

Newsletter of the VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS

2010: 25
years in
Africa!

Supporters Update

Welcome!

This is being written as the negotiations start and world leaders prepare for the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Whatever the outcomes of the Conference, the effects of climate change are already being felt in the communities of Africa. Equally, however, it is clear that not all the solutions lie at the community level and that we all need to take responsibility in addressing the issue. In recognition of this, ICA:UK has recently joined the 10:10 campaign here in the UK (see page 4) which encourages people to reduce their carbon



In Uganda, Kirya Namulezu a community mobiliser and trainer working with ICA:UK partner Safe Neighbourhood Community Foundation exchanges views with family members. See more stories of community workers on Page 2.

Come to the ICA:UK AGM and International Programmes showcase in London on 23rd January 2010 and begin the 25-year celebration of Village Volunteers!

See back page for details

emissions by 10% in 2010. We continue the theme on Pages 5 and 6 where we reproduce an article looking at the wider context of climate change in Africa, and Benoit Ndamu of ICA Cameroon writes of their efforts to promote more sustainable forests. On page 7 we report on the recent assessment to gauge the impact of the 2008 HIV/AIDS programme. This was carried out by ICA Togo nine months after the activities ceased and so gives an idea of the more lasting effects of the programme. On page 9, Eugene Kouamé of ICA Côte d'Ivoire writes of their efforts to support ex-fighters to take up opportunities to start small businesses. Finally, we provide an update on the progress since the Resource Mobilisation

workshop held in Zambia in May (page 10) and which we reported in the last issue.

Village Volunteers: 24 years supporting development workers in Africa

The “unsung heroes” of development in Africa

We continue our profiles of some of the man and women who work with our partners in Africa and who are the key links between the community and the organisations supporting them, and who are responsible for building and maintaining that relationship in the interests of development.



Cristobel Chitambala was born in Kabwe in the Central Province of Zambia and has been working with the Organisation for the Promotion of Meaningful Development through Active Participation (OPAD) for the past four years. Cristobel manages the Munga Women’s Empowerment project, facilitating self-help group formation for business enterprises among 600 women; working with 200 PLWHA promoting business initiatives and Voluntary Counselling and Testing; supporting them in conducting value chain analysis on processed vegetables, mushrooms and fruit products so that they understand where there are market opportunities.

What motivates you in your work?

The positive response by the women has been a major motivating factor. So far £2,083 has been raised by the women through their own group savings. The number of businesses done by women has also grown tremendously. Women say they are now able to take their children to school and rely less on men for meeting basic expenditure needs. Some have cell phones now and others have bought small animals such as goats and chickens. When it comes to HIV/AIDS I have seen that there are more people coming in the open about their status. The community is no longer just sitting back and experiencing the situation. They are taking steps to make sure that those who are positive are assisted and those who are not remain safe.

What have you learnt from your experiences?

I believe that being honest and respecting each person’s view is important. I therefore never underestimate the level of local knowledge available. My role is to build on what the people that I work with already know. I have learned that finally development is about people. That people are also a part of everything around them. So that as we are advocating for growth and development we also have to factor in all the other things that directly or indirectly relate to man in his environment. I have also learned that when local women put their minds together to do something they usually do very well most of the times better than the men.

If people like you weren’t working in the villages and communities of Africa, what would happen?

First and foremost I’m working with very poor women who have lost hope about everything. Through my work, I bring back hope to the hopeless. I revive their hope and future. Now most of these women boast of being independent and of meeting basic expenditure needs. A number of these women now travel outside their communities for trade, something that they could never have dreamt about in the past. Without people like me these people would never have been reached and would have remained in their state of hopelessness and despair. Today they not only do business but are also able to challenge the status quo where men have more access to resources than women.



Owolola Olatunji has been working in community development for the past thirty years. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Owolola works with the Nigerian Integrated Rural Accelerated Development Organisation (NIRADO) where he facilitates planning events for villages and communities and trains facilitators.

