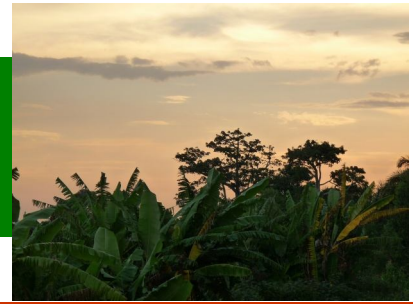




NEWSLETTER

Congo 09 Team Report



Congo 2009



Some of the team at Kasanje Airstrip departing to Beni, DRC from Entebbe, Uganda, June 29, 2009.

TRAVEL ITINERARY

Uganda:
June 24 - June 29

D R Congo:
June 29 - July 14

Uganda:
July 14 - July 15

England
July 15

USA - July 16.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

	Page
Back Home from Africa!.....	1
Reunited with Old Friends.....	1
Three Conferences.....	2
Meet the Team.....	2
CEPIMA.....	3
Gratia Counseling Center.....	3
Grounds for Hope.....	4
A Final Word from the Team.....	4
Please Continue to Pray.....	4

Back Home from Africa!

It's quite surreal being home. We got back July 16th and we are still adjusting to being back in the USA!

The three and a half weeks in Africa were amazing. As always, God did nothing short of exceed ALL expectations and did more than we could have imagined (Eph 3:21). It was one miracle after another. God touched so many lives, changed hearts, started a revolution as our Ugandan teammate who is a pastor said, and did so much more.

It was not an easy trip. It seemed we were engulfed in a spiritual battle with all the consequences of such but that in itself just caused us to be more dependent on God and have an even greater expectation of God working - which is exactly what happened.

Aside from the conferences - one in Kampala, Uganda and two in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the ministries we visited, and the churches we preached in, we got to be reunited with friends, local ministry partners, and women who had recovered from the severe effects of the sexual violence they had suffered. We were welcomed like long lost family members.

Each conference went extremely well. It was incredible to see leaders we had worked with over the past few years, hear of the ministries they had started as a result of what we had taught in previous conferences, what God had done in their lives, and see them so hungry for more teachings just to be able to go back and expand their ministries and be even more effective. It was truly amazing to see how God has used and developed these leaders and caregivers over the past few years—and to hear all the stories of people they had ministered to and who had benefited from their training.

Christine Stephenson (co-team leader) teaching at "Caring for the Vulnerable Child" Conference in Kampala, Uganda.



Steve Tracy (co-team leader) being interviewed by local journalists in Goma, D R C.

Thank you for all your prayers and support. They were appreciated, felt and much needed. And above all, God did hear and answer our prayers. You were all a vital part of the team through your support.

Thank you and blessings, Christine and Steve on behalf of the team.

Reunited with Old Friends



This was our third visit to the D R Congo. Throughout the past three years we have continued to work between trips with our ministry partners in the DRC. We have made great friendships and partnerships as we all do God's work together. Our reunions with each other were sweet and joyful. On the left is a photo of me being greeted by Anna the sister of the David Kasali, the founder and president of Congo Initiative, the organization we have partnered with these past three years.

On the right the photos depict our arrival at CEPIMA - the mental health clinic in Beni, DRC. We were greeted by song and dance and we rushed forward to embrace each other in the joy of the moment of seeing each other again. The road leading to the clinic was lined with patients and staff dancing and singing welcome songs, and waving leaves. What a welcome!



Steve Tracy (above) and Christine Stephenson (below) being greeted by patients and staff from CEPIMA (mental health clinic).



Three Conferences



"Caregivers Conference"

The attendees at the caregivers training conference in Beni, DRC holding their Swahili Mending the Soul Workbooks.



Elizabeth Boyd teaching at the Caring for the Vulnerable Child Conference in Kampala, Uganda.



Widows in Goma working to produce flour from maize and wheat and become self-sufficient. A project of HEAL Africa.



Steve Tracy and Christine Stephenson with the sheik (on the left with blue shirt). He is the top Muslim imam in Goma. The man in the white shirt is the general secretary of Muslims in Goma.

We held three conferences on this trip. The first was in Kampala, Uganda. The second conference was in Beni, DRC. The third conference was in Goma, DRC.

