

## **PONT newsletter – April 2007**

Welcome to the third edition of the PONT newsletter. We hope you find it informative. We plan to hold a supporters conference in September to give a more in depth picture of how the projects are progressing. In the meantime if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are also holding a dinner and dance in support of PONT on 12<sup>th</sup> May. It will be held at De Cauceys restaurant Craigau tickets are £25 per head. Please contact Sharon Nesham on 01443 204515 if you would like to reserve seats.

### **Expanding the Network**

A number of official bodies within the borough are keen to make their expertise available to make poverty history in Mbale. They have agreed to form a “Coalition Against Poverty” together with PONT. The organisations involved are RCT council, the Local Health Board the University of Glamorgan and the Royal Glamorgan Hospital. Within PONT we are very excited by this development since we can see real benefits to this coalition as it partners with its counterpart in Mbale region. The link with the university is already bearing fruit as Mr Alwyn Pugh, a Senior Lecturer from the Faculty of Health Sport and Science, has spent a week in Mbale during the latest health worker training course to assess and advise on course development.

This coalition has also made a successful bid to the Welsh Assembly for a grant as part of their “Wales For Africa” initiative. The Local Health Board applied for this grant on behalf of the coalition and some of this money will be dedicated to health worker training as described in the healthcare report below. This has allowed us to train more health workers than originally planned but this also means that we have 4,000 extra families that we are now looking to provide with mosquito nets. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us in this effort as we need to raise £20,000 during 2007/2008 to meet this goal.

### **Healthcare Update**

In consultation with the Mbale district health service we have designed 2 levels of health worker training. The first level is for Community Health Promoters (CHP) who are trained to promote good sanitation, diet and hygiene. The second is for Operational Level Health Workers (OPL) who are enabled to diagnose and treat common conditions such as Malaria and Diarrhoea. Each OPL is responsible for about 100 families. They will distribute mosquito nets to these families and collect health statistics. Both categories of health worker are volunteers who have agreed to serve their communities in their spare time. They will receive refresher training periodically.

In November 2006 we financed the training of the first group of 20 OPLs. They undertook a very intensive 3 week course at Salem Training centre. All twenty passed the examination set by the District Director of Health Services, Dr Francis Abwaimo, and we were delighted to be present at their Graduation Ceremony.

Through your donations we also provided training in February for 25 Community Health Promoters.

40 more candidates selected by our partner agencies are undergoing a 4 week OPL residential training course in March/April, financed by the funding secured from the Welsh Assembly Government.



**Newly qualified OPLs with their certificates**

Fred Chemuko , the chairman of our health sub committee in Mbale recently sent us this encouraging report:

“Community members are happy not only because of the reduction in the number of cases of malaria in their families but also because of the large amount of money saved that used to go on treatment. They now see a chance to save and invest in viable economic ventures.

Teachers at the schools in some of the communities where the nets were distributed have noticed great improvement in school attendance by pupils, and are confident that if all people get nets they believe there will be great change in the standard of living.

The number of Malaria cases at the out-patients department has drastically reduced. All the heads of the health clinics gave the same message – with the intensive community education and follow up made possible by the OPL and CHP health workers we are going to register a drastic change in Mbale Region.

At household level in the sampled homes visited, there has been great improvement of their sanitation this shows that the CHPs are doing good work.

With your continued support we look forward to having more changes towards improved health at house hold level.”

## Orphans and Needy Children

After quite a slow start the Goats we have distributed are now breeding well. During the last 10 months they have produced over 100 kids. This means that typically each family now has 2 or 3 kids and are well on the way to being able to achieve a steady income by selling the goats.

In October last year we financed 4 days of training in goat rearing. 14 people attended - they were made up of workers from our partner organisations and some people from the communities which have received the goats. The course covered breeding, feeding, disease management and housing of goats. The training was given by two government vets. The course was particularly valuable for those partner organisations which had not had previous experience of goat rearing.

In November we were able to purchase a further 60 she-goats making a total of 267 goats (262 female, 5 male) which have been distributed.



## Contact Details

### GENERAL

website: [www.pont-mbale.org.uk](http://www.pont-mbale.org.uk)

email: [info@pont-mbale.org.uk](mailto:info@pont-mbale.org.uk)

phone: Keith Lewis on 01443 491260

### HEALTHCARE

Cath Taylor ☎ 029 2089 2396 email: [cathtaylor@doctors.org.uk](mailto:cathtaylor@doctors.org.uk)