



April - May 2010

April:

Country Focus - Democratic Republic of Congo

The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have endured years of poor government and years of conflict. The country suffers from immense poverty and 77% of the country's children live below the poverty line.

The country has poor health systems, lack of access to fresh water, bad sanitation, malnutrition, little access to vaccinations, putting the lives of millions of children at risk of preventable diseases. UNICEF records the total number of internally displaced people (IDP) due to the conflict to be around 1 million, 60% of whom are children. The numbers of children who have been abducted has reached awful levels and UNICEF is calling on all armed groups to immediately end deliberate attacks on civilians, the recruitment and use of children, and to release all children in their ranks.

Amidst all this, the BBC has uncovered evidence that 321 men, women and children were massacred in December of last year. It was a brutal and horrific attack and one of the worst to emerge from the DRC in a long while. Local people and Human Rights Watch have been blaming the Lord's Resistance Army from Uganda. However this has been refuted by the LRA. Whether the LRA does accept responsibility or not, it is obvious the DRC remains a very unstable country and continues to need the UN peacekeeping force, particularly in areas where the LRA operate.

Please pray

- for God's peace to come to the DRC; the Congolese are tired of conflict and poverty and long for peace.
- for the church which is trying, despite its own poverty, to care for people who are in great need.
- for God's comfort for those who have been bereaved through the internal conflicts and in the massacre last December.
- that the violence, conflict and the abduction of children will stop.
- that the Lord's Resistance Army's reign of terror in Uganda, the DRC and Sudan will end.



May

Project Focus: Uganda

Our project in Patongo, northern Uganda, is really taking shape and we are very excited about the prospect of providing the Youth Centre for the young people and children who had been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). These children face very serious challenges as a result of their trauma at the hands of the LRA.

Our project is based in the Acholi region of northern Uganda. Twenty two years of war and suffering at the hands of the LRA has meant that 1.8 million people were forced out of their homes and land into IDP camps. The LRA focussed its attention in this region and thousands of children were abducted and forced to become child soldiers, sex slaves, porters, spies and human shields. Lack of employment opportunities now has resulted in disaffected and bored youths turning to alcohol and drug abuse. It is to these children, many of whom are now teenagers and young people, that we want to bring help and give them hope and a life.

The Amazing Youth Centre will provide:

- Trauma counselling to former child soldiers
- Workshops to help the community to accept former child soldiers back into the fold
- Education to compensate for years of lost schooling
- Training on health issues such as HIV, TB and malaria
- Training to address problems such as gender-based violence, rape, drug and alcohol abuse
- Practical advice to the children so they have the skills and confidence to begin rebuilding their communities

Please pray:

- for God's comfort for the former abductees and that their lives will be rebuilt.
- for the building process of the Youth Centre and for our partners, David and Agnes, as they build relationships with local authorities and others who are working for the good of the children.
- For the upcoming 2011 Elections, that the candidates will have a focus, as they campaign this year, on the youth and the development of the forgotten areas of northern Uganda.