

# APAC

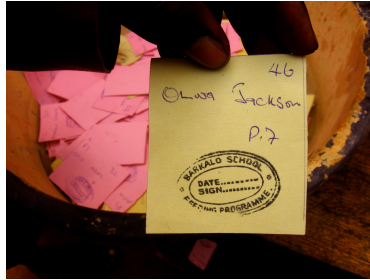
*A report regarding the expansion of the C2C program in Barakalo*

## FHI in Apac

*Background of FH's activities in the community.*

The community of Barakalo is located near the village of Akalu in the Apac district of Uganda. This particular community presents many challenges to the Apac FH staff in the area of HIV / AIDS, as well as the usual areas of economics, health, and nutrition.

In one of schools in the community, FH has established a feeding program for the Child Development Program (CDP) participants, which allows children to eat lunch at school. This program involves foodstuff contributions from parents of CDP children. Parents are also actively involved by being held accountable for their attendance at school meetings. Parents are regularly visited by a specific FH staff to ensure that mosquito nets, mattresses, uniforms, and goats are being used and are in good condition. FH also fights the issue of worms in homes by giving de-worming medicine to CDP children at the beginning of each school term.



Another area of the Barakalo community in which FH is involved is that of the women's group. This is a dynamic group of women and men are the most active group in the community that FH helped begin. The group allows both women and men to participate in the group, but only women are allowed to serve as leaders. The group's activities include a savings project, income generating projects, and providing community support.

Finally, FH works with community leaders in areas such as Sunday School training. This relationship is evident in the respect the community members and leaders have for FH and its staff in the Barakalo community.

### Centenary UMC and Barakalo

*Response to proposed ideas*

#### 1. Community Strengths and Resources-Listening Time

I completely agree that the work teams need a holistic understanding of the community's needs, from the mouths of the community themselves. However, I believe this goal might best be accomplished through the proposed home visits and meetings with the women's group. With the home visits, groups of twos can effectively visit more families,

see living conditions, and even establish relationships by asking for families to share traditional pieces of oral literature, like the suggested songs and stories. One



issue with asking community members their needs as a community is that the individual often only tells you their own personal needs, such as the fact that they need more land. I believe a combination of interviewing and observing would best serve CUMC as they learn more about the Barakalo community's needs. This process would take longer than the proposed 3-4 hours, but it would prove more fruitful for the team in the long run.

#### 2. Working with women's groups on improving maternal and child health

The need for a better understanding of child health is a great need in the community. Mothers need to learn how to care for themselves during pregnancy, despite carrying jerry cans of water. Also, they might need to improve on simple hygiene, such as not allowing children to sit on the ground without clothes /



underwear. Malaria, diarrhea, and worms do seem the biggest health problems for the community's children. While FH has been able to respond to these needs in the case of CDP children, but whole families need to be dewormed and given mosquito nets. A large part of the problem with malnutrition appears to be a lack of options. During the dry season, there are few viable food options outside cassava and beans and the occasional palm fruit. The malnutrition could be addressed through a larger agricultural development program that would include expanding nutritious food through organizations like ECHO (as suggested by Christy Tygert) that provide free seeds to community groups in the developing world that fit that community's agricultural climate and that provide high amounts of nutrition.

Perhaps there could be a discussion on the use of natural family planning with the group or a group of midwives. Some women are only in their 30s, yet they have already had 9 children. In a community with such poverty, it is important to ensure one can care for the number of children they have.



### 3. Working with youth's groups on HIV / AIDS prevention

While two groups of Go-Ed students have started the Choose Life manual, it's never completely been finished with either group. It would be great to teach the Choose Life manual, along with alcohol education. A great number of people in the community, especially men, spend their days drinking local brew. Christy and I both feel that it is necessary to teach

about the negative impact of abusing alcohol, in addition to teaching the youth about sex.

After teaching some of the lessons from Choose Life, I believe that it would be



more useful to teach the FH staff how to teach the materials, as opposed to one of the children. It would also be useful to teach the staff how to change a lesson if need be since some of the lessons may not apply to the kids' lives very well. Teaching one of the staff games and icebreakers could be useful as well, or simply bringing materials that they could use.

### 4. Working with children

It goes without saying that the children would love VBS. It might also be useful to include the local Sunday school teachers in the process so that they get some new ideas about teaching styles and subject matter. If craft projects would be part of the program, perhaps useful crafts, such as bags for the children's books, etc.

