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HAPPY 2017 TO YOU ALL! Just a couple of weeks ago the long-awaited rains finally arrived in some parts of our beautiful Uganda. And as I stare out across our now lush-green office lawn, I am reminded of those days when as kids we used to dance, sing in the rain, and gleefully throw ourselves into any puddle we found, with a devil-may-care-how-hard-mama-spans-me attitude. Those were the days—at least in some ways. Well, the rains are here, and indeed it's a great celebration.

One of my joys is in taking the opportunity to write down a testament of what faith, hope, perseverance, and love can do to ignite the transformation of an entire community. And in this newsletter we are able to testify that indeed all the training and various programs you have supported are worthwhile. It may take a while to see results, but most good things don't come easily. Like a gem, they will often require time, pressure, and a little heat from opposition to transform into something beautiful. It usually takes a step of faith to put into practice what you have learned and to continue in hope that it will yield well. It takes perseverance to go against all odds while you nurture this new learning. It also takes love to willingly share your new strategy with those who thought it was foolhardy. Remember our story about the church that took to the streets to peacefully protest against the sale of sachet alcohol in their community? Well, now we can tell you what came out of that. We will also share with you how Conservation Agriculture champions are breaking new ground and challenging the status quo. For example, a Kenyan woman farmer is raising dust by going against all odds to enthusiastically embrace Conservation Agriculture simply because someone told her it was a "good practice." In addition, we are able to report how another community is learning to work together against destructive cultural perceptions.

Sometimes it's not enough to just share these joys in script—sometimes it's best that you also see for yourself how farmers are tasting the goodness of God and how big their reward has been. We invite you to come and see, and then tell others that indeed God is doing a mighty big thing with our partner communities in Uganda and Kenya.

Breaking New Ground with Conservation Agriculture

A Story of Transformation *by Carol Musoke*

Mama Jane Wanjiko defied social and cultural norms by adopting the farming techniques of Conservation Agriculture (CA). The results made her neighbors not only raise an eyebrow but also question her spiritual morality—for who in the middle of a severe dry spell can have a lush, fruitful garden with almost triple the yield of a usual harvest? Was this the work of witchcraft—as some of her neighbors thought?

The practice of CA in many farming communities is an enigma and represents a total deviation from traditional farming methods. In fact, many traditional farmers will insist that spacing is unreasonably tedious, that minimal tillage is a mere excuse for laziness, and that mulching will harbor pests that can be fatal for any garden. So introducing CA methods to farming communities has not been without challenges. Both the

World Renew and Kenya partner staff who are engaged in CA programming have had to take extra steps to ensure that local farmers who adopt the practice are kept encouraged to inspire others.

So this is not just Mama Jane's story. Many other World Renew Partner CA pioneer champions have adopted the practice and shared it with other farmers in their communities. Mama Jane says she got curious when a World Renew Partner CA farmer told her that she would be able to yield double from her little plot. And after seeing his yield for herself, she attended all the trainings and started using the practice too. When we visited her plot in September just before the rainy season, her garden was the greenest spot

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Men Who Care

A Story of Transformation *by Raymond Mutava*

For many early-settling communities across the entire globe, men were deemed to be “emotionally superior”—fearless, worry free, emotionless, limitless, and unhindered by many other traits that were perceived as vulnerable. Today’s modern cultures would call this patronizing, sexist, and egotistical. But in a time where body mass and extreme vigilance were essential to ward off attacks from wild animals, cut through thick vegetation to create settlements, and fight off invaders, there was no room for emotional frustrations, fear, worry, or limitations of any sort. And while the women were fully occupied with raising the children and preparing food, the men had to take up their highly regarded macho tasks. In some societies this reality can only be found in a museum of natural history. But there are still some communities around the world that in subtle ways continue to live up to this stereotype. Such discriminating perceptions tend to impede community transformation, however. Following an assessment during the Designing for Behaviour Change training in HIV/AIDS awareness, for example, the World Renew partner Kabale SouthWestern Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) discovered that indeed such subtle perceptions were critical barriers for male involvement in HIV/AIDS programs. When addressing HIV/AIDS issues, individuals must literally uncover their fears, anxieties, concerns, and limitations—something that the men there were uncomfortable doing—it was seen as “un-brave”! So, using Men Who Care Clubs, headed by male champions who have broken free of male stereotypes in their culture, the Kabale SouthWestern PAG is addressing these perceptions and encouraging men to transcend conflicting cultural perceptions and thus to enable much-desired community transformation. Herbert Karugaba is one such man, and this is his story.

Herbert Karugaba is a resident of Rwamugimba village in Kyanamira in Kabale District of Uganda, where World Renew has been working with the PAG SouthWestern Uganda pas-



Herbert standing and narrating his story during MCC meeting in Rwamugimba

torate (PAG SWU). He is 41 years old and married, with three children (two boys, one girl). Herbert is a member of the Men Who Care Club (MCC) in Rwamugimba village, and the club focuses on HIV counseling and testing, prevention, stigma, discrimination, and disclosure. Herbert had never tested for HIV because he feared the results, and yet he dared not share that fear with others, lest he would be labeled “not a man”! But when he consistently attended the MCC meetings, Herbert developed the confidence to be tested for HIV in one of the World Renew-PAG SWU monthly HIV Counseling and Testing camps held in Rwamugimba. Unfortunately the results showed that he was infected with HIV. Herbert recalls that upon hearing this news he might have committed suicide, but because of the knowledge he had acquired through MCC about positive living and coping with the virus, he was encouraged and determined to cope. He appreciated the work done through the HIV Innovation project for sensitizing the community. Theater presentations and other information helped to reduce the stigma and discrimination against people with HIV. As a result, Herbert has developed confidence to freely disclose his status in public and among his peers without fear of being stigmatized and discriminated. He is now one of the facilitators promoting voluntary testing, and he is a counselor for those who are HIV positive. He appreciates that the HCT services are available in the area’s villages and are targeting especially men.

