EU project to own it and protect the facilities.

"I thank the Red Cross for being a transparent and -

accountable organization. I have no doubt that you will do a good job," the minister added.

The EU Head of Delegation in Uganda Ambassador Vincent De Vischer recognized the drama group that made a presentation in a way of sensitizing communities about WATSAN. He said the project will involve protection of 120 springs; construction of 87 shallows, 167 boreholes and 27 public toilets. "This will boost the water & sanitation coverage in the 5 districts. Although it is still below coverage, we shall over come it," the Ambassador explained. Mr. Vischer requested that the project be integrated in the planning of Government.

Mr. Tom Buruku, CGB Chairman said URCS is committed to its mission. He hailed EU and Danish Red Cross for its continued support. "We are grateful for the trust you have entrusted in us. We will be able to implement the project effectively and we will involve all the stakeholders," he said.

Ms. Jeanette Bäckmark, Country Coordinator Danish Red Cross said the programme has a combination of hardware and software. "It's not all about putting up structures. The human factor is important in this project," she added.

Ms. Bäckmark appealed to all stakeholders like Government, local government and the community to work together for the success of the project.

The Deputy Secretary General Mr. Michael Nataka said URCS is committed to implementing the project to ensure that the lives of the most vulnerable people are improved, not only in the area of WATSAN but other fields as well.

The LC 5 Chairman Kabarole District Mr. Michael Mugisa said the district is grateful for its partnership with URCS adding that access to safe water is still a big challenge to communities. He however hastens to add that in the last 10 years, there has been a great improvement in the area of water & sanitation. He appealed to the community to own the project and the structures that will come with it.

Food Security Strategy launched

URCS celebrates Red Cross Day 2008

By Catherine Ntabadde

Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) on 8th May 2008 celebrated the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Day. The National Society and its 50 branches were engaged in various activities like road safety, blood donation, sports gala, sensitization about URCS activities, intensifying membership recruitment and undertaking community service.

Tororo branch hosted the 8th May Day celebrations that kicked off with a charity walk in Tororo town. The Chief Walker was Tororo MP Hon Sanjay Tana.

The International Red Cross/Red Crescent Day is celebrated to remember the birth of the Red Cross founder the late Henry Dunant. Dunant who was a Swiss businessman, born in 1828 and died in 1910.

He founded Red Cross/Red Crescent after witnessing a battle of Solferino in Italy, an engagement in the Austro-Sardinian War. In a single day during the war, 40,000 soldiers on both sides were left wounded or died on the field. Henry Dunant was shocked by the terrible aftermath of the battle, the suffering of the wounded soldiers and the lack of medical attendance and basic care. He abandoned the original intent of his trip and for several days devoted himself to helping with treatment and care for the wounded as he mobilized the local population to aid -without discrimination.

The theme for URCS' celebrations this year was You & I in partnership to serve the most vulnerable. URCS choose the theme to enable it reflect the partnership it has attained with the various stakeholders in response to the victims of the different disasters and tragedies in Uganda.

The Guest of Honor Hon. Musa Ecweru, State Minister for Disaster Preparedness recommended URCS for its timely and immediate response whenever disaster strikes. "I am glad I can always rely on you people (Red Cross) even before government intervenes. Disaster management is not a job but a calling. I look at Red Cross as my front fighters. They fight with food, medicine, blankets, soap, jerrycans," he said.

The Central Governing Board Chairman Mr. Tom Buruku hailed Tororo branch for the great work during the time of disasters. He briefed guests why the International Red Cross Week is celebrated.

The Branch Governing Board Chairperson Tororo, Ms. Robina Jassa briefed guests about activities the branch has been involved in and the role it has played towards supporting Kenyan Refugees at Mulanda Transit Centre.

Food Security Strategy launched

As part of the activities to celebrate the day, URCS launched its long term food security strategy that will focus on scaling up community based food security programming to enable the vulnerable communities



State Minister for Disaster Preparedness Hon. Musa Ecweru inspecting a Musalaba Mwekundu stall.

-enjoy food availability, access and utilization. It will also ensure that at least 20% of the most vulnerable population are provided with sustainable food security support through provision of seeds, tools and building capacities of communities to be self sustaining.

URCS' Secretary General Mrs. Alice Uwase Anukur said the National Society will continue addressing the immediate needs of those in food crisis through its humanitarian work. "Strengthening livelihoods in order to improve food security and resilience is also at the heart of URCS in disaster risk reduction," she said.

