

BEGA KWA BEGA

BKB ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

On behalf of Bega Kwa Bega, I hereby present the activities annual report for the project year ending 2001 to 2002.

The mission of "Bega kwa Bega" is to improve the living standards of children and childcare providers in Ugandan villages. Ugandan families are burdened by the ever-demanding situation of children orphaned by war, civil unrest and the Aids epidemic.

The orphan issue has presented various challenges. One out of every five (5) children below the age of 18 years is an orphan, giving 20% of Ugandans as orphans. 25% of all households have more than 1 (one) orphan. Uganda has a total of 2.3 million orphans. (SOURCE: Ministry of Gender/ Uganda Aid commission / UNAIDS).

It is of great importance to note that working in a diverse cross section of different settings and new peoples, atmospheres and beliefs, is not an easy task. BKB staff members sometimes have to spend hours in order to get our papers worked on by different officials. "Well, it's a pity, but that's how the system works in Africa."

Many organizations have succeeded in mobilizing and organizing rural poor women. But, unfortunately, they have made poor women depend on their funds. Which is practically not suitable. Many have lost properties, as collateral security. Such agencies normally request for membership fees and land titles before granting the beneficiaries any assistance. In the event of failure to repay back the loan, the recipient loses his/her property. This is due to the fact that these organizations don't train the recipients first. It is very important to first provide knowledge, skills and the appropriate technology before funds are disbursed. This has greatly accounted to the reason why BKB has managed to maintain over 75% of its original income generating projects. Indeed, this is a healthy percentage. As a result of this, the minister in charge of the presidency in the president's office identified BKB as a very probable organization to partner with and implement a skill development centre at Kakiri. In a meeting held at BKB office the minister offered BKB an office at Kakiri, where we would coordinate our efforts in Kakiri sub-county.

In our endeavour to eradicate poverty, explicit human targets have been incorporated such as reducing malnutrition, expanding literacy, emancipating women, orphan self-reliance, adapting new skills and technologies, and as a result increasing life expectancy. The projects and programs being run by BKB try to establish a link between ill health and lack of income. All our project beneficiaries are highly encouraged to share the acquired knowledge/skills with other people and MUST cooperate with those who are doing similar activities with BKB.

I will hereby proceed to review the activities that have been going on.

The adult literacy program is going on with 85 students. Most of the participants in the programme had previously not attached much importance to education. They have now realised that education is not a luxury but a necessity. More than 65% of those who were previously able to send their children to school but had not, are now paying for their children's education, some for their grandchildren. The other percentage would like to but are limited by lack of funds.

BKB has also directly sponsored 52 needy orphans with school fees enabling them to carry out

their education. Of these, 41 were in nursery school, 5 were in primary school and 6 in secondary school.

BKB, was contacted by "Books for Africa" USA to help with the clearing, and distribution of a consignment of over 1400 boxes of books. The books were sent for distribution to over 50 schools in 7 different districts countrywide. The books were a donation from "Books of Africa" USA. Well, as usual, it was indeed an experience and a pleasure for BKB to serve the people.

BKB started a mobile clinic that moves about in Kakiri sub-county every week. They are stationed for a day at a particular place and treat the children/locals plus offering a course in hygiene, cleanliness, nutrition and HIV Aids prevention. A total of 8,225 patients have been treated in 45 villages. As a result there has been an increase by 30% the number of people in the area that are periodically de-wormed and a reduction of 20% the number of people staying in the same house with their birds and animals. This has been indicated by the increase of 20% of constructed animal's shelters. There is an increase by 35% in number of families with clean water pots and containers with covers where drinking water is put and kept; an increase by 18% in the number of stands for drying cups, plates and home utensils, an increase by 15% in the number of clean homesteads, cleared bushes, cleared broken utensils i.e. tins and pots to discourage mosquitoes breeding places; an increase in number of well constructed and reasonable sized Pit-Latrines so far by 4 %. This is due to the fact that latrines are costly to construct. 85% in Kakiri sub-county don't have Pit Latrines and the 15% have substandard Latrines. (SOURCE: Sub-county government office - Gombolola chief)

