

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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Model Children's Center *New Hope Uganda* celebrates its 20-year existence

(Bonn, 23.02.2009) They came in great numbers – the former sons and daughters of the Children's Center Kasana of *New Hope Uganda* celebrating the big 20-year anniversary. Believe it or not, for three days 1800 people gathered on that Sunday to participate in the festivities. They celebrated the day when 20 years ago, the *New Hope* founders Jay Dangers and his wife Vicky welcomed the first ten orphans in the aftermath of the bloody civil war waged for many years in Uganda.

For many years, the charity *Gebende Hände (Giving Hands)* has been supporting orphanages, schools, vocational training centers and academies in Uganda. For *Gebende Hände* in Bonn, the Children's Center is the most important project partner in Uganda. With its help, orphans and children from destitute families have the opportunity to finish their schooling and vocational training in the context of *New Hope Uganda* without, at the same time, becoming alienated from agricultural life. The grouping of the orphanages in small family clusters who each cultivate their own field is considered exemplary and is being copied in many orphanages all over Africa. Recently, *Gebende Hände* financed a big project for the reintegration of child soldiers in Uganda.

How did *Hope Uganda* come about?

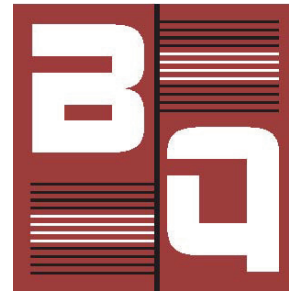
After some years in the Congo and after a home stay of several years, the young couple Dangers from South California in 1988 set out to Kampala. They carried the vision in their hearts to set an end to the misery of a great number of Ugandan orphans left behind in the wake of the civil war and AIDS. Jay Dangers who, like his wife, comes from a missionary family, had always in mind not to house the orphans in the traditional dormitory setting. He rather wanted to provide them with a new family in which they could experience quite tangibly the love of their Heavenly Father.

From a humble beginning with the first ten children grew fast an extensive project which encompasses in addition to the Children's Center, a school and a vocational school. From the very beginning, Jay and Vicky Dangers were supported by the Ugandan couple Jonnes and Gertrude Bakimi. In order



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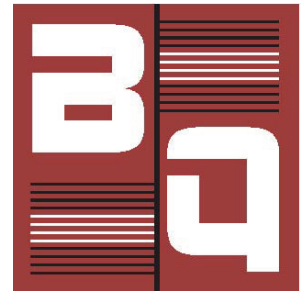
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to work full time for *New Hope Uganda* they gave up their prestigious job at a big beverage manufacturer and a leading vocational high school in Kampala respectively.

About 80 kilometers away from the capital in the so called Luweero triangle, several “group homes” were built around the centrally located community buildings such as the school and the church. In each of these “homes” lives a group of children of mixed ages with their “parents” just like in a real family. 1994 only six years after the founding of *New Hope Uganda*, already 75 children and 30 co-workers lived in the Kassana



family. These co-workers were mostly Ugandan Christians who wanted to care for the orphans as group parents, educators, artisans, nurses, cooks, gardeners and teachers. They are also joined by children from surrounding villages whose inhabitants subsist on mostly meager crops. Thus, about 215 children cavort daily on *New Hope's* premises.

The Dangers family has been growing ever since. Again and

again, their own six children get Ugandan “temporary siblings” whenever their parents deem it necessary to give an extra amount of love, security, care and loving attention to a child who was the victim of abuse and abandonment.

In 1996 *New Hope Uganda*, supported by American, Canadian and British charities and congregations, became its own independent non-profit organization. Over the years 20 more buildings were added. The work is being partially funded by an agricultural project (first poultry farming and later the cultivation of plantains). Through this project, the children gain knowledge and skills of great use for their future independent life.

Today more than 80 co-workers care for over 500 children. One finds there the *Children's Center* where still orphaned, abandoned or traumatized children live, the *Essuubi-Eppya Primary School*



with about 300 pupils, the *New-Hope Academy* with about 85 secondary students, the *New Hope Institute for Vocational Training* where about 20 trainees graduate each

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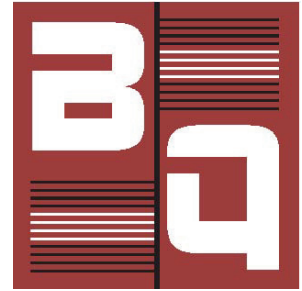
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year, and the *New Hope Institute for Children and Family* which trains each year about 30 committed Christians and sends them out into all corners of the world to work with traumatized children and families. *New Hope's* own hospital provides medical care and abandoned babies find a home in the *Hope House*. In the *Launch House*, after graduating from school, older girls can live together for a year and prepare themselves for their independent life.

And the project continues to grow. Right now, in the Kumi District in the East of Central Uganda, the *Kobwin Children's Center* is being built. The centre will take in former child soldiers so that they can find their way back into normal life and their spirits can heal from the harrowing experiences in Joseph Kony's rebel camps. Furthermore, the planning started for a vacation and training center in which young people can become aware of their God given roles as men and women and where they can learn how to live out their man-or womanhood based on a biblical understanding. In a world where most boys and girls grow up with only a vague idea what it means to be a man or a woman, such a program is truly revolutionary. A broad variety of seminars are offered ranging from day-long or weekend events to three and nine-month long training sessions. These programs are intended primarily for young people from Kasana but they are also open for congregations and other children's centers in all of Uganda.

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- Photo 1
- Photo 2
- Photo 3
- Photo 4: Thomas Schirmmacher, chairman of Giving Hands, at a visit to New Hope Uganda

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