Conference 1: "Caring for the Vulnerable Child"

This conference was geared towards workers who work with 1) children who have experienced abuse through family neglect, physical/sexual abuse and 2) street children. The conference centered on the book "Caring for the Vulnerable Child" written by Steve and Celestia Tracy. Topics included God's perspective of children, the effects of abuse on children, why children respond in particular ways, cultural issues, discipline of children and healing from abuse. There were 165 attendees from organizations that worked with children. As a result of this conference organizations such as Compassion International and World Vision asked for meetings and materials to train their workers, children exposed to sexual abuse were rescued and several workers who were abusing the children they were caring for were reported to authorities. The attendees were delighted with the materials they received and all reported how useful and necessary the teachings/materials were for their work. They said they were going to train the rest of their staff so that they would be better equipped to work with the children and help them in their healing and recovery - and we were invited back to provide more advanced training next year.

Conference 2: Caregivers Conference in Beni

This conference was in Beni, DRC and was attended by 120 caregivers (counselors, psychologists, social workers, pastors, NGO directors) who were trained on how to utilize small support groups to help abuse survivors heal and recover and how to use the Mending the Soul Workbook which had been translated into Swahili. This conference was the culmination of the previous two years of training and preparation. The attendees experienced working together in small groups and sharing their own personal stories. Men and women publically shared together which is highly unusual in Africa. They worked on their own personal healing and recognizing the importance of that as they work with abuse survivors. Consequently, we had a service to hand back shame to the abuser and surrender this shame to Jesus. This conference was so successful that on day 2 the attendees were experiencing what we thought would happen on day 4 of the conference. The attendees are now planning to meet in small groups with each other and go through the workbook over the next 10 weeks and then meet at a follow-up conference to report their experiences, discuss concerns, questions, and implementation of small support groups for survivors in their ministries and organizations.

Conference 3: Working with Abuse Survivors

This conference was for pastors and counselors who work with abuse survivors in Goma, DRC. There were 62 attendees over the 3 day conference where the effects of abuse were discussed along with a biblically based healing model, the secondary effects of trauma and compassion fatigue, shame and healing from sexual shame. The attendees had received training on working with rape survivors but had never received training on a holistic approach that included physical, emotional and spiritual healing and recovery. This conference was held at HEAL Africa - a phenomenal organization. Many of the attendees shared their own personal stories of abuse for their first time with us. Men realized that their sexual behavior towards their wives was not appropriate, counselors realized they needed to support each other in their work, and the top Muslim imam in Goma asked "his Christian brothers and sisters" (his terminology) to help him help abuse survivors in his congregation. The conference went so well - we have been asked to do 6 different conferences next year!

Meet the Team



Jumah Patrick



Steve Tracy



Christine Stephenson



Peggy Bilsten

David Creech

CEPIMA - the Mental Health Clinic in Beni, DRC

CEPIMA is a holistic mental health clinic that incorporates not only psychiatric care but physical, emotional and spiritual care of their patients along side a reconciliation ministry to reintegrate rape survivors and other patients (e.g.: rebel and child soldiers) back to their families once they are better.

CEPIMA is an organization we have worked with for the past three years. They do an incredible work under very difficult circumstances. They are poorly funded, have little local support and are overwhelmed by patients. Yet year and year we meet patients who have recovered from devastating trauma and seemingly hopeless situations because of the dedicated work of the staff who all strongly believe that God is central to the healing of their patients.

We have mentioned to you the stories of the two Naamas - young girls who were raped, abandoned and who suffered such severe trauma that they were virtually catatonic when we first saw them. The photos on the left show Steve Tracy (top) with Mama Abia (founder and president of CEPIMA) with the two Naamas who are now fully integrated in society, recovering extremely well from their experiences and even helping other women as they recover from their effects of rape. God has done an amazing miracle of healing in both their lives - it is amazing to behold. (Middle left photo: Christine with the two Naamas; bottom left: Peggy with the young Naama).



The photo on the right (top) shows the CEPIMA senior team which includes Mama Abia, psychologists, social workers and counselors. They attended the conference in Beni, DRC to learn how to use the Mending the Soul Workbook and start small support groups at the clinics. They were so excited to receive the materials and to start to implement a new model of support for their patients as they recover from the effects of the abuse they have experienced. The bottom right photo shows David Creech with some of the CEPIMA leaders.



Please pray for CEPIMA - they all work incredibly hard. They say they are so successful in their work because of people's prayers for them and the patients. Keep praying!