### 5. Working with the clergy

Pastoral training is a great need in these communities. Generally, pastors base their sermons on feelings and battling the devil instead of explaining Biblical context or developing a deeper understanding of God through the Bible. While it's not necessary for sermons to attain a high intellectual level, considering the congregation's educational levels, it is important that pastors better understand the history of the Bible and potentially different ways of teaching God's word.

Bible study is also a huge need. Congregates may hear a couple of Bible verses

during the sermon, but not study the Bible for the rest of the week and have no guidance on how to read the Bible. If the work team could bring resources on Bible study techniques and could teach a few church leaders on the subject.

### 6. Home Visits

Home visits are definitely a wonderful way to get to know the community. Perhaps some of the team members could go on home visits with the staff on their usual Saturday visits to see families, as well as experience how the staff work and interact with the families. Overnight stays can be wonderful ways to get a better understanding of the daily routine that most families follow. I think the suggestion of this already shows a great desire to truly understand the people of Barakalo that many other short teams I have participated in have failed to show.

### 7. Reporting Out

Whenever Christy and I ran our ideas by the women's group in Barakalo, they were

very helpful on giving us feedback about ideas that



would fit their community/group and those that would not. I am sure that the teams would have no problems receiving the necessary feedback from community groups and that they would appreciate the effort.

### Further Ideas

While living for a month in Akalu has not made me an expert on the community and the village of Barakalo, Christy and I have observed problems and we have generated the following ideas about areas that need to be addressed and potential solutions to certain issues.

1. Gutters for water system, housing for staff

While there is a water collection system in place at the school in Barakalo, there are not enough gutters to help facilitate water collection. It's crucial that the water tank have as much water as can be collected, especially since the community also uses the water tank during water shortages. It will also be extremely helpful to the school if staff housing continues to be built.

## 2. Another protected borehole

Some members in the community have to walk extreme distances to retrieve water and this causes problems for the older community members. One woman specifically requested that another borehole be constructed in the community.

## 3. Bicycle ambulances/wheel chairs

With the number of illnesses in the community and the condition of some AIDS patients, frequent health clinic visits are necessary for many community members. It is difficult to transport people with extreme cases to the health center without vehicles. While FH can arrange transport for CDP children in such cases, other community members would have to ride on the backs of bikes. A possible solution to this issue is one or more bicycle ambulances. Perhaps with the recent emergence of the motorized bicycle in Uganda, ambulances could be even faster and more effective.

There is also a need for wheel chairs in the community for maimed people and even CDP children, such as Dillis who is in between foot surgeries and has trouble walking to school, causing her to even miss school some days.

## 4. Wheel barrows

The women's groups in the villages do agricultural work, as well as projects such as building homes for needy families or children in the community. The women have mentioned that this work is hard for them since they are older and can carry less crops or bricks. Potentially, wheelbarrows could be given to the women's groups for their work. When the group was not using the wheelbarrows, they

could loan the wheelbarrow out to other community members for a nominal fee and earn money for the group savings project.

## 5. HIV/ AIDS testing center/ counseling, problem of expired ARVs or inconsistent delivery of ARVs

While there is mixed information on this topic, it appears that the local health center in Akalu will be able to test AIDS pa-



tients in the future, when the laboratory receives the proper equipment from the government. However, until then, community members must travel to Lira to be tested or wait for one of the Lira hospital staff to make a quarterly visit to the communities before he or she is tested. The distance to Lira is extremely far for the Barakalo community and even the health center in Akalu is quite far for some community members. A future testing and counseling center, possibly placed at the same location as the drug store beside FH's Barakalo office, would increase the ease of testing and it could provide long-term counseling for AIDS patients. One AIDS patient I spoke with only receives his information on AIDS care through the radio. Potentially, AIDS patients could form support groups where they could encourage each other and experience a place where they felt understood, without being judged.

## 7. Water purification with moringa seeds

Christy Tygert is attempting to connect the women's groups to the ECHO organization so that the groups can access free, seeds for super nutritional food and experimental planting. It would be useful

for teams to follow up on this initiative and ensure that the necessary forms have been filled out, sent to the correct location, and that the project has started since the group in Barakalo was very enthusiastic about the idea.

Additionally, Christy researched on ECHO's site and discovered that the seeds of the moringa plant (already in the area) can purify water when ground and added to water. Perhaps the team could in some way follow up on this initiative as the women's group and FHI staff have been made aware of the idea and have received more information about the process.

