

The Success of the volunteer Revolving Scheme

Before ADRA Uganda used to pay a stipend of approximately Ushs. 30,000/= (approximately US\$16) to her volunteers per month. Later ADRA realized that it was very hard for the volunteers to continue doing their work after the closure of the projects because there were no stipends given to facilitate them. It was on this background that ADRA Uganda initiated the idea of the Volunteer Revolving Scheme with the intentions of sustaining the project activities. HAAP III project is one of the projects in the poverty reduction program which has a component of the Volunteer Revolving Scheme. It is from this project where we have Mr. Mukisa James who is telling his success story below.

Mr. Mukisa James is 32 years old, married and blessed with 3 girls and 2 boys. He is located in Kasanje Sub-county Wakiso district. In 2004 during the first phase of the poverty reduction project, James was selected by the community to work as a Community HIV/AIDS Educator (CHAE) in the HAAP II Project. Being selected as a CHAE James was a member of KAFICHEVA (Kasanje FAL Instructors and Community HIV/AIDS Educators Volunteers Association) a volunteers scheme in the project which invested their money in loans to members. However he did not participate or access the loan services in the first phase of the project.

When asked why he did not participate he said, "Before joining the project, my life was miserable because I was living from hand to



Mukisa James posed on his motorbike—he acquired it using a loan from the volunteer scheme.

mouth, characterized by severe food shortage and poverty. With such a background, I had no business in mind and lacked business techniques therefore, I refused to borrow the money from the association with fears that I may wrongly invest the money and fail to pay it back."

However in the second phase of the project after receiving some training in entrepreneurship skills, Mr. Mukisa decided to start with a loan of 300,000/= (US\$162) which he invested in livestock farming. He used the money to buy a bull and a local cow. After caring for the bull for a period of 8 months, he sold it at a 400,000/= (US\$216) which helped him to

Inside this issue:

The success of the Volunteer Revolving Scheme (From HAAP) 1

Unanticipated Change! (Story from RUDEP) 2

Advance Uganda Achieving its goals (From Advance Uganda) 3

The benefit of other Functional Skills (from Kamwenge) 4

The fruits of the Pygmy Sponsorship Program (From Mabayemeru Project). 5

Continued from page 1

settle the loan. Later he also sold the cow at a Ushs. 200,000 (US\$108) and used the money to buy a cross breed (heifer) with intentions of getting milk for both domestic and income generating purposes.

“My livestock business worked out well, the cow first produced a calf. From the milk sales, I managed to save Ushs. 100,000/= (US\$) and acquired another cross breed cow. Currently I have a total of 4 animals. The cow also provides us with manure which we put in our garden. Currently I do not spend money in buying food and milk at home and the nutrition and health of my family has greatly improved.”

In June 2008, Mr. Mukisa got another loan of 1,000,000/= (US\$545) from the scheme from which he bought a motor cycle for use as a taxi to transport passengers (boda boda). “The boda boda business has also greatly changed my life and household income. From the boda boda business I get equivalent to 40,000 (US\$20) per week.” Mukisa uses the money to service his loan, paying his children’s school fees and meeting other domestic purposes. By the time this story was covered, Mr. Mukisa had so far paid 75% of his loan and he said that he will meet the entire loan balance by the end of January 2009. After servicing this loan, he is having a plan of acquiring another loan to buy another Boda Boda.

To his fellow volunteers, James advises them to start with small loans and after gaining experience in entrepreneurship they can again go for big loans. James and his family are also grateful for the work done in changing their lives. The children are also happy because they are no longer chased out of school for fees and they always take break fast before going to school.

With such successful volunteers/resource persons organized in volunteers schemes, ADRA Uganda has hope that the project activities will be sustained even though the project closes.



The two heifers that belongs to Mr. Mukisa James. A heifer if well fed can give between 7 to 10 litres per milking

Unanticipated Change!

Kalyowa Moses (38) - (inset) is a Community Model Entrepreneur of Wakayamba Post Literacy Group in Kikamulo Sub-county Nakaseke District. He hesitantly accepted to be the Community Model Entrepreneur since the people had put confidence in him that he was the most capable member of their community.



After gaining such a position, many people started visiting his home for learning or monitoring purposes. Among the visitors it included community residents, community leaders and ADRA staff. With the number of visitors growing every other day, he had to do something about his grass thatched house and also acquire some facilities where to sit and entertain this growing number of visitors.

He had previously been so contented with his residence but now that he had become a model he thought that even his house had to be one good enough for a model entrepreneur.

He told his family about this idea and they welcomed it. Together with his wife and children they started making bricks. And what surprised them is that within four months they had made and baked bricks enough for constructing their planned house. As you read this Moses’ house is only awaiting roofing. He has even paid for some of the roofing material.

Moses says that he got a challenge during and after the CME training. The thought of being a model has changed his attitude about so many things. He thought that he was a very poor man sleeping in a grass thatched house and that there was nothing much he could do about his economic social status. With a change in attitude, everything is changing for the better. He has organized his garden so well; he grows Pineapples, Bananas and Vegetables.

