Dear reader, welcome to this edition of the Humanitarian. This is the first release of the year covering the first and second quarters of 2016. In this edition we bring you events and activities of Uganda Red Cross Society and insights snapped from different Directorates.

The biggest activity of the year has been the Bundibugyo operations that started December last year (2015) with floods. This was followed with inter-tribal conflicts following Post Election Violence in March 2016. Other floods and mudslides followed in May and left many dead, homeless and restless. As usual, URCS responds in the fastest way possible to save lives and give hope to the affected.

Many people have been hosted in Bundibugyo Camps and URCS has been on ground since, supporting the survivors. Currently, we have three camps in Bundibugyo, each accommodating about 1000 people. URCS doing its best to cater for their needs and also restore the family links of those who lost their families. Please enjoy reading this newsletter. There’s a lot more that you will find herein and will interest you as a partner of URCS.
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Over time, Health Campaigns are manned by Ministry of Health in close partnership with civil society organizations, local community leaders, Village Health Teams and all key stakeholders in the fight against diseases like Aids, Malaria, Typhoid and cholera. "We have trained all the Volunteers and have been given protective gears to protect themselves as they reach out to the victims." said Nalwoga Anitah – URCS Communications Intern

Situation in the area has been able to participate in registration of new refugees. In districts of Butaleja, Buddaka, Sironko, Bulambuli, Namayingo, Iganga, Kapchorwa, and Nebbi in Uganda Red Cross Jinja Branch on July 9th, 2016, celebrated the International Youth Day. This is the 12th celebration of the day.

By Irene Nakasiita

"Everywhere for everyone" adds Thomas Ndyanabo, Branch Manager- Bundibugyo. As our theme states this year, “Everywhere for everyone”, we are committed to serving the vulnerable people, everywhere in Uganda, all the time. We pledge our commitment to the people we serve and look forward to serving Ugandans better. As we cross to the next half of the year, we invite you to continue supporting URCS to enable us help those we serve.

URCS Celebrates International Red Cross / Red Crescent Day

On 8th May each year, Uganda Red Cross joins the rest of the World to commemorate and celebrate the “Red Cross / Crescent Day”. This year’s (2016) theme was “Everywhere for everyone” which directly relates to the work Red Cross does with inclusive service to all everywhere in the World.

Uganda Red Cross this time celebrated the Red Cross day on Wednesday 11th May 2016. This time round, the day was celebrated in a different way. URCS took time to invite Membership for a Dialogue as a way of calling back the Volunteers and members back to the roots of URCS and support the Red Cross activities in the Country.

As usual, all the 51 URCS Branches actively engage in several activities in commemoration of the day. Our Editorial team took time to interview some branch Managers who shared great insights of what transpired at their different branches. Standing out among activities is Road Safety Campaign which was conducted in almost all Branches. Uganda has had many road carnages and this is attributed to ignorance among road users and reckless driving. Imparting Road Safety messages would ignite a sense of safety in the minds of Road users. This would then save lives of Ugandans and reduce the rate of accidents in the Country. The Branches deployed many volunteers with Road safety messages at hot spot areas on busy roads. This was prior to the Red Cross Day Celebrations.

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I also take the honor to usher you into reading this Newsletter for you to get acquainted with URCS work.

Enjoy this edition!

Robert Kwesiga
SECRETARY GENERAL

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Uganda Red Cross Society is undergoing Change. This is holistic and will see the National Society to another level. The process started by ensuring the right people are recruited to fill the vacant positions to form the Senior Management team. Having constituted a full management team, we embarked on the process of revising Policies which will guide operations as we fulfil our Mandate of responding to emergencies and saving lives of people. The first and second quarters have been utilized fruitfully by consulting different levels of URCS in the different regions where we operate. This has been made possible with participation of Board Members from different Branches, Branch governing boards, Branch Managers, and other stakeholders. We have Technical expertise from different Consultants, who have volunteered their skills, time and offered knowledge to support URCS in this process. We intend to carry out eight regional consultative meetings and four have been done so far. We expect to conclude this process by August 2016.

Policies for review include the Youth and Volunteer Policy, Branch Policy, as well as URCS constitution. URCS is also developing a new strategic plan 2016-2021 and this will guide operations for the next five years.

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URCS Celebrates International Red Cross / Red Crescent Day
In Kampala, where the Grand Celebrations were hosted, Kampala Branches hosted distinguished members and volunteers of their Branches. These participated in the dialogue and shared great insights on how they want the National Society to operate. Emphasis was put on local Fundraising which will see the National society grow from a dependent National Society to a self-sustaining Strong body.

