



## **Beacon of Hope for Widows Vulnerable Women and Children (BHWVC)**

*Lueur d'Espoir pour les Veuves, les Femmes Vulnérables et les Enfants (ASBL)*

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### **End of year up-date**



that we can serve more children.

### **Dear friends**

I would like to extend my warmest Christmas greetings to all of you. As we reflect on God's love and the gift of eternal life to us this season, I do feel a great urge to show appreciation for your love for orphans in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Your commitments make us bold to take new steps of faith every year in serving orphans and children with trauma. Un till last school year we kept the number of children we serve to 100 but this time we were seriously challenged and the number of children increased to 102.

At the end of September 2013 we received a visit of an elderly woman who walked for almost 12 km to plead for the education of her granddaughter. After explaining to her that we had reached the maximum number of children we can support, I thought that she would leave. To my amazement she stayed at the school ground for two hours saying nothing at all. When I saw her I thought of the example of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8). I apologised for making her wait that long and I reassured her that Beacon of Hope would support her granddaughter. Then she went home happy.

Unfortunately, every year we have to turn down many orphans who come to seek our help. Please pray that the Lord may increase our capacity so

## Children with trauma

Trauma counselling is one of activities of Beacon of Hope. As more people learn of our services to children with trauma, we are faced with more demands. We are called upon to help guardians of orphans or widows who struggle to look after orphans. We often find that the presence of orphans sometimes even threatens the stability of families. Dr Tim's willingness to train teachers and church workers to offer help to children has been a great answer to our prayers. In July 2012 he spent 2 weeks with us in Bogoro training 21 people. It was such a blessing to us all to watch a qualified psychologist in action. Since then our dealing with children with trauma has greatly improved.



Neema Bongerize (photo on left), a thirteen old girl was thought to be losing her mind by both her mother and school teachers. It turned out that she was very angry at her mother who dropped her from her back in February 2003 as militiamen pursued them. Fortunately she was saved by her six year old brother who managed to get away with her while militiamen hacked adults to pieces. After six months of counselling she has forgiven her mother and is a much happier girl and doing well at school. Please pray for a complete healing for Neema and an improvement of relationship between her and her stepfather.

Recently a church elder from the local Brethren Church approached me about Consolée (photo below), a 14 years girl who spent several years in the hands of a militiaman. The day her village was attacked by an ethnic militia her mother had left her with neighbours while she took cassava roots to the mill. Because killers had

doubt about her ethnic identity, a militiaman took her to his home village. For 7 years she lived with her captor until he got killed in an attacked they launched on a neighbouring ethnic group. The militiaman's mother then decided to send her back to her relatives if they were ready to pay a ransom. Three cows were paid so she was brought back but in an extremely poor health. Consolée then lived with her aunt whose husband continually threatened to return her to her capturers unless she did what he wanted. Her trauma got worse and disappeared from home often. Finally neighbours spoke out. The very first thing Beacon of Hope did was to take her to a foster family. Now she is regularly attending school and Sunday school. Please pray for the foster family as they try to show Consolée love and teach her about Jesus.

Also pray that Beacon of Hope may give the head teacher and foster family the support they need to look after Consolée.



## **The Bagamba family<sup>1</sup>**



This year many of us had poor health; Bagamba spent 5 days in hospital with malaria. In spite of that we are so grateful to the Lord for He has been our Ebenezer. Akiiki, Maziga and Amooti are doing well at school. Amooti was so happy to be first of his class in November. Maziga is in year 3 studying commerce. So far she is very happy with the study option she has chosen. Akiiki is doing well too. Akiiki is in year 4 of biochemistry. She loves biology and chemistry but she wishes that she maths were easier...

We are so grateful for the solar panel you bought for us. Now the girls can read as much as they wish in the evening. Akiiki always reads some pages of Jane Austin's collection (she borrowed from a British couple) before pulling bed sheet on her head. We sincerely thank you for your support, encouragements and prayers. May the Lord bless you all. We wish all of you Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year 2014.

### **Praises and prayer needs**

We praise the Lord for Brightlingsea Anglican Church joining us in serving orphans and children with trauma in eastern DRC. We are conscious that as a small congregation, members of Wivenhoe Methodist Church sacrifice a lot to support us and serve 100 orphans every year. Therefore, we have been praying that the Lord may bring more congregations to share the vision and the burden with Wivenhoe Methodist Church. We see the decision of Brightlingsea Anglican Church as an answer to our prayer. We do pray that the Lord may bless the congregation as they share their blessings with his least ones.

We have often solicited your prayers for Ngandru, a boy who left his home village while he was probably 8 after losing both parents. We are so grateful to the Lord after 3 years of extensive counselling he is finally able to remember a lot of things from his childhood. This time he was able to give us many clues that could help us identify his surviving relatives.

Please pray for total peace in eastern DRC. Government troops are working hard to disarm dozens of militias that terrorise civilians. The militia that threatens our own area has been pushed to about 50 km from where most children we serve live. Please pray for God's wisdom for military commanders as well as political decision-makers.

Finally we would appreciate your prayers for our friend Dr Tim Friesen, an American psychologist whom we rely on for trauma counselling expertise. Recently, while he was serving in the Philippines he realised that he was losing vision in his right eye very fast. Now he has lost about 90% vision in that eye. Please pray that the Lord may guide and give wisdom to doctors looking at the problem. Also pray that God may give Tim and his wife Tammy peace and confidence about the future of their ministry to children with trauma.

In him  
Bagamba B. Araali

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<sup>1</sup> From left to right: Tusiime (2 years and 10 months), Bagamba, Maziga (12), Banage, Akiiki (14) and Amooti (the boy 10).