

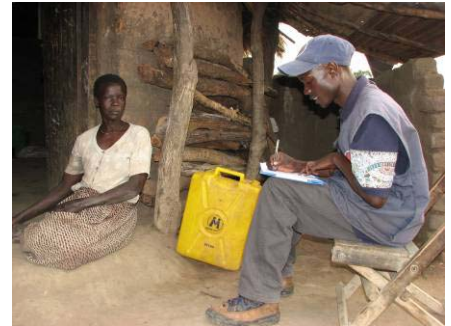
BENEFICIARY ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE FOR 2008: MEDAIR UGANDA



UGANDA CASE STUDY 2008 *Robert Schofield, Country Director*

In Patongo, Northern Uganda, Medair appointed a Beneficiary Accountability Officer in 2008 who works full time on communicating with the communities we serve, measuring progress against our objectives and responding to community complaints and requests.

We go to great lengths to ensure that beneficiaries can complain and make suggestions as easily as possible in our project sites. Why? Because we don't come to a crisis situation to impose our will. We come to compassionately serve the most vulnerable, to listen to their needs, and to work alongside them to find solutions. Above all, we strive to make ourselves accountable to our beneficiaries.



Richard Engwenu, BA Officer

Accountability to Internally Displaced People in Northern Uganda¹

Medair has been active in the Pader district of Northern Uganda since 2003, one of the areas worst affected by the insurgency of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In 2002, the whole population had been moved into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps where they suffered poor living conditions, poor access to services and loss of livelihoods. Medair was there to provide water, sanitation, health and psychosocial services. Since 2006 and an agreement to cease hostilities, our focus has been to aid the return of the IDPs to their villages of origin. We have enjoyed good relationships with the communities that we serve but we wanted to ensure that they could influence what we did, where we did the work and how we did the work and that they were able to tell us if they were unhappy about any of our work. After all, it is their home.

The Medair Beneficiary Accountability Programme (BAP) was our response to this issue.

The Beneficiary Accountability Officer, Richard Engwenu, was appointed to:

- Receive letters from the community and to answer every one of them. Suggestions, requests and complaints are passed to the relevant sector manager and specific answers provided
- Communicate with the communities by publishing a monthly news letter so our beneficiaries know what we are doing and the progress we are making. The news letter provides contact details so that the communities can contact us directly
- Conduct quarterly household surveys to measure the progress of our water and sanitation project. We know how many water points we have created and how many latrines slabs we have laid but this survey measures the change in behaviour that contributes to good health outcomes. We feedback the results to the communities so they can see their progress and compare themselves with neighbouring communities

¹ A version of this report appeared in Medair News, July 2008

- Conduct a six monthly beneficiary satisfaction survey. They are our “customers” and we want to know how well we are doing in their eyes. We can act on their concerns and complaints to improve our programme delivery.

In addition, we provide a monthly progress report to the District authorities. And as part of our legacy, we have provided community notice boards to parishes in which we work.

As part of the March 2008 Household Survey we identified a new community that did not have clean containers for collecting and storing water – we were able to respond with a targeted distribution. In the Beneficiary Satisfaction survey we were told that some of the Hygiene Promoters we had trained were not being effective which allowed us to retrain and re-motivate these volunteers who have an important role to play in their communities.

As a consequence of these measures, Medair is recognized for being responsive to the communities and transparent to the district authorities and a leading agency in the District in our engagement with the communities that we serve.

“Beneficiary Accountability takes time and effort, but it is part of putting our values into action. The results make it well worth the effort.”
Geoff Andrews, Project Manager