What motivates you in your work?

My beliefs and values as to equality of living for all mankind. The joyous mood of the

community when reporting what could be seen as little accomplishments.

What have you learnt from your experiences?

Local people are capable of achieving victories and accomplishments if properly guided in planning and required motivation is given as supports from the other three sectors [public, private, voluntary/community]

If people like you weren't working in the villages and communities of Africa, what would happen?

There would be stagnation in national development, urban chaos as people drift in from villages and food insecurity



Kassimou Issotina is the Executive Director of Lambassa ICA Benin and has been working with Lambassa since its inception in 2004. Born in Ouaké in Benin, his work includes project management, proposal writing, managing external relations and attending national and international workshops and meetings.

What motivates you in your work?

When I was student, my dream was to be useful to grassroots communities in my life and now it becomes reality. My main satisfaction with ICA is the introduction of ToP methodologies in Benin. This technology is much appreciated here.

What have you learnt from your experiences?

Many things have been learnt by me with ICA Benin. Now I have the confirmation that rural communities are often neglected by politicians in Africa and prefer to collaborate with NGOs.

If people like you weren't working in the villages and communities of Africa, what would happen?

Without the great work done by NGOs and volunteers in Africa, politicians and rich people will continue to live in comfortable situations in towns when those in villages die with hunger and sickness.



Richard Kirya is the Director of the Safe Neighbourhood Community Foundation (SNCF) in Budaka, Eastern Uganda. With ten years experience in the field, Richard leads the team of community facilitators, as well as training them in participatory approaches. He also trains community members on subjects such as HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation and savings and credit management.

What motivates you in your work?

To see the poor revive hope and work to improve their lives. A community living in harmony among themselves and nature. Practicing justice for all people without discrimination in gender, race, religion etc. To empower people to determine their future

What have you learnt from your experiences?

Sustainable development can only be achieved when the people effectively participate in the development process

If people like you weren't working in the villages and communities of Africa, what would happen?

Many people would still be going without basic necessities of life: enough food to eat, clean water for drinking, suffering from preventable diseases. There would be no one to interpret the written word (English) from the books to practice. Communities would be living in despair and without hope. There would be an increase in basic human rights abuse, ignorance, and poverty.

ICA:UK joins the 10:10 campaign!

As part of our effort to address the issue of climate change, ICA:UK has joined the 10:10 campaign in order to demonstrate our own commitment to reducing carbon emissions as well as supporting our African partners to enable communities they work with to be able to cope with the negative effects that a changing climate is already bringing to them and their livelihoods.



What is the 10:10 campaign?

10:10 is a national drive to reduce the UK's domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 10% during 2010. The plan is simple: by signing up, any individual, school, business or organisation pledges to do their best to reduce their emissions by 10% during the year 2010.

Launched in September 2009, the campaign has already attracted a large number of diverse individuals, organisations, businesses and government institutions. The intention is that by uniting large numbers of people and institutions around immediate, effective and achievable action, 10:10 enables all of us to make a meaningful difference. It will also act as a powerful symbol at the upcoming Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December.

The campaign seeks to gather commitments, to collectively challenge the UK government to match the commitment, and to support implementation of the pledges made. It is a starting point- cutting carbon emissions by 10% is not enough in the long term, but it seeks to set an achievable target for people to begin to make a difference in the short term.

ICA:UK's commitment

Our organisational mission is "To enable people to bring about change in pursuit of a just and sustainable world for all". It is hard to imagine pursuing this mission effectively without addressing climate change. For us, climate change is not just an environmental issue, but it is about human beings and it is about justice. We are already seeing the effects that a change in climate can have on the livelihoods of people in the countries in Africa where our partners live and work. Supporting them without making an effort to address a major cause of climate change ourselves would only be tackling half of the issue.

