

## Receiving the UN Gold Star Communities Award on behalf of PONT, August 2008



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### **RCT and its MERCURY Middle Management Development Programme**

As part of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's MERCURY Middle Management Development Programme, the Council is seen to be offering a hands-on approach to “making poverty history” with the intent of establishing a robust Coalition Against Poverty within the district of Mbale.

As part of this MERCURY programme a project group has been set up with the aim of linking professionals in RCT with their counterparts in Mbale, thus forming working relationships, which will bring mutual benefit to those involved. The project presents an opportunity to save lives, money and reduce risk by looking to tackle underlying factors such as poverty and discrimination.

Although the project is still in its infancy stages, there has still been some notable work that has been undertaken:

**July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008** – Several of the project group members attended an open public meeting at the Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd regarding ‘How Climate Change is Affecting Africa.’ This meeting was used to gather background information on some of the problems faced by areas such as Mbale and the project group took a lot from the speeches by Jane Davidson and Edith Wakumire, as well as from the hard-hitting video on climate change and the effects it has.

**August 1<sup>st</sup> 2008** – Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council arranged for Edith Wakumire and Apollo Mwenyi to meet with the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council as well as the project team members. A formal welcome by the Chief Executive was given, with a brief about how the Council would be committed to

sharing our knowledge and experiences within RCT but also learning from our counterparts in Mbale.

Also present in the meeting were representatives from PONT and the Education Committee involved. This meeting was used to gain valuable knowledge about the problems Mbale face, together with what initiatives were currently being undertaken to combat them. The project team spent quality time with both Apollo and Edith discussing the various initiatives they planned to put forward, and took the opinions and views of Apollo and Edith on board.

**September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008** – Initial project team meeting whereby the issues raised by Edith and Apollo were discussed further. In this meeting it was decided that two themes would be focused upon for the project – one environmental and one of a social aspect.

It was agreed that the ‘environmental’ initiative would incorporate litter collection and recycling with overriding themes of carbon setting and environmental health.

The ‘social’ initiative to be investigated would center on alcohol misuse, domestic abuse and gender equality.

These initiatives were selected based on the fact that they would both be mutually beneficial to RCT as there were currently major legislation and priorities underpinning both.

The remainder of the meeting was used to divide the group into roles and responsibilities whereby research would be undertaken to look at what was already being done both within Mbale and RCT and then what was being undertaken in other areas which suffered less from these problems (i.e. models of best practice).

**September 13<sup>th</sup> 2008** – Several of the project team will be attending the PONT Conference on 13<sup>th</sup> September at Pontypridd High School, where Jane Hutt and Jane Davidson will be attending. Team members will use this conference to discuss existing projects within Mbale and how their project work can help.

**September 17<sup>th</sup> 2008** – The second project team meeting has been arranged for this date whereby the team will share any information they have collected and discuss further direction for the project.

### **RCT workers visiting Mbale as part of a PONT team :**

