

## **ACTIVITY REPORT FOR DEC-MARCH**

The children's department has been full of activity in the recent months especially in November to January. This is owing to the support of our partners at the Watermark Community church who pledged their support for the children's ministry. With their support a number of things have been done and there is indeed a great change among the children and the communities that they live in.

We would therefore like to give a special thank you to all our dear partners who work so hard to ensure that every child gets an opportunity to enjoy their childhood. And to individual sponsors, three months of your support has created visible impact as you'll read from the report following. Thank you very much and may God richly reward your efforts.

### **December**

In the month of December, the mentors who are now 28 in number conducted home visits for the children. This was done for the old children in the program. Each mentor works with at least 10 children whom they follow up in home visits and school visits. Home visits were conducted for children in Kampala, Gulu and Pader, and since the children were on holiday, school visits were not possible.

At least each of the children received a visit from a mentor and a report was filled showing their status. Their profile information was also updated. Some of the information gathered included their family background, health status, education status and the state of the families in which they live. It was an interactive process where the mentors had a chance to interact with the parents and guardians of the children and also the children as they gathered this information. Children would also receive counseling on individual basis from the mentors.

Also 3 new child headed families were identified. These are children in a very vulnerable state and needed immediate attention.

In December 2 Christmas parties were held 1 in Kampala and the other in Gulu. The children had an opportunity to have fun with their mentors and other implementers. They cut cake had food and sweets. The best children in performance and discipline were rewarded to encourage the others to pick from their example.



***Children playing during their Christmas party***



***The food and drink at the Christmas party , they loved it!!!***

A review meeting was held with the mentors in Kampala to discuss their roles and experiences as mentors. A number of issues were shared especially on experiences they had had during their time with the children. Some issues that were raised from the children and parents were handled. Mentors expressed willingness to continue serving in the children's ministry

## January

A total number of 310 children were recruited. In Lira 20 were recruited, In Kapchorwa 20, in Kitgum 30 children, in Pader 100 children, in Kampala 40 children, and in Gulu 100. The children were first of all assessed to make sure they fitted in the criteria which had been developed by the team working in the children's department.

Also an assessment form was developed to be able to implement the criteria. The assessment form contained questions that would help determine if the child fitted in the criteria. The assessment form was explained to the mentors in a meeting so that they were able to implement their work with accuracy. Different authorities such as school leaders, church leaders and local council leaders were contacted to recommend vulnerable children they thought would fit the criteria. They did and the mentors later went to ascertain if the children indeed fitted and then gave their recommendations.

Mentors did their task of assessing and selecting new children. The profiles and pictures of the children were taken. Children were selected from the districts of Lira, Kitgum, Kapchorwa, Pader and Gulu.

Also in the month of January, there were home visits done by the mentors and later reports written on the findings amongst the children.

A key issue that arose from the visits was that some children were found to be living with HIV/AIDS, and it was recommended by one of the mentors that ALARM comes up with initiatives to offer assistance to children living with HIV/AIDS in a special way. Also it was recommended that older girls, be grouped with female mentors so that they are able to open up and confide in them especially for adolescent girls. The boys and girls should be encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities through formation of sports groups e.g. a football club to help them socialize.

Food was distributed to 36 children (child headed and needy) in Gulu. They appreciated the food they always received from ALARM, **Gumma Richard** made a comment and said, "I, my sister and brothers are able to have a meal every day without missing, we used to sleep hungry for 2 or 3 days" Thank God for ALARM, ALARM found us in a helpless situation, but now we have found a mother to take care of us, "the greatest thing we have ever missed was love".



*Children from child headed homes receiving food*



*Mentors during a review meeting in Gulu in January*

Training for the mentors in Pader, Kitgum and Lira was held. In Lira 2 people were trained, 5 were trained in pader and 5 trained in Kitgum. The purpose of this training was to share with mentors their roles and responsibilities and also encourage them to continue the good work of mentoring that they had started. In the training, the mentors had an opportunity to share their experiences with one another and thus encouraged and willing to continue in this ministry.

## **February**

In this month all the children old in the program received scholastic materials. This included books, pens, pencils, colored pencils, school bags, rulers, mathematical sets and erasers. They were very happy and their guardians could not thank us enough for the support given to their children.