Over the coming weeks and months we will be deciding what we can best do to reduce our carbon footprint. We are a small organisation and it may be difficult for us to achieve a 10% reduction, but our commitment raises climate change on our agenda, and will cause us to look more carefully at what we do and how we do it. We will keep you posted on our progress!

Will you join us?

This campaign is for everyone- why not join at www.1010uk.org and begin to play your part as well?!



*The crowd at the 10:10 launch with their individual pledges
(Photo from the 10:10 campaign)*

Climate Change and Africa's Natural Resources

Climate change is truly a global issue, challenging all of us at the international, national, local and individual levels. Here William Minter and Anita Wheeler look at the issue in Africa, and set the context for any community-based initiatives our partners will be involved in. This is a shortened version of an article that appeared in Pambazuka News (www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/59823) and which also appeared in AfricaFocus Bulletin, Niger Delta Rising and Institute for Policy Studies.

On the eve of the climate change summit in Copenhagen this December, momentum for action still falls far short of that needed to avert catastrophe. Africa will suffer consequences out of all proportion to its contribution to global warming, which is primarily caused by greenhouse gas emissions from wealthy countries. But Africa can also make significant contributions to mitigating (i.e. limiting) climate change. Stopping tropical deforestation is one of the most cost-effective means to slow the growth of greenhouse gases. Ending gas flaring in Africa's oil-producing countries could reduce carbon emissions and, as a bonus, also provide cleaner electricity.

AFRICA'S STAKE IN CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

In Africa, as around the world, awareness is growing that climate change is not a remote threat but an immediate danger causing more frequent 'extreme weather conditions' of drought and flooding. Ice is melting at the poles and on Mount Kilimanjaro. The waters of Lake Chad are disappearing. Drought cycles in East Africa are becoming more unpredictable.

Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change, notes the International Panel on Climate Change. Factors such as dependence on rain-fed agriculture and the impact of warming on the spread of disease reinforce multiple pre-existing stresses. Like AIDS, the threat is already here. The toll is rising. Even more damaging effects will play out over decades.

Yet global warming comes primarily from greenhouse gas emissions outside Africa. Much of Africa's share, moreover, comes from extracting natural resources to be exported.

According to the latest estimates, the entire African continent was responsible for only 3.7 per cent of the world's annual CO₂ emissions, compared to China with 21.5 per cent, the United States with 20 per cent, and the European Union with 14 per cent. Comparing cumulative emissions, a better measure of environmental impact, Africa's estimated 26.7 billion metric tons of emissions (1900-2004) were less than half the 55.1 billion tons from the United Kingdom, and only 8 per cent of the 314.8 billion tons from the United States.

African countries have prepared a common position for Copenhagen, stressing strong targets for emissions reduction by developed countries and global responsibility to aid Africa in reducing emissions and adapting to change. But attention at the conference will centre elsewhere. The United States and China are the two largest contributors to global warming, followed by Europe and emerging powers such as India, Brazil, and Russia. Africa's leverage in the negotiations is limited.

Whatever is decided in global talks, the crucial test will be what happens on the ground. When it comes to Africa's natural resources, the prospects for change depend squarely on African governments, on foreign companies and their home-country governments, and on the pressures that can be mobilised by national and international civil society.

As pointed out in the previous article, stopping deforestation is a key factor in addressing climate change. One of ICA:UK's partners in Africa, ICA Cameroon, has a particular concern with the exploitation of forests. Benoit Ndamu, Director of ICA Cameroon, writes here of their efforts to address this issue. A longer version of this article first appeared in ICA International's Network Exchange.

Cameroon's forests are part of the Congo Basin, which is home to the second largest region of tropical forest on the planet, after the Amazon. In Cameroon, forests span across 17.5 million hectares, of which 86% is public land, and the forest sector accounts for 6% of the country's GDP. Throughout recent years, sustainable management of forest ecosystems in Central Africa, and specifically in Cameroon, has seen a prodigious evolution: various initiatives have been put into place in order to achieve effective and equitable management of forest resources.