URCS also planted 850 trees at Tororo Rock in Tororo. The land was provided by Tororo District.

Reaching out



Sensitisation about HIV through drama in Kampala East branch.



Mrs. Camille Aliker, one of URCS' women volunteers speaks during the golf tournament in May.

Occupational Safety

Red Cross participates in World Occupational Day Event

By Charles Nsamba

Uganda Red Cross Society in April joined the rest of the world to celebrate the World Occupational Safety and Health Day in commemoration of people who have been impaired and those who have lost their lives at work.

The event organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and presided over by the State Minister for Labour, Employment, and Industrial Relations, Mr. Mwesigwa-Rukutana, attracted religious leaders, civil servants and several dignitaries from the corporate world.

This year's theme "My life, my work, my safe work", aimed at ensuring the provision of personal protection equipment (PPE) such as nose masks, helmets, and seatbelts.

The celebrations started off with march through the city.. "We are marching in commemoration of workers who were

impaired and those who lost their lives at work in the past years," Mr Rukutana said. He stressed the importance of managing risks in any work environment and called upon employers to train workers in risk management.

All the companies that participated exhibited various ways through which they ensure safety of employees at the work.

URCS' Health and Care Department together with Msalaba Mwekundu Company Limited, a company that mobilizes resources for the National Society, exhibited several drills in first aid and emergency handling. They also distributed promotional materials like stickers and informational materials like brochures.

The World Occupational Safety and Health Day falls three days before Uganda joins the rest of the world to mark International Labour Day, which is celebrated on 1st May.

HIV AT WORK PLACE

Fighting stigma at work place

By Sam Mugisha

Discrimination and stigma is not only evident in service provision arena but also among HIV clients and organization staff. The Uganda Red Cross is strengthening awareness of the value of HIV/AIDS testing and the prevention campaigns using its HIV work place policy. The program hopes to decrease the stigma associated with its services and to increase the uptake of staffs volunteering for counseling and testing and the related services.

Some of the effects of stigma are:

- Emotional stress and anxiety, depression, attempted suicide, isolation
- Problems in family relationships and friendships
- Increased inequities between those who are affected and those who are not Increased disability.
- Concealment of the disease after diagnosis, leading to stress and anxiety
- Poor diagnosis

Participation restrictions (e.g, loss of job, economic dependency, inability to marry, lack of access to loans and credit) that may affect entire families and, in high prevalence areas, entire villages.

- Isolation.
- Increased psychological and psychiatric morbidity.
- Lack of motivation to continue treatment.
- Empowerment (e.g, positive self-image and confidence) developed in resistance to discrimination (through participation in support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS).

How to fight stigma at work place:

- Training staff in stigma-awareness
- Setting standards of behavior.
- Linking good response to rewards, best address these behaviors.
- Gather important data on stigma.
- Train post test and positive living clubs in public speaking among other issues of concern.
- Carry out discussions with all staff

Response to disasters



A board member of Entebbe Branch handing over relief items to the affected people.

Uganda Red Cross supports victims of fire outbreak in Entebbe

By Hasifa Kabejja

Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) distributed relief items to the victims of an inferno that gutted Makusa Island in Entebbe destroying property worth millions of shillings.

The fire that broke out on 31st May was reportedly caused by a lit candle, which came in contact with petrol when an unidentified woman tried to refuel a generator in a video hall on Makusa Island.

According to a June 1st, 2008 assessment by Entebbe Red Cross Action Team (RCAT), no person died but all property on the island was destroyed. The island has a population of 450 people.

URCS distributed non food items; 65 tarpaulins, 540 blanket, 360 jerrycans, 180 cooking pots, 450 cups and 450 plates to 193 most affected households. "The items were distributed according to the lists of households which were compiled by the RCAT with the help of the local authorities," said Mr. Shaban Mawanda, the Entebbe Branch Field Coordinator.

He said the community's response to the disaster was very positive as boats were sent from all islands in and around Entebbe for rescue operations.

The Entebbe URCS Board Chairman, Mr. Mohammed Kawuma donated sacks of posho and poles for construction of new houses.

Blood donation drive

Masaka branch collects 772 units of blood

By Hasifa Kabejja

URCS Masaka branch in May held a six-day Blood Donor session in which it collected 772 units of blood more than the targeted 500.

The exercise was conducted in Nyendo Trading Centre, Rukaya Town Council and Masaka Municipality.

Masaka Branch Field Coordinator Daniel Nsubuga said the exercise was organised due to the high number of accident victims in the district referral hospital who need blood.