There was also distribution of food to at least 36 children in Gulu. In Gulu also at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the children were visited at home or at school. Among the home visits, it was realized that Anena Fiona an 11 year old heading a family needs very special attention as she cannot take care of her siblings ably. She is too young to fend for them. Among the school visits it was realized that some children had become irregular at school for different reasons. Many of them were commonly getting malarial attacks. To the stubborn ones, counsel was given and they have improved except for Piloya Miriam who would like to go to a vocational school because of the burden she feels at home( domestic duties). She is currently being forced into early marriage by her relatives who had earlier on abandoned them as children. She is receiving counsel from the mentor in charge.

In Kampala one of the head teachers whom the mentor talked to on while visiting a child was impressed by this initiative and said that the children are now improving in their performance as a result.



*Children with the scholastic materials they received in February for term 1 of school*

On 27<sup>th</sup> of February, a centre day was held for the children in Kampala. The program started at 10am and went on up to 4pm. the children were divided into 2 age groups of 6-10years and 11-18years of age. During this time the children were taught about being an obedient child and listening. The bible context was from Luke 2:41-52 of 'The boy Jesus at the temple'. They also had a memory verse from Isaiah 1:19. "If you are willing and obedient you will eat the best of the land".



*Simon Peter answering a question in class- the younger class of 6-10yrs listening to their mentor and teacher*



*All together on a center day –mentors and children having fun*



*There was also music and dance*



*And then we prayed with our teachers*

The children had lunch at the center and games after lunch after which a short evaluation was done and we later prayed and went home.

Some of the mentors visited the children at school. There were also home visits conducted for the children.

### **March**

In Pader, children have been coming to the center at least twice a month where they do bible study and do praise and worship. We call this a center day. Children have an opportunity to socialize with one another, receive some teachings, play, pray, share and eat together.

In the month of March there was reassessment of 16 new children whose profiles had not been very clear. Of these 10 were found to be fitting while the other 6 had either got support elsewhere or could not fit the criteria of child selection given earlier.

The new children were oriented into the program. This involved them coming together to the center, being introduced to their mentors and the nature of program explained to them in detail.



*Orientation of new children into the program*



*Happy to receive scholastic materials*

Also school fees of the new children in Pader, Kitgum, Lira and Gulu has been paid. However the Kampala and Kapchorwa children await payment of school fees.

Also in the month of March two mentors were trained in Kapchorwa on their roles and responsibilities as mentors. Also the children's profile information was gathered and their pictures taken mainly through home visits. The children living in this area were found to be in a unique situation as many of them were suffering the consequences of tribal conflicts and were living in abject poverty. On the day of training, two children from another region and aggressive tribe reported to school. All they had on them was a cloth to be used as a blanket and a small suitcase for the second boy. They had never been to school and were so excited about this new opportunity on hearing that they had received support from ALARM. They were moving from a life of cattle rustling with violence to peace and gainful living.



*Happy to go to school for the first time*

In Gulu one of the child headed households where Gumma Richard stays was lucky to have a 2 roomed house constructed for them. This was with the support of the Watermark community church team that came in November 2009. The house is going to be officially opened at the end of this month. Thanks again for your continued support towards the lives of the children.

**Guma Richard** , newly discovered child headed family received gifts from Water mark community Church worth \$ 100; these items were purchased for them from Gulu town. When Molly delivered these items to them, Guma told me "I thought nobody cares for us but God is great. Sheila was so happy that she could not even talk only smiling. Sheila said this is a big miracle, now I can cook very fast without being disturbed since I have enough saucepans. She used to have only one saucepan and a pot for cooking.

ALARM bought house holds utensils, food, beddings, mattresses, 2pairs of blanket & 2 pairs of bed sheets, etc. The house is leaking and these children need \$ 5000 for a better permanent shelter.



*Guma Richard & Sheila reciving their items.*

*Happy Richard Hug his sister.(other children went to fetch water)*



Completed 2 roomed house for child head Guma Richard with support from Watermark team that visited in November 2009



### **Upcoming activities.**

- Making of children's uniforms
- Mentors monthly review meetings
- Payment of mentors' stipend
- Holding center days at each center.
- Home and school visit of children
- Completing payment of school fees of the new children
- Purchase of scholastic materials for the new term
- Payment of school fees for the new term
- Distribution of essential items such as mosquito nets and blankets
- Distribution of children's bibles.