However, while many of the efforts that have been directed to forest management in Cameroon have been well meaning, most of these efforts have, during the last decade, targeted certain issues related to forest governance, neglecting other factors. As a result, it became imperative to deal with the issues of illegal forest and faunal exploitation, certification, and more recently, voluntary agreement partnerships which have been established between the wood-producing tropical countries and the wood-importing countries of the European Union.



Research on the realities of the forest sector in Cameroon highlight a number of facts: first, despite various actions that have been initiated to slow deforestation, forests continue to be exploited at a estimated rate of 120 000 hectares per year; second, local populations have battled mightily with the State and forest companies, but largely as a result of grossly unequal power relations they have only received a meagre portion of the gains from forest exploitation. These and other facts clearly suggest that a fundamental understanding of the underlying causes of deforestation in Cameroon - including

the key human development dimension – was, despite being a fundamental theme of sustainable forest management, largely absent from the discussion of solutions.

Responding to this fact, ICA Cameroon decided to contribute toward knowledge and understanding to help ensure that no issues would be neglected in achieving better integrated and more sustainable management of Cameroon's forests. In 2008, with the support of the Global Forest Coalition, the organization initiated a research-to-action project on the underlying causes of deforestation and degradation of the forests of Cameroon. In addition, in September of 2008, a national initiative was launched, during which the results of the research conducted in the south-west and east regions of Cameroon were discussed. Representatives from the different parties involved in Cameroon's sustainable forest management, including national and international organizations, local communities, research institutes and State officials from the Ministry of Forests and Fauna, took part in this initiative. This resulted in an action plan aiming to sensitize the concerned parties to the impact of deforestation and degradation of Cameroon's forests.

African Updates: Assessing impact in Togo

In the last issue of this Newsletter we reported on the programme being implemented by ICA Togo on fighting AIDS in Zio District. Nine months after the completion of the programme, ICA Togo carried out a survey to see how long-lasting the effects of the programme were. These are the findings.

The survey was carried out by the peer educators trained in the programme, using a questionnaire developed jointly between the peer educators and ICA Togo. A sample group of 110 people was agreed (75% male, 25% female and between 14-50 years old). Having gained the approval of the local chiefs and Village Development Committees, 105 interviews took place in nine out of the ten communities.

The key findings (see box) demonstrate that the programme has been largely successful in conveying the importance and significance of HIV/AIDS, and how people may avoid being infected. While there are still gaps in their knowledge, however, there are also signs that behaviour is beginning to change.

Findings

1. What is HIV/AIDS?

A slimming disease (60%), a virus attacking the immune system (40%)

2. What are the symptoms of HIV/AIDS?

Diarrhoea or loss of weight or cancer or fever or cough, or fatigue (96%), don't know (4%)

3. How can I get HIV?

Unprotected sexual intercourse (100%), sharp tools infected with bad blood (93%), transmission between mother and baby

4. How can I avoid infection?

Be faithful (77%), use condoms (17%), avoid sex (4%), don't know (2%)

5. Why are women at greater risk?

Poverty (64%), their biological constitution (30%), changing partners too often (6%)

6. How can I live with HIV/AIDS and have a healthy life?

One or more of the following: Protect from sickness, avoid contact with mosquitoes, practice safe sex, eat good and rich food, go from time to time to hospital for opportunistic disease treatment (98%), Don't know (2%)

7. How can we care for someone with AIDS?

Provide love and support (including washing, giving food and respect) but take care not to be infected yourself (90%), don't know (10%)

8. What treatment is available for HIV/AIDS?

Need to go to hospital (98%), don't know (2%)

9. What new behaviours have people developed in addressing HIV/AIDS?

29 witnessed that they no longer practice occasional sexual intercourse; 3 young people said that they avoid having sex; 11 people opted for systematic use of condom; in Fongbe Apedome village, where there is a shrine, the manager of the shrine said that he abandoned the use of common sharp tools for scarification events. Now everybody comes with their own knife or blade; 13 people said that after their HIV test, sex is no more their priority.