Moses thanks ADRA RUDEP for changing his attitude and is also grateful to his community that selected him to go for ADRA training and for putting confidence in him. He encourages people to have a change of attitude because his poor attitude had tied him down in poverty.



Moses family posed for a photograph—in the background is their new and old house.

Advance Uganda Achieving its goals

Mrs. Kalibbala Abey is an old beneficiary who attended classes with Rural Development Initiative Project (RDIP) which was implemented by ADRA between 2004 and 2007 in the districts of Luwero. The project among its components had agriculture and environment where Kalibala picked interest and decided to invest in it as an Income Generating Activity. During the project implementation, Kalibbala was equipped with nursery and tree management skills which she is currently applying in his project. The project has since grown big and she sells trees to the people in the nearby area and other organizations. She is also applying the agricultural skills in her garden where she gets enough food for her family and sells off the surplus.

Currently Kalibbala is a beneficiary of advance Uganda Micro finance Wobulenzi branch. When she was asked why she chose Advance Uganda she has this to say: “First of all being an old beneficiary of ADRA, I saw it as an advantage if I borrow from Advance Uganda micro finance for ADRA. Secondly Advance’s package is better than some of the micro finance institutions in the area because they mind so much about the people’s development than the interests got unlike other institutions. For example before giving you money you first under go training in some skills like business manage-

ment, savings, loan management and repayment, record keeping, etc.; and they also visit your IGA to see its viability. This process helps someone understand what she is going for and how to go about it.

Kalibbala first opened up an account with advance Uganda where she saved some money and later started borrowing starting from a small loan of Ushs 200,000/=. Currently she is servicing her seventh loan of Ushs 1,200,000/= on which she has already paid at least 40 percent. She invests the money in her tree seedlings development project from which she earns Ushs. 350,000/= per month on average. The business has helped her pay her children’s fees and also meet other family necessities/requirements. After servicing this loan Kalibala has a plan of borrowing more money and open up another tree seedling centre with the intention of expanding her business.

ADRA Uganda is proud of beneficiaries like Kalibala because Advance Uganda Micro Finance was initiated as the financing arm to provide loans to the active poor as a strategy of economically empowering them to come out of poverty.

The Benefit of Other Functional Skills

Egurance Batitengire is an old woman who lives in Rukunyu village, Kyakanyemera parish Kahunge Sub County Kamwenge district. Being of old age and coupled with the eye problems, Egurance did not participate in learning how to read and write in her FAL class. However she has benefited from other components of the poverty reduction program implemented in Kamwenge district through the Kamwenge Integrated FAL Project. The Project FAL Coordinator visited her home and narrates her story here below:

Egurance, a widow lives in the house a lone. She says she had two grand children but they moved to Kampala for studies. In our talk, Egurance does not remember exactly when she was born. She says she gave birth to four kids who have grown and got married.

When asked whether she had attained any form of education before, she replies with a very big no. She says, "I did not have chance to attend school as my parents were not able to take me to school." She continues and says the only form of education she has attained in her life is from ADRA FAL programme and she is a member of Rukunyu FAL group. When asked the period she joined the programme she says "I don't remember the year but ADRA has helped me a lot."

In the FAL class she says she was not able to write and read but she is very good in grasping skills. She has learnt to knit baskets and mats as functional skill. She says since she learnt these skills, she has never stopped making baskets and mats. Egurance lives a happy life and keeps herself busy with weaving. She says on average a mat takes her 2 weeks to finish a long side other activities and a basket takes one week. When asked how much she sales the products she says it depends on the size of the mat, fashion and the number of colors but then that it ranges from Ush.3000 – 8000 (US\$4.3) and a basket ranges from Ushs.3000 – 7000 (US\$3.7) depending on the size. Although the money she gets per month

looks small,

Egurance is very proud because the money helps her very much as she no longer depend on her children for every thing like soap, paraffin salt and match boxes she gets them by herself. She says by doing this she has kept her body strong and healthy.



Mzee Egurance inside her house—she posed for a photograph to show the mats and baskets from which she survives from.

When asked about other things she has learnt from the FAL class, she smiles and challenges us to look at the arrangement in her sitting room and later says she was taught always to be clean to keep the house clean, to always boil drinking water, to always cover her pot

after putting in water, always to wash hands after using the toilet and she keeps water with soap at the toilet for washing hands after using the toilet, she also says that she was taught to put plates on a stand after washing and she regrets that in the past she used to wash her plates and put them wherever she could find but now she praises ADRA for changing her life. Egurance also says that the energy saving stove has helped her so much because due to her age, she can not go in the bush looking for fire wood but after getting this energy saving stove she uses little fire wood and even the smoke is not much as it was in the past. This has also helped her eyes not to be irritated by the smoke.

Although Egurance is unable to read and write, she has benefited from Other functional skills

In conclusion Egurance thanks ADRA for bringing such programmes in the area and request for such programmes to continue. She also advices old people not always to think that if you go to a FAL class you only go to learn how to read and write but there are other functional skills and benefits one can attain so they shouldn't hesitate joining FAL classes.