The chief donors were the district chief administrative officer and the President of the Rotary Club Masaka. Five hotels in Masaka district provided free lunch to five people who donate blood frequently.

Meanwhile, in the same week, the branch mobilized 60 youth volunteers from different links within Masaka Municipality to clean up the district with the aim of eliminating non organic materials that are an environmental hazard.



URCS Programme Officer-Malaria & Immunisation Mr. Abdu Masaba demonstrating during a malaria in emergency situations workshop in Kampala in April 2008.

Golf Tournament

Internally Displaced Persons to get shelter

By Catherine Ntabadde

Ugarose emerged the overall corporate winner in the 2008 Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) charity golf tournament. For the individual category, Francis Ngabo and Flavia Namakula emerged winner for Men and Women players respectively.

The 1st runner up in the Team category was Expo Momentum, 2nd runner was Diamond Trust Bank while the 3rd runner up was Kobil. This all happened at the Uganda Golf Club on May 17th 2008. The winning teams and individuals received prizes.

45 companies took part in the tournament which was raising funds aimed at providing shelter to 300 families formerly living in Internally Displaced Camps in Northern Uganda. The tournament

was organized under the theme, Build a house,

Mr. Francis Ngabo, winner of individual category receiving a trophy from Mr. Godfrey Kaganda



Prepare for Disaster will see URCS construct houses in form of huts for families whose lives have been shattered after living in IDP camps for 20 years as a result of the war. The houses to be constructed will be flood resistant.

Through the same programme, the National Society plans to set up a National disaster management centre to train Ugandan communities in disaster preparedness and response.

By the end of the tournament, URCS had realized about sh20m. The Build a house, Prepare for Disaster programme is part of URCS' efforts to rehabilitate and resettle former IDPs back into their communities. To fulfill this noble cause, the National Society needs over sh300m.

URCS is implementing the resettlement and rehabilitation programme in line with Government's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP).

The companies that participated in the event are: Quality Chemicals, Toyota Uganda, Footstep Furniture, Hima

Cement, Housing Finance Bank, MTN, DFCU Bank, UAP Insurance, Micro Care, Birungi & Co. Advocates, Diamond Trust Bank, Motor Care,

ICRC, Stanbic Bank, Lions Assurance, JBG, Ugarose, National Housing Construction Company, Eskom, Engen, Kobil, Jofram, Amazof Enterprises, Matrix, Afro Frieght, Eye Care Centre, Barclays Bank, Expo Momentum, Kassim Service Centre, ICEA, Alexander Forbes, Iway Africa, Crown Beverages, Banana Boat, Rwenzori Beverages, Air Uganda, Nile Breweries, Quality

Cuts, Adrift, New Vision, Super Supermarket, Christex Garment Industry, Multiple Industries, Krishna Construction and Hotel Africana.

Dr. Okullo Odongo, Captain of the Uganda Golf Club hailed the Ladies Section (Golf club) for the hardwork that resulted into a successful charity golf tournament. She said the Ladies Section has worked closely with URCS for a number of years.

The Chief Guest Mr. Godfrey Kaganda, CGB board member hailed all golfers that spared their time to participate in the tournament. He further hailed the sponsors of the tournament and all corporate bodies that have continued to support URCS activities.

URCS' Secretary General Mrs. Alice Uwase Anukur said the rehabilitation programme will also include provision of psychosocial support because the communities in the former war torn areas have suffered physiological problems as a result of the war. She saluted the lady volunteers who have continued to support humanitarian work by sparing time to undertake URCS work.



A sample of the grass thatched house URCS is to construct for IDPS. Over sh300m is needed to put up such houses.

Red Cross interven



The EU Head of Delegation Ambassador Vincent de Vischer handing over car keys and a laptop to URCS Chairman Mr. Tom Buruku. EU provided vehicles, laptops, motorcycles to URCS towards the implementation of an EU water and sanitation project in Western Uganda.



Some of the oxen & ox ploughs URCS is giving to farmers as part of the income generating programme aimed at...



Distribution of relief items to victims of an inferno that gutted Makusa Island in Entebbe on May 31st, 2008. URCS distributed 65 tarpaulins, 540 blanket, 360 jerrycans, 180 cooking pots, 450 cups and 450 plates to 193 most affected households.



Tororo BGB Chairperson at the kick off of the Red Cross...

entions in pictures



giving to farmers in Teso sub region as part
ed at increasing farmers

Residents of Butehe village in Kyangwali sub county in Hoima District lining up to collect water from Kawayana well constructed by URCS under the DAR programme.