In their remarks, the members appreciated the Current secretary general for the good leadership and the love he has for this National society. “We thank the SG for loving this National society and the good leadership skills exhibited. His desire to see this as a self sustaining National society will see this place a transformed one from the way it has been. I thank you Robert” said Robert Sebunya, Member – Kampala west Branch.

The dialogue was graced by several dignitaries, media and delegates from different National Societies.

A team of professional Volunteers representing Branches received guests in a professional way and ably sat them as per the arranged format. An exhibition of URCS literature and URCS Branded materials was held. We show cased what we produce and the Red Cross Commercial First Aid team had some marketing materials for sale. An auction item was prepared as a Fundraising item. At the end of the dialogue, Mr. Ssebunya a life member of Kampala West Branch took lead in the auction and raised 1 Million shillings.

The day was colorful and will live to be remembered.
URCS distributes food and Non Food Items to Flood Victims in Bundibugyo

By Irene Nakasiita

Over 710 households were excited after receiving food, jerrycans, and soap from Uganda Red Cross Society (URSC). Residents of Humya – Sub County in Bubukwanga community, Bundibugyo District were recently affected by heavy rains. Over 1000 people were affected and many left homeless. Uganda Red Cross in partnership with UNICEF Uganda and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) mobilized food, jerrycans and soap as relief support to the victims.

While addressing the media recently, Robert Kwesiga the Secretary General of Uganda Red Cross appreciated UNICEF and OPM as good partners who have supported the Emergency Operation since March 2016 when the people of Bundibugyo got involved in inter-tribal conflicts that left many dead, injured and many others displaced. The displaced persons are hosted at Bubukwanga Camp and Uganda Red Cross with support from UNICEF Uganda have been active partners offering basic support in form of hygiene and sanitation for good health, extending clean water, shelter, psycho-social support and food items to these Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

“We are hosting over 640 people in Bubukwanga camp alone. We gave them food and we are here to give emergency relief to these people who were grossly affected by floods recently. We thank UNICEF and OPM for extending a hand of support to enable us perform our mandate in this country, and more so to these our friends in-need,” said Kwesiga, Secretary General at Uganda Red Cross Society.

Bundibugyo is one of the areas in Uganda that is prone to flooding. When it rains, river Humya breaks its banks and over flows to most of the low lying areas and destroys thousands of property. Well known for growing cocoa, a major cash crop that brings in revenue for many house-holds, Bundibugyo has little food coming through to feed the residents hence leaving many hungry especially during the dry season.

This community remains needy. Looking at the number of people still in camps, and those affected by floods recently, it is not clear what the future holds for them. Those in the camps are still in fear and can’t settle in their former communities because of the inter-tribal insecurity, while those in flood prone areas fear for the uncertain rain patterns that affect them each time it rains.
“Bundibugyo is a vulnerable community and as Red Cross, we are always on stand-by to support any emergency” adds Thomas Ndyanabo, Branch Manager- Bundibugyo.

Uganda Red Cross is the only Humanitarian Organisation that runs to the rescue of such people when such catastrophes happen. However, URCS cannot function without support from partners and therefore appreciates UNICEF for the long term partnership spirit exhibited through this Bundibugyo Operation.

INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF UGANDA, URCS MOBILISES BLOOD TO SAVE PEOPLE’S LIVES

The Indian association of Uganda in conjunction with the UGANDA RED CROSS SOCIETY, and the Uganda blood transfusion service recently carried out a bleeding session in Kampala where 80 units of blood were collected. The drive was conducted at Acacia mall in Kamwokya. During the session, URCS volunteers actively participated and shared with the Public the importance of donating blood. They also recruited more members and Volunteers, adding to the 35,000 URCS Volunteer base.

Sharing his mind with the Public, Kishor Dattani, URCS Kampala West Branch Member who also doubles as an active Board Team Lead of the Indian Association in Uganda, said Blood mobilisation is a Humanitarian cause that needs to be given priority. “We have organized this blood donation with Uganda Red Cross because the blood saves people’s lives and Red Cross is here for a Humanitarian cause. They save lives and that is very important for Humanity. The blood mobilized today will save many more lives and give people chance to live” Kishor added.