The fruits of the Pygmy Sponsorship Program

The Pygmies are one of the minority groups often referred to as the forgotten people in Uganda. The Pygmies lived in the Mgahinga forest as hunters and gatherers until the Government of Uganda through the Wild Life Department declared some forests game reserves expelling the inhabitants in 1991. After their expulsion from Mgahinga forest, the Pygmies were left landless and destitute with no means of production as the forest was their home and source of livelihood. Later they were forced to stay with the Bafumbira community, a mainly agricultural community, who have moved on and attained a degree of development in terms of education e.t.c. With no education, land and social skills required to survive in the mostly agricultural community, the pygmies were reduced to begging and living as squatters on other people's land with the minimal basic requirements for survival. They are also treated with a lot of ridicule, prejudice and discrimination and therefore excluded from any exposure to developmental opportunities.

Due to lack of income, the Pygmy parents cannot afford to pay for necessary requirements like school fees, scholastic materials etc. for their children's education. Believing that education is the major key to the Pygmy's plight, in 1998 IBM—Sweden and the Danish Children Fund (DCF) with ADRA Uganda initiated a sponsorship program for the Pygmy children in Mabuyemeru primary school.

This program has enabled the Pygmy children to attain education through the provision of schools fees, food while at school, clothing, beddings, books and other scholastic materials. Their attending school has also attributed to changing their attitude, especially through socializing with the rest of the school community. The children now freely sit and play with the rest of the children unlike earlier days/years when they were frightened of other children and preferred to be by themselves. This can be evident in the story told by Nyamihanda Alice one of the children under the program.

Nyamihanda Alice is currently one of the most educated pygmies in Kisoro District. Having completed her education at Mabuyemeru, she joined Sseseme girls school where she completed her secondary education. Alice is currently studying at Bugema University where she is pursuing a degree in Development Studies. She is

not sure of her age as pygmies do not give birth in hospitals and there is no birth certificate but she looks around 26 years of age. She is born to the late Badeyi Jackson and Mrs. Badeyi Joyless of Gitera Village, Gitovu parish in Busanza sub-county.

“I was born in a very poor family of 8 children and we grew up amidst hardships. Without land, my parents could not afford to grow food or get other basic essentials for the family. My parents used to dig on other people's land in exchange for food (labour for food) for survival. Thank God! My mother was one of the Pygmy beneficiaries who acquired land through ADRA Uganda and now our family has land on which we have a small house and grow food.”

“My father died when I was still young and my mother was not able to look after all of us or send us to school. So I worked as a house girl in somebody's home. This job was not easy for me, as I had to wake up very early in the morning to do the house chores then later in the day look after the goats and sheep. After doing all these chores, in turn they would give me little food which was my contribution to the family food basket.”

Although Nyamihanda does not tell what motivated her to go to school after working as a house girl, but simply smiles, she narrates her educational background as follows:

“I started my primary level at Gitovu Primary School in Busanza and later joined Mabuyemeru Primary School in 1997. Because



my mother was only selling her labour for food, she could not afford to pay my school fees. As a result I was constantly sent home for lack of fees and other school necessities like books and uniform.”

Luckily for her when the sponsorship program for the Pygmies was initiated at Mabuyemeru Primary School, she was one of the pupils who were selected to join the program. “Under this program we were provided with school fees, clothes, beddings, utilities and other basic needs and scholastic materials to at least keep us at school.” She says.

Nyamihanda completed Mabuyemeru Primary School in 2000 and passed in Division 3 with 8 (a pass) points in Mathematics, 9 (a fail) in English, 5 (a credit) in social studies and 5 (a credit) in science. Although these grades were not very good, they enabled her join secondary education at Sseseme girls school where she completed with 2 principal passes. With such a performance she could not be helped by the government sponsorship but the project helped her join Bugema University for a BA in Development Studies.

Asked about her future plans, Alice proudly says: “ I thank my sponsors for the funding, which has helped me see where am heading. Through my childhood I wanted to become a school Head-teacher with intentioned of helping the pygmy children join education. But am also very happy with the course am undertaking now. After completing this course I will work with the government together with NGOs that are working with the pygmies and change the attitude of the Pygmy community who believe that when they

attend school, non-Pygmies will kill them. I will also help other pygmy children and parents to understand the value of education thus alleviate poverty amongst themselves.”

ADRA is also proud of Nyamihanda’s persistence in her quest for education in spite of other pressures and the negative perception of the pygmy community concerning education.

Nyamihanda is currently the first Pygmy (Mutwa) to attain this level of education in Kisoro District out of a population of about 2,000. It is hoped that she will complete University education to help her pursue her dreams.

Apart from Nyamihanda, the program is now sponsoring other 36 pygmies, 19 are at Mabuyemeru Primary School, 8 are in Secondary Schools and 9 are at Kisoro Technical Institute where they are undertaking courses in Tailoring, motorvehicle mechanics and Carpentry and Joinery. Next year the 8 girls at the vocational are expected to complete their tailoring course if everything goes on as planned.