## 8. Tutoring program

While filing papers for the FH staff in Apac, Christy and I both noticed the large number of CDP children who are failing their classes. I started thinking of how this could be addressed and I believe that



peer tutoring could help the situation. If select older children, who are at the top of their class, could tutor children in the CDP program that require minimal tutoring to receive passing grades then this could benefit both children. The incentive for the tutors could be small allowances or school supplies, etc. This could supplement other tutoring programs that FH already sponsors in Barakalo.

## 9. Scholarship program

While there are some extremely bright children at the school in Barakalo and in the CDP program, there is little incentive for them to dedicate themselves to their studies if they may not even be able to attend university due to funds. While a

scholarship to university can be a large investment, maybe CUMC could explore offering some sort of scholarship program for select children in the CDP program who excel at their studies to help them attend university.

#### 10. Women- tailoring/ drawstring bags etc. project

While some members of the women's group learned sewing techniques from a short-term team last summer, they can always use more instruction and practice. I suggested that the group look into the idea of making bags to sell that children can use to carry their books to/from school. Some children have poorly made bags that they use, but if the group was able to charge a low rate for the bags, they could make money and improve their skills at the same time. Christy suggested diversifying even the types of bags with designs like drawstring bags, etc. There is already a tailor in the group and he would simply need to be taught a few different patterns and given the materials for him to help lead the project. This could potentially turn into more trouble

making skills, they could corner the market in Akalu and the village.

#### Other long term project ideas:

Salon: Few salons exist in the area, so Christy thought that a few women gaining skills in this area could allow them to own small businesses

Clothing store: Apart from the markets in Lira, there is one market that opens once a week near Barakalo. Therefore, we thought that a clothing store project might work well for the group. The group could buy bails of clothes that find their way to Lira and then sale the clothes in the village. This could save people time from traveling to Lira for clothing needs, etc.

Dairy project: While there is some milk sold in the area, there is room in the market for more sellers to enter. This project idea would also require a loan and extensive training, but it could involve men and might be easier for the group due to the area's history with cattle. The group was very favorable to this idea, but they would need guidance in this process for anything successful or long term to transpire.

#### 12. Letter correspondence

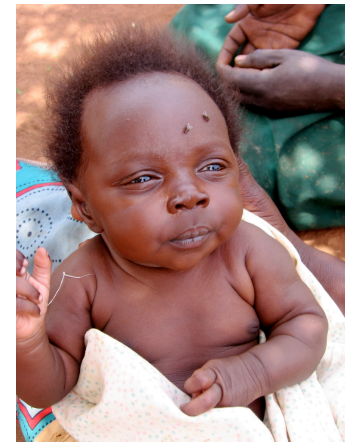
While we were talking with the women's group in Barakalo, the members expressed an interest in traveling so that they could get new ideas about projects, etc. While money for travel could easily be misused, the idea is valid. Many of the members have almost never been outside the village and with little resources they have limited creativity/ ideas. I think that a letter/photo relationship with an American church might open their minds up to new ideas, images, and resources.

#### 13. Root cellars and compost piles

While neither Christy or I are experts on food preservation, we believe that root cellars might be useful in preserving greens during the dry season when they are in low supply. One member of the Barakalo women's group discussed an older method of preserving greens in clay

pots, but it seems that no one does this much any more. The group was intrigued by the idea of a small root cellar and wanted to know more about the mechanics of making an experimental one. Perhaps a future work team could explore this idea further with the group.

Constantly, food scraps are thrown away, which could be used in compost piles for fertilizing people's crops. The groups need to be taught about how to make composts piles and how composting can benefit the community.



#### Conclusion

While not all of the above ideas are feasible, there are certainly many needs that must be addressed in this community. Since FH will eventually leave this area, I personally believe that the bulk of any future projects should be based on enabling community leaders to improve the community themselves.

While there are many challenges with this community, there are also many wonderful people and numerous possibilities for development. One thing I have learned is that true development will only occur when it is done by the community themselves. I hope that CUMC will be instrumental in helping the Barakalo community advance and increase their sustainability.



that it would be worth, but in theory it sounds fruitful.

#### 11. Breadmaking

The closest market in which someone can buy bread is located in Lira, thus leaving Barakalo, Tikoling, and Akalu without bread distributors. If the women's groups were able to receive a low interest loan (hard to come by in microfinance, especially with such low collateral), potentially from a church, and receive bread-