The survey also affirmed the success of the strategy of identifying and training peer educators from the local community, although it is also clear that ongoing support is needed:

- a) Of the 20 Peer Educators trained, 17 are still active. Of the three no longer active, 1 died after a long sickness (Yawlui Akuwavi from Fongbe Boeti) and 2 left their communities. They are civilians (teachers) since September 2009, they were appointed to new villages: Logo Kossi from Hové and Kougbenou Apélété from Fongbé Apédomé.

b) Some Peer educators are using their privileged status in their communities to increase and/or improve their activities. Indeed, in villages where there is a community health centre, peer educators play double roles. They are used to give Vitamin A or worm tablets to children or they are involved in fighting malaria in their communities. They use every opportunity that they get to talk about HIV, both in their own and neighbouring communities. These Peer Educators are in the villages of Gbatope, Gati-Sun, Gati Agodu and Davedi (although there is no health centre there).



Participants attending training in Tokpanou village, Togo

- c) Where there is no health centre, peer educators have become a source of reference for several people about HIV issues in their village. (e.g. a couple in Hové went to be tested for HIV test, after being advised by peer educators).
- d) In general, the intensity of peer educators' activities has diminished in their communities.

Apart from the wider community, more specific target groups were children orphaned by HIV and their carers. Here the picture gained from the impact assessment is less positive. Of the 21 women who take care of orphans and who were trained and provided with loans, 5 died, 1 is almost blind, and 2 are seriously ill. As a result of this and other challenges only 62% (about £713) of the total loan money disbursed was repaid. Although this percentage may increase over time, it is still a low rate of repayment. Of the 30 orphans the programme intended to support, 14 (47%) are adequately supported while 16 (53%) have very uncertain futures.

As a result of these findings ICA:UK and ICA Togo are putting an application into Comic Relief for further research to be done as a prelude to a larger programme focusing specifically on those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. We feel the need to understand the situation of those people much better than we do currently, and to understand from them what sort of support and guidance they need to help them improve their livelihoods and have better quality lives.

Have you visited our new website yet?

www.ica-uk.org.uk/village-volunteers

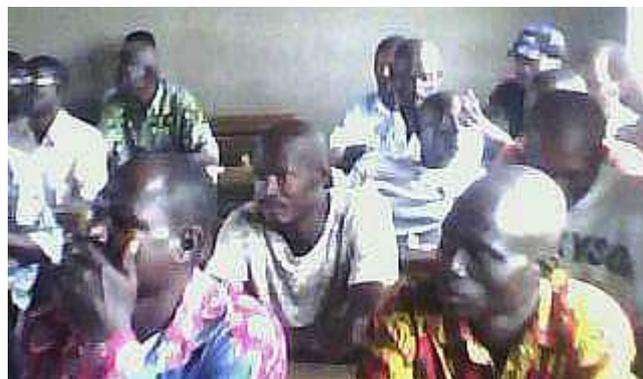
See an overview of the sponsorship scheme and some of the profiles we have been sharing in this Newsletter, a map to see where all our partners are, and the opportunity to become a Village Volunteers sponsor.

Please point your friends and colleagues towards the site and encourage them to become sponsors- we are actively seeking more supporters to help finance this important work.

Over the past few years ICA Côte d'Ivoire has been struggling to cope with the very difficult situation in the country but, as their Director **Eugène Konan Kouame** writes, they have still been able to find ways to assist. This article first appeared in ICA International's Network Exchange.

