



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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Update from Beacon of Hope

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Dear friends,

Greetings to you all from me and the children we serve. I hope that that you are all doing well. I am sorry I have not been able to write as frequently I would like to. I have been very busy both with Bible translation ministry as well as the ministry to orphans and children with trauma. The number of missionaries in the ministry of Bible translation is dropping so fast that the few of us in the field find it harder and harder to accomplish our work.

With regard to our ministry to orphans and children with trauma, for the past few months we have been mainly concentrating our efforts on trauma awareness among Sunday school teachers. Our last workshop was held at Brethren Church in Bunia last March. This church receives an average of 350 children every Sunday. Due to lack of facilities and appropriate materials for children they do what they can. The director of the Sunday school is Salire. He is in his thirties and very dedicated to children. Beacon of Hope trained him last year and he asked for help to get his entire team trained. The second day of the training it became very clear that Sunday school teachers themselves needed help before they can help children with trauma. Most of them lost their relatives during 1999-2006 conflicts and the wounds are still fresh in their hearts. So we decided that we would give the training in a three chunks of two days in order to be able to help teachers before they are asked to help children. Most Sunday school teachers failed to accomplish studies they had wished to do due to the fact most of them lost their parents during ethnic conflict.

The main achievement of the workshop was the understanding teachers had of the pain trauma can cause and the consequences if the person does not get help. They gave us many examples of situations they have never been able to understand. The most moving was the story of boy revolted to hear that God was like a father. The boy told teacher: "Teacher, if God is like a father, I cannot love him. I thought God was like a mother!" The boy's father is a drunkard and very abuse. When the man comes home at night the entire family shakes with fear.



On the photo, you see Salire (left most) and Brethren Church assistant pastor (last on right) comforting two very sad Sunday school teachers. Aimé is right next to the pastor and chef is second from left. Chef has been telling the story of his mother's violent death at the hand of militia in 2003. He was overwhelmed by sadness and could no longer talk. Aimé had just finished talking about the burden of

keeping from other family members the secret of his father's death he found in his late father's diary. For the very first time the pastor experiences of handling emotions and the pain people with trauma go through. Please that he would give appropriate support to Sunday school teachers.



We had only female teachers. Neema (at the right) on the photo) is dedicated to teaching children but at the moment a very sad woman. The circumstances of her mother's death have left deep wounds in her heart. As she cried and cried, the younger members of the group did not know what to do. I sat with her as she cried. Though deeply disturbing for the two younger members, it was a good experience for them. Please pray the Lord may strengthen the two female Sunday teachers. We need more of them to help teenage girls with trauma. Please pray that Sunday school teachers at Brethren Church would recover from their own trauma and be able to offer help to children. Also pray for Salire (Sunday school director) who went through a long

period of trauma. Please pray that he would not slide back.

Last Easter two teenage girls asked to spend Easter holidays with our family. Unfortunately one of them wasn't able to come due to a case of death in her mother's family. Neema Bongorize, the young girl I have written to you about previously was able to come. She seldom joined in any conversation in our family that we wondered whether we were treating her the right way. As I was taking back to her mother, I was surprised when she thanked our family for the rest she had had. She said she does not remember when she last had a restful holiday. Even her stepfather with whom she has bad relationship called to ask what magic we did to make his stepdaughter so happy. Please pray that we would have means and the opportunity to open our home to more suffering children.

It is time we often request prayers for orphans who are going to sit for State end of primary and secondary school test. This year the fees have increased twofold. Please pray for orphans without support as well as pupils from very poor families. We would appreciate prayers for Amooti who will be sitting for the State end of the primary school test. They have one more month of classes to go. Amooti loves sleeping so he cannot wait for the exam to come so that he can stop leaving home at 6:30 AM.

Let me end this update with a thank you message to you all from Chef, the Sunday school teacher I mentioned earlier. He was deeply moved to hear that you do support us so that we can help them. He asked me to pass on his heartfelt thanks to all who support us. Also, he thanks Dr Tim Friesen for sharing with us the knowledge about trauma counseling. He no longer feels alone on the journey of forgiveness for those who destroyed his family.

Serving together,

Bagamba