This partnership for blood mobilisation has been on-going for a great deal of time. The Indian Association of Uganda has been an active partner and faithfully mobilizes people each time there is a blood drive. Many other people from different parts of the Country too donate blood and URCS has embarked on more partnerships with different corporate bodies to ensure the Public understands the need for blood in hospitals. Today it is you, another day your relative or friend will need the blood. Go donate now! Blood donors are Heroes!
Story by Joseph Sempijja – URCS Communications Intern

ASSET DISPOSAL AT URCS

Fourteen old URCS Vehicles are up for sale. The procurement and logistics department have expressed need for old cars to be disposed off and money raised given for emergency response to vulnerable communities in Uganda.

This follows the procurement policy that stipulates the period above which a car can’t be in active service at URCS. However, this does not mean these cars can’t work anymore. Robert Okilla, a procurement and logistics officer at URCS notes that cars disposed off can still be used and are in good condition only that URCS has a policy that cannot be abused. “We sell them off because of the Policy but these are cars in good mechanical conditions and the Public is free to buy them” Okilla adds.
UNICEF responded by availing tool kits which were distributed while URCS did the sensitization in local communities. This community remains needy. Looking at the number of people still in camps, and those affected by floods, a major cash crop, the world needs more resources to meet the unpredictable needs of these people. Well known for growing cocoa, Uganda is host to almost half a million refugees as victims of war. These include refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. Families from these countries have been claimed in the fights and many more rescued because of the presence of humanitarian support from key organizations. In recent years, hundreds of lives have been lost in floods and other natural disasters.

Over time, health campaigns are manned by the Ministry of Health in close partnership with civil society organizations, local community leaders, Village Health Teams, and all key stakeholders in the fight against diseases. After conducting an assessment, URCS noted that most of the communities where cholera was epidemic and save lives of Ugandans who were at risk. UNICEF took brave steps to curb down the epidemic, while others were admitted in several cholera treatment centers on time. They were also equipped with skills on how to distribute chlorine powder and hand washing to enable us perform our mandate in this country, which will guide operations as we fulfill our mandate of responding to emergencies and saving lives of people.

URCS has a sustainability standard plan for all fleet. Looking at the nature of URCS work, it is clear that after sixty months, or after reaching 150,000 km, a car cannot be deployed to active service. This is done to ensure safety and decency as we roll out for community outreaches.

In addition to the cars being sold are other items and these include: 80 refrigerators (AMPEX), 15 flat screen television sets (32 inch), 15 mattresses (spring, 6*6 inch) and 1 piece of a used heavy duty generator. The money generated will be used to support URCS emergency operations to communities where our services are needed.

Uganda Red Cross operates under emergency situations. Local fundraising is one of the ways this is made possible. Selling off old assets allows URCS to generate extra income which can support the national society in a bid to save lives of vulnerable in the country.

Story by Nalwoga Anitah and Ddembe John Bosco

URCS JINJA BRANCH CELEBRATES THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY IN STYLE

By Nalwoga Anitah – URCS Communications Intern

Uganda Red Cross Jinja Branch on July 9th, 2016, celebrated the International Youth Day. This is the 12th event they have marked since ministry to the Youth started at this branch. The theme of the year was “My choice, my responsibility”. The function was held at Kakira Senior Secondary School in Jinja. It started with a procession through Kakira town after which other activities followed. Among key activities conducted was a blood donation drive where 132 units of blood were collected. There was HIV / AIDS testing and counselling, Music Dance and Drama competitions among invited school links and other forms of Youth Enter/ Edutainment.

Whereas the international youth day is celebrated on 12th August elsewhere in the world, the branch celebrates it in July every year, to allow a great deal of youths in schools to participate since around August many are busy with Exams and other school tight curriculum. This year, 31 school links were able to participate and hosting was done by one of the school links. The event attracted big crowds from Kakira town and Red Cross Activities were exhibited.

William Male, the branch Manager – URCS Jinja, noted with passion the importance of Youth links in URCS Branch activities. “We celebrate this day so as to come together with the young people all over the world to recognize the effort they put into Red Cross activities. About 70% of the membership of Red Cross in Jinja are the youth, so recognizing them as active URCS Participants adds value and worth to their participation as members of Jinja Branch as well as URCS as a family”. Many volunteers, Board members and staff of Uganda Red Cross started as Youth volunteers when they were still young people. This shapes them to help those we serve.

Long live Red Cross Jinja Youth Links!

In his key remarks, the chairman Central Governing Board Mr. Joseph Omilmot appreciated the Madhvani Group for their support to the event. In his remarks, the members appreciated the current secretary general for the good leadership and the love he exhibited. His desire to see this as a self-sustaining National society will see this place a transformed one from the dependent National Society to a self-sustaining Strong body.