URCS Masaka Branch volunteers cleaning Masaka town as part of celebrations to mark Red Cross/Red Crescent week.

son Ms. Robina Jassa handing over a ball to the captain of Mbarara URCS Region
Red Cross Week sports gala finals. Central Region beat Mbarara Region 1-0.

Dissemination

Red Cross fights emblem abuse

By **Emma Twesigye**

The use of the Red Cross Emblem is respected by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and National Legislation.

Dissemination activities in Kasese Branch have helped scale down the abuse of the Red Cross Emblem.

Only one case of emblem abuse has been identified in the district since the beginning of 2008 which is not the case in other areas. Even then, the identified emblem abusers have consented to the mistake and have stopped using the Red Cross emblem.

In May 2008, four community disseminators of the Uganda Red Cross Kasese branch were deployed to sensitize the staff of Alleluia Medical Centre that had been using the Red



Cross emblem on its signpost. After the well delivered dissemination, the proprietors of the medical centre con-

The sign post for Alleluia with a Red Cross emblem.

fessed they had used the 'Red Cross' unknowingly.

They have since removed the Red Cross from their signpost. Some staff

at the medical centre have also registered as members of the Red Cross.

Dissemination as one of the key activities of the Red Cross has not only scaled down the abuse of the Red Cross Emblem, but has also boosted URCS membership recruitment and promoted URCS image. Kasese Branch recruits a minimum of 10 people every week.

Dissemination has also helped create awareness about IHL, URCS activities, principles of Red Cross/Red Crescent. It also entails disseminating about other members of the Red Cross Movement like ICRC and IFRC.

Partnering with Corporate companies

Motor Care donates 117 mosquito nets

By **Khalid Simbwa**

Motorcare Uganda donated 117 mosquito nets to the returnees in northern Uganda through Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS).

Handing over the nets to URCS Deputy Secretary General Mr. Michael Nataka in Kampala on June 6, 2008, the General Manager Motorcare Uganda, Mr. Kim Vandabek, said as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, Motorcare is looking at "a giveaway with a meaning", and at the same time, "a responsible giveaway". "Instead of giving out a pen or a cap, we are looking at a more meaningful

giveaway, for instance a mosquito net or a condom that can save



URCS Acting Secretary General Mr. Michael Nataka receiving 117 mosquito nets from Motor Care GM Mr. Kim Vandabek.

lives," Mr. Vandabek said. "We have donated several items but this time we found it ideal to partner with

URCS, because we believe the roots we share with the Danish Red Cross are an assurance for a more concrete working relationship with URCS."

Mr. Nataka said mosquito nets are one of the most important components of the return kit, which is yet to be distributed to the returnees. "We appreciate the contribution Motorcare has made to improve the lives of the vulnerable. Since this year's fundraising focuses on the returnees, we shall include the mosquito nets in the kit," Mr. Nataka said.

He said URCS has a corporate volunteering scheme, where corporate individuals can volunteer to offer a service to the National Society. "We would be glad to have some of the Motorcare staff as part of the initiative," Mr. Nataka said.

Orphans & vulnerable children

Gulu branch in psychosocial support

By Hasifa Kabejja

As a way of motivating and curbing the biting poverty in Gulu District, the Uganda Red Cross Society branch in Gulu is offering psychosocial support and entrepreneurship skills to orphans and vulnerable children in the district.

The Branch Field Coordinator, Gulu, Mr Terence Omonya, on 29th May said the officers and volunteers at the branch visit several homes mainly in Ongako and Bungatira sub counties to encourage children to study and to avoid peer pressure.

"Losing parents is not the end of life, so children are counseled not to lose hope and to work hard to support their guardians despite the challenges," Mr Omonya said. He said children are also counseled to avoid bad practices like alcoholism, theft and consumption of drugs.

The branch has introduced a memory book where vulnerable children record information regarding their age, deceased parents, school, assets and future goals for easy access of their details by other agencies willing to help them.

Mr Omonya said the branch is also offering entrepreneurship skills to the children. "We encourage the children to be innovative. They are advised to borrow some little money to start up income generating activities like food vending, brick making and cake baking," he said.

Mr Omonya said they group the children and keep them busy through sports and recreation activities.

Most of the children in Gulu District have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS and the 20-year Lord's Resistance Army Insurgency led by Joseph Kony.