Working with ex-combatants in the Sub-prefecture of Brobo, Côte d'Ivoire

The political and military crisis that began in Côte d'Ivoire on September 19th 2002 lasted five years and pitted the Ivorian army (FANCI) against rebel forces (FAFN) in a bloody struggle for power. The crisis was finally resolved through the Political Agreement of Ouagadougou established between the parties on March 4th 2007. However, the crisis strongly disturbed the economic and social fabric of the country and left many former members of the opposing groups without means to secure their basic



livelihoods. In response to this situation the Côte d'Ivoire State and the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) have expressed a strong desire to provide meaningful opportunities to the former members of the self-defence groups and the former members of the newly demobilised armies (*forces nouvelles démobilisées*) through the initiation of 1000 micro projects that would enable their reintegration in the social and economic fabric of the country.

With its commitment to taking an active role in the rebuilding of society, the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Côte d'Ivoire has recently obtained financing from MINUCI, managed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), for the implementation of a project of reintegration of former members



of the self-defence group in the sub-prefecture of Brobo, a locality situated in the centre of Côte d'Ivoire. In Brobo, the main beneficiaries of the project are youth at risk, who used to be part of the self-defence group: a total of 356 young women and men. This project will take place over a three-month period. The first phase of the project will enable the creation of 100 jobs for former group members, while a further 256 jobs will be created during the second phase. The jobs created will provide the former armed forces members with an occupation and contribute to their financial autonomy. Also, the projects will enable the training of these individuals in management and basic accounting, further

contributing to their independence. The main objective of this project is to contribute toward social cohesion and to establish a return to peace through the reintegration of these former self-defence group members in the Ivorian socio-economic fabric. Specific project activities include agricultural projects (chicken husbandry, tomato and rice production), and small enterprise development (oil, meat, sugar and drink commerce; cement and hardware commerce, and motor-taxi businesses).

ICA Côte d'Ivoire is proud to have gained the trust and support of the UNDP for this project, following their successful implementation of earlier projects promoting solar energy and agro-forestry.

Other News

The Resource Mobilisation Initiative

Since the workshop in Zambia in May which was partially supported by Village Volunteers funds, the process developed there has slowly started to gather momentum. Participants have been trying out the process in their own organisations and work is progressing on developing the manual. An internal briefing document has been produced, and several participants have introduced either the whole process or relevant parts of it into their own organisations.

After introducing the process into the Il Ngwesi project in Kenya, Gabriel Nyausi wrote: *“Generally it has helped us sail through the difficult financial times and we were able to do greater things by mobilising the fewer resources available within and without [the organisation]”.*

After a series of visits to donors, Meshak Mutevu wrote: *“This exercise was a great exposure for resource mobilization. From what I have experienced it needs thorough preparation through booking of appointments and putting together you points of discussions as well as evidence of past work and best practices from the work done”.*

There has also been collaboration between participants from the same countries: Richard Kirya of Safe Neighbourhood Communities Foundation, for example, has been working with Susan Kisitu of Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC) and Meshak Mutevu of ICA Kenya has been supporting Aniceta Kiragu of the Tharaka Women’s Group.

We intend to have a draft manual prepared early in the New Year, and to begin sharing the process more broadly after that.

Announcing....

ICA:UK’s Annual General Meeting will take place in London on 23rd January 2010 and will be showcasing our international programmes including celebrating 25 years of Village Volunteers. Come along and hear what we are doing, have the opportunity to share your views and take part in discussions on partnership, conflict transformation, climate change and resource mobilisation.

For more information, visit www.ica-uk.org.uk/images/stories/mgilbraith/AGM_2010_flyer.pdf or call Clare Vermes on 0845 450 0305 or 0161 232 8444.

Village Volunteers will be celebrating 25 years of supporting work in Africa in 2010- how shall we celebrate? What would encourage you to take part? How can we use the anniversary to raise our profile, attract new supporters and boost our income? Any ideas, please contact Jonathan Dudding at jdudding@ica-uk.org.uk or telephone 0208 697 6896.

The Village Volunteer sponsorship scheme is a project of ICA:UK, 41, Old Birley Street, Manchester M15 5RF.

For more information on ICA:UK, the International Programme or Village Volunteers, contact ICA:UK on 0845 450 0305 or visit www.ica-uk.org.uk