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in the surrounding dry cornfields. Mama Jane is confident that even her skeptical neighbors can’t stop admiring her garden and that soon they too will give CA a try. And that’s her mission—to see that all farmers in her community embrace the “sweetness of CA,” as she lovingly calls it.

I met Mama Jane last year during our annual regional East African Ministry Team meeting, where the Kenyan team that was hosting us took us to see for ourselves how well the CA program was working for some of their Partner farmers. And early this month, as I was listening to some of my recordings from that visit (a backup plan for those moments when my memory fails me), the excitement in the discussion between Mama Jane and the World Renew and Kenya Partner staff is still very evident.

Any mentor, teacher, or trainer finds great joy in seeing their student or protégée take up the skills, lessons, and tips they have been given—and even more in seeing that it’s working out well for them. To us World Renew and Partner staff, knowing that the programs we are working on with the communities are fruitful gives us a lot of joy and encouragement to keep doing what we have been called to do—and that is to serve Christ in whichever positions he has called us to fill. Won’t you come and see for yourself?



Mama Jane Wanjiko, CA champion

Success: Alcohol Ban Approved

A Story of Transformation

by Joseph & Robinah Mutebi

I jumped up off the chair in excitement as I watched the local NTV News at 7:00 p.m. in a restaurant during one of my field visits. The people around me were amazed to hear Joseph shouting loudly “Amen! Aaammmmen!” on witnessing the announcement of the sachet alcohol ban.

Over a year after starting the fight to rid Gulu District of sachet alcohol, the local Ordinance Diocese of Northern Uganda, with support from World Renew, worked steadily with Gulu District and finally received approval for this ban by the attorney general in Kampala. Tessa, the justice coordinator in DNU, had this to say: “After first waiting patiently, then sending well-known representatives of Gulu District to check on the law’s progress in the Ministry of Justice in Kampala, we finally resorted to sending Wakonye Kenwa’s coordinator to personally investigate. Wakonye Kenwa’s coordinator located the state attorney in First Parliamentary Council that had been assigned to work on the alcohol ordinance, and then worked on it alongside her until the process was complete. The group’s coordinator then tracked the document’s progress from the First Parliamentary Council to the local government office in Kampala, and then back to Gulu District, where it was signed by the LC5 chairperson on the 3rd of October. It then took three additional weeks to track the ordinance back to the local government office in Kampala, back to the First Parliamentary Council for approval, and finally to printing in the Gazette from the Ugandan Printing and Publishing Corporation in Entebbe.”

When the return was complete, the alcohol ordinance created a media storm via national television (NTV News), newspaper (The Daily Monitor), online websites, and multiple radio stations. The Wakonye Kenwa group held a local celebration to coincide with the group’s annual party.

Radio Talk Shows

Wakonye Kenwa members featured in two key radio talk shows that discussed the new alcohol ordinance. In the first talk show at Radio Mega FM, coordinator Aber Tessa and the



Daily Monitor NEWS BUSINESS OPED SPECIAL REPORTS MAGAZINES

Gulu to restrict consumption alcohol - official

The district chairperson says there will be a penalty for anyone who violates the ordi

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leader of Obiya West, Otim Lawrence, appeared alongside the LC5 chairperson and prominent lawyer Henry Komakech Kilama. Otim Lawrence explained how the Wakonye Kenwa group had fought for the new law, and he shared his own personal story of losing his brother to liver disease as a result of alcohol addiction. In the second radio talk show on Mega FM, Gulu District’s most popular station, Wakonye Kenwa chairperson Bongomin Lawrence told the story of how Wakonye Kenwa came up with the idea of the new law and worked with many allies to ensure that the ordinance

succeeded. Laker Alice, a member from Obiya West community, told her personal story of being both a brewer and drinker of alcohol, and how it brought severe problems into her home. She announced publicly that she had resolved to stop drinking, and that she had not consumed alcohol since Wakonye Kenwa’s addiction training with Caritas Counselling.

Preparation for the Launch of the Alcohol Ordinance

Wakonye Kenwa continued to play a key role in bringing together an alliance of locally based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are continuing to work together to make sure the alcohol ordinance is enforced. Together they planned a joint district-civil society launch that was held on Tuesday, the 22nd of November, 2016. The same alliance of NGOs produced simplified resources to explain the law to Gulu citizens, holding meetings to educate key enforcers about the law, and sensitizing various community groups and the business community. Wakonye Kenwa performed a drama about alcohol at the launch, and they played a key role in mobilizing people from the local community to attend. While the NGOs represented at the coordination meetings are interested in educating and “sensitizing” their communities, Wakonye Kenwa hopes to play a key role in demonstrating how community watch groups can help ensure that enforcement really happens, acting as an example and a catalyst for other areas.

Please pray that

- there will be victory over the challenges toward making the law operational.
- wisdom and diligence will prevail as the partner organization works through the details of community mobilization for positive action.
- we will have the resources to continue responding to the South Sudanese refugee influx in northern Uganda, as people need shelter, water, and food in the midst of the long drought season.