HIV/AIDS in camps

URCS scaling up HIV support in Kitgum, Pader

By Catherine Ntabadde -facilitators understand the communities they serve and the nature of services they offer.

When the project started in November 2005 in Pajule and Lapul sub counties, Pader District, there were 50 HIV/AIDS clients. By June 2008, the project had supported 420 People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV) in the two sub counties. The 420 clients are among the 870 that the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) HIV/AIDS programme is supporting in the districts of Pader and Kitgum.

Since the commencement of the project, the life of HIV clients has changed, thanks to the home based care facilitators, some of whom also live positively. In Kitgum and Pader districts, URCS HIV clients have been living in the camps due to the insurgency in the region. Some of the clients have since returned to their communities as a result of the prevailing peace. This is however posing a challenge given that the clients' villages are very far.

During a monitoring and supervision exercise in Kitgum and Pader, it was evident that the home care-

"Through sensitization, stigma within the camps and surrounding communities has greatly reduced. We are promoting positive living and this has helped our clients desist from bad practices like drinking, immorality and unprotected sex," Mr. Charles Ongom, Secretary URCS volunteers Pajule and Lapul sub counties.

Ms. Suzan Akol, HIV project officer Kitgum & Pader, explains that the project among others provides nutritional supplementary food, psycho-social support, nursing care, referral, voluntary counseling & testing, creation of positive living clubs. In addition, the project undertakes hygiene promotion as a key preventive method to ensure that PLWHIV do not suffer from other diseases like ring worms, cholera and scabies.

Patrick Okello, a volunteer in Lagoro camp, Kitgum district says the supplementary nutritional support provided by URCS gives strength to the clients.

"It gives them some strength to continue with their daily work like going to the garden. The nutritional support encourages them to continue taking their drugs" he said.



Pader Home Care facilitators during an M& E session.

Mama Bag & Return Kit

2, 500 expectant mothers for safe delivery

By Catherine Ntabadde & Hasifa Kabejja

Expectant mothers in northern and eastern Uganda will be able to undergo safe delivery, thanks to DFID for supporting the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) to reach out to this vulnerable group.

DFID through its HIV programme recently contributed 2,500 mama bag kits toward the URCS Mama Bag project which were distributed to expectant mothers in Katakwi, Amuria and Pader districts in June. Mama Bag project was initiated in 2004 to facilitate safe delivery of expectant mothers in Internally Displaced Camps.

Each kit contains cotton wool, gauze rolls, plastic sheets, receiving sheets, a packet of razor blades, code ligatures, nappies, two pairs of plastic baby pants, baby dress, basin, mosquito nets, vaseline, powder, disinfectant dettol soap, safety pins and glove. The expectant mothers who are returning to their homes also received return kits.

The Return Kit, which is an addition to the Mama Bag kit, contains a seed kit (beans, maize, egg plants, dodo, onions, okra, sukuma wiki), hoes, sickles, axe and pangas. It seeks to improve



RCS CGB Board member Hon. Stephen Tashobya handing over mama bags & return kits in Katakwi.

food security in the northern and eastern parts of the country, where 80% food crops were destroyed by floods that hit the regions last year..

The return kits were procured using funds raised from Uganda corporate bodies during URCS 2007 annual fundraising dinner and proceeds raised from the MTN Kampala Marathon 2007.



MTN Sponsorship & Brand Manager Mr. Aggrey Kagonyera participating in the distribution of Mama Bag & Return Kits.

"We are here because we are concerned about promoting safe delivery so that our children and the mothers do not die. At that critical moment, you can easily die if you don't have safe delivery kits," he said.

He commended MTN Uganda for its continued support to URCS calls & called for more support from the company. MTN has been supporting the Mama Bag project since its initiation through various fundraising drives like the MTN Kampala Marathon.

MTN Marketing Manager Mr. Isaac Nsereko said the company has so far contributed Shs120 million to the Mama Bag project. "We expect to have more runners during this year's marathon and all the money will come to you," Mr Nsereko said while addressing expectant mothers in Magoro Sub County.

He said MTN chose to partner with the Red Cross because it is a global leader in humanitarian emergencies and understands the needs of the vulnerable people. "We believe our money will directly come to you when we give it to Red Cross," Mr Nsereko said.

The district principal health inspector Idholoi Okia commended the URCS & MTN for the gesture adding that 87% of expectant mothers deliver in unsafe places.

Speaking during a function to distribute the kits in Magoro Sub County, Katakwi District, the URCS Vice Chairman, Mr Robert Ssebunya, said the National Society is concerned about the welfare of IDPs.