Inakasiita@redcrossug.org
UNICEF responded by availing tool kits which were distributed while URCS did the sensitization in local communities. This community remains needy. Looking at the number of people still in camps, and those affected by floods, URCS has availed tarpaulins to accommodate increasing number of refugees especially at the reception points, as well as provided basic needs such as food, water and medical care.

URCS has also carried out a number of initiatives to support disaster management and relief efforts. Among key activities conducted was a blood donation drive where 132 units of blood were collected. There was also a House to House campaign where soap, jerricans, latrine construction tools and other hygiene tools were distributed.

Long live Red Cross Jinja Youth Links!

URCS, UNICEF join efforts to curb down cholera Epidemic in East and North Western Uganda

Districts of Butaleja, Buddaka, Sironko, Bulambuli, Namayingo, Iganga, Kapchorwa, and Nebbi in East and North Western Uganda have notably been affected by Cholera between April and June, 2016.

A good number of people succumbed to the epidemic while others were admitted in several hospitals. Uganda Red Cross in partnership with UNICEF took brave steps to curb down the epidemic and save lives of Ugandans who were at huge risk. With a strong network of Volunteers, URCS embarked on House to House campaign, sharing messages of good hygiene and sanitation, to prevent and control the disease from spreading elsewhere. The affected communities were reached out with soap, jerricans, latrine construction tool kits, hand washing facilities, Emo (toilet chemical), aqua tablets for water purification and treatment, distribution of chlorine powder and hand washing facilities for both institutional and communal services.

They were also equipped with skills on how to prevent Cholera as well as refer victims to gazetted cholera treatment centers on time.

UNICEF responded by availing tool kits which were distributed while URCS did the sensitization in local communities, training of the technical people as well distribution of the Hygiene promotion tool kits.
“We have trained all the Volunteers and have been given protective gears to protect themselves as they reach out to the local communities with the messages and tool kits. These will help the people learn good hygiene practices and chase Cholera out of their communities” says Gracious Kyagaba, the Ag. Health Director – URCS

Over time, Health Campaigns are manned by Ministry of Health in close partnership with civil society organisations, local community leaders, Village Health Teams and all key stake holders in the fight against diseases. After conducting an assessment, URCS noted that most of the communities where Cholera was identified, local communities were in poor hygiene and sanitation conditions. This called for immediate help as a way of saving lives of people in those areas. The operation is still on-going until these communities are declared “Cholera – Free” zones.

**Story by Nanyanzi Hafswa – URCS Communications Intern**

**At your service - URCS committed to respond to South Sudan refugee Situation**

By Irene Nakasiita – URCS Communications

Uganda Red Cross Volunteers on June 26th braved the night, cold and bloody boarder of Numule – Connecting Uganda to South Sudan in rescue of refugees fleeing trouble when fighting broke out in Wau, South Sudan forcing thousands of people to flee to Uganda. The situation has since been tense and alarming. Hundreds of lives have been claimed in the fights and many more rescued because of the presence of Humanitarian support from key players like Uganda Red Cross.

Uganda Red Cross Volunteers have been working around the clock to support those in need, evacuating the injured, offering first aid to the wounded, and referring many others to nearby hospitals. In partnership with UNHCR, UNICEF and OPM, URCS has been able to participate in registration of new arrivals, transferring people from transit centers to settlement Camps, preparation of meals for the victims, supporting medical teams to vaccinate little ones with polio and Measles vaccines, as well as carrying out tracing services to restore family links for those who need to trace for their loved ones.

URCS has availed tarpaulins to accommodate increasing number of refugees especially at the reception points, as well as Trucks to transfer others to settlements camps. The process is not easy, the work is tough but the spirit of service compels the Volunteers.

“The numbers are overwhelming but our team is dedicated to serve and we will do our best to serve every one. We pray that you join hands and support this operation because we don’t know when this will end and we still need more resources to meet the un-predictable needs of these people” says Robert Kwegiga, Secretary General – URCS
This fighting is not the first of the kind in the same Country. It has been nearly two and a half years of fighting in south Sudan and Uganda is host to almost half a million refugees as victims of war. These include refugees from Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Sudan, and Ugandans who have fled their homes due to inter-tribal conflicts. The Red Cross remains with a big challenge, at the fore-front with the mandate of rescuing, and saving the lives of these vulnerable people.