December 2000 BKB began a heifer project with 10 cows. The project has expanded and as of today we have a total of 16 heifers. This project was aimed at elevating the nutritional standards plus income levels of orphans and their providers. This is a revolving scheme, where by each orphan recipient family hands over the first calf produced, which in turn is passed on to another identified needy family. It's important to note that under this project the cows are distributed when they are in-calf-heifers. Before all this, recipient families pass through a training process, which is conducted by the veterinary doctor. Training is carried on in artificial insemination technique AI, Animal management, Extension methods, Environmental protection, Disease identification, and Farm planning and Fodder conservation. Normally we have to hire the veterinary doctor to do this kind of training. Since the beneficiaries are independent of each other, it becomes costly to train each individually. However this calls for group training which is cheaper for BKB and also advantageous for the beneficiaries as they get to know each other and share project experience and problems. The training is not only for the heifer beneficiaries but also for all members of the community who are in dairy business. The heifer beneficiaries have registered an average income of £975p.a. (The average income p.a. in Uganda is £450.) All beneficiaries registered an increase in health and milk consumption both for children and adults. A drop in malnutrition by at least 10% amongst the recipients has so far been experienced. An increase by 95% in the usage of manure by all participants was evident. Manure of both cow dung and urine increase the usage of land. The land has been cleared for growing fodder like lablab, elephant grass and some treatment/remedy plants.

The Kitala Borehole, named "Moera" is functioning, although it has had a number of breakdowns due to overwork. This borehole provides water to more than 120 families daily. The average number of people per family is 7 members. This therefore means that approximately 840 people benefit daily. A second borehole, named "Wishaw" has just been drilled in Magogo village, Kakiri Sub-county, and it serves more than 1200 people. While a third borehole is soon to be drilled at Kakiri. (It's the drilling company which has delayed the work).

BKB organized agricultural workshops aimed at equipping farmers with modern farming

methods. Due to the ever growing population, the need to educate and sensitise the locals about better farming methods is urgent. Land is becoming scarce and the need to maximize the little available space in the best way possible should be opted.

BkB carried out a monitoring exercise that toured 45 women's groups. The exercise was aimed at finding out what, how, why, and all the legal aspects of the groups. BkB had developed an idea that would be quite a success if organized groups of needy widows were given a push. It's hard to provide direct assistance to orphans. This is one way we could help them: identifying groups that we could work with in the future. The women are engaged in a number of different income generating activities i.e. gardening, brick making, baking, tailoring, knitting, small retail shops, and second hand clothes. These women's groups are totally different from the business start-ups. While business start-ups were for individuals, these are needy women who got together and formed groups with a purpose of working together as a group for better profits. Some of these groups have already realized profits from their businesses and their lifestyles have started changing. "This was the very reason why BkB helped them start."

We are now seeing women who have been staying in grass thatched houses buying iron-roofing sheets for their houses. Those who used to be without milk or meat etc for their families are now being seen heading for the market to buy themselves some good food. We have already started with a few of these groups by giving out start up capital of £385 to each group. We would like to help them all but we're limited by the funds.

Knitting has really proven to be a money earner. Two groups have so far managed to win orders for schools outfits. However, the major problem facing the knitters is slow payment for placed orders making the knitters capital to be tied up in stock. BkB is trying to look at ways of how best the knitters could market their products. BkB hosted two volunteers from Scotland who brought in more knitting machines and also helped training the local knitters.

BkB staff as a routine carries out monitoring rounds on ongoing projects to assess the impact and evaluate which also encourages the participants. At times it's a piece of advice or to boost their morale.

However, I would like to take this opportunity and thank all volunteers, donors, well wishers and all friends of BkB for having made a better day and or future for the disadvantaged Ugandan beneficiaries.

Thank you very much.

David Ssagala.
BkB Project Manager.