"We are here because we are concerned about promoting safe delivery so that our children and the mothers do not die. At that critical moment, you can easily die if you don't have safe delivery kits," he said.

Blood Donation

URCS, UBTS celebrate World Blood Donor Day

By Khalid Simba & Juliet Cherotich

The Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in conjunction with the Uganda Blood Transfusion Services (UBTS) celebrated the World Donor Day on 14 June 2008.

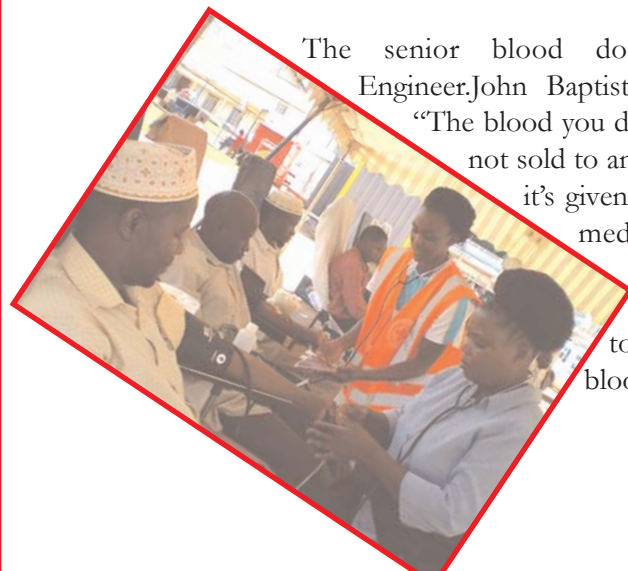
The function took place at the UBTS headquarter in Nakasero under the theme: **Giving blood regularly.** Celebrations were held to pay tribute to voluntary donors who have over the years donated blood to save the lives of others.

"Giving safe blood is a fundamental need for any country through voluntary blood donation by blood donors," a medical consultant of the Uganda Blood Transfusion Mr. Peter Kataaha said.

"110 units of blood are collected every year and this has contributed to the improvement of maternal health and other vulnerable people like, pregnant mothers, newborns & accident victims," he said.

The chief guest who is also the president of the URCS and the patron of the life savers Club Dr. Edward Bahagatte said at the function that "its not proper to say some regions are lacking blood yet we have over 24 million eligible adult blood donors in Uganda, so donate blood to save peoples lives and reduce the infant mortality rates.

"We really thank all blood donors for donating blood and also the journalists who spread blood donation information to the rest of the people in the country," he said .



The senior blood donor captain Engineer John Baptist Egesa said, "The blood you donate to us is not sold to any one instead it's given freely, if any medical officer sells you blood, report to the nearby blood office."

A blood donation exercise in Bundibugyo branch during the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Week 1-8 May.

Always at your service!

By Charles Nsamba

An act of genuine humility is what he puts on! On request, he's always at your service. Born 49 years ago, Mr. Mukaaya Sam is one of the longest serving staff of URCS. Mukaaya, who hails from Lwoogi, Luweero district, is born to the Late Christopher Kalanzi and Nalongo Catherine of Bulemezi.

"I left home at the age of seven and came to Kampala to live with my sister in Matuga," he narrates. "In 1980, I decided to leave my sister's home to rent a one roomed house in Kawempe, a suburb along the outskirts of Kampala".

As a starter, Mr. Mukaaya depended on petty jobs to try to raise his rent and also facilitate his general upkeep. "It was through these petty jobs that I heard a rumor about the need for volunteers in Red Cross to assist in the loading of items onto trucks, which were to be taken upcountry for distribution. I woke up in the morning as usual & that day I walked to South Street where Uganda Red Cross was situated then," he explains.

Later on, he was taken on as a volunteer. "I earned shs500 as a volunteer daily and because it was able to sustain me & meet my necessities, I decided to stick there. It was a tough time then because of the insurgencies and insecurity within the country, due to the liberation wars, but all through, I had a to persevere," he continues.

"I got my staff appointment letter on the 18 November, 1984 as a cleaner, because of the good working spirit I had exhibited", he adds.

A husband and father of six, Mukaaya currently lives in his own house in Kawempe, on a plot he bought in 1991. On top of his family, he also looks after some of his siblings, who are still in school.

"I have enjoyed my stay in Uganda Red Cross and I believe if offered the opportunity, I would like to stay and serve the society, even after I retire", Mukaaya vows.