Gratia Counseling Center in Goma

Gratia Counseling Center was started in Goma, DRC one year ago by Daphrose Muteho Kyakimwa. She attended the first conference we did on the effects of abuse and healing in May 2007. As a result she, a high school teacher, decided that the school needed a counselor for the students who were deeply traumatized. She persisted, also attended our second training last year, and a year ago opened up this center (photo on



right). Gratia is located in the very center of the school grounds - Daphrose says the heart of a person is their center and so Gratia should be physically representative of that. In this past year alone Daphrose (left photo: Daphrose in blue blouse with her family) and her team have counseled 534 students, mentored 255 students through a Bible correspondence course, helped 500 students with reading, helped a group of 90 orphans (and still are),

mediated between students, parents and teachers in 780 cases, seen 336 kids become believers, shown 16 Christian movies, prevented multiple suicides, got 336 students to pledge sexual abstinence until marriage, mentored 50 youth leaders (still ongoing), and are currently talking to other school districts to implement similar counseling models in their schools throughout the country. What an incredible woman of God. Please pray for her.



Images from Congo



"On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers."

2 Cor 1:10-11a



Top: Women at Grounds for Hope with Steve and Christine. Middle: Steve with some of the residents showing him their sewing skills. Bottom: Resident standing outside her rooms.

GROUNDS FOR HOPE

A HEAL Africa community

Many of the women who come to HEAL Africa after experiencing sexual violence do so because of the severity of their rapes and the need for medical help. The physical damage is so severe they develop fistulas and become incontinent. In a significant number of cases these fistulas cannot be repaired in spite of multiple surgical attempts. This village is where these women can live as they are rejected and abandoned by husbands and family. Here they lived together in community, help each other bring up their children, take care of rabbits (therapy rabbits!) and vegetables, and love to welcome visitors. We spent time hearing their stories, praying with them and just having fun, laughing, joking, telling stories and trying to speak Swahili, French and whatever combination thereof that helped communication. It was a great time and a privilege to meet these women who are suffering enormously but who seemed to be so delighted that we had visited them.

The good news is that HEAL Africa has a program where they very actively work with the families of these women to try and reintegrate them back into their families as fully accepted members. Six women from this village (located on the outskirts of Goma) had recently been reunited and reaccepted by their families. Please pray for these brave women of "Grounds for Hope" and the work of HEAL Africa.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Eph 3:20-21)

A Final Word from the Team



We cannot even begin to express how much your support in prayers has meant to us. We know that in our strength alone, we cannot do what God has called us to do. This trip has faced it challenges as has each team member in different ways BUT we can all truly say God did a good thing in Uganda and the D R of Congo. We are truly thankful. To God goes all the glory, honor and praise. Amen.

Please Continue to Pray

Please continue to pray for the work in Uganda and the DRC. The uncertainty continues in the DRC with a very tenuous peace. The rebel militias are still not integrated into the Congolese army. Murder, rape and pillaging still continues and the government struggles to bring about peace and restoration to a country totally devastated by years of unrest. However, the people are hopeful and work diligently to bring about healing, recovery and restoration. Please pray for their safety as they bravely and courageously do this work under very difficult circumstances. Please pray for our partners in ministry - Congo Initiative, CEPIMA, Gratia Counseling Center and many others as they continue in their ministry to the abuse survivors, training leaders in this work, and bringing about hope and restoration to the DRC.

In Uganda, please pray that the organizations and children workers who attended the Caring for the Vulnerable Child conference will use what they learned to improve their organizations, train others and work more effectively with children.

Please pray for what God would like us to do next year. We have already received more invitations than we could possible handle and we want to be wise in understanding God's desires for our team and the people of Uganda and the D R of Congo.

Websites to Check Out

Mending the Soul Ministries

www.mendingthesoul.org

Global Hope Resources

www.globalhoperesources.org

Global Training Network

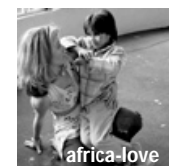
www.globaltrainingnetwork.org

Blogs on Africa

Christine Stephenson's blog at

<http://heart4congo.blogspot.com>

(a blog with stories from the D R of Congo and Christine's work there)



Abby Tracy's blog at

<http://africa-love.livejournal.com>

(a blog with stories from Kampala, Uganda and Abby's work with street children)