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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Everything is fluid. Our personal goals and ambitions are often different at 35 than they are at 15, and the same can be applied to communities, small and large. Communities can be seen as living, breathing organisms with histories and influences as unique as yours and mine, and like you and I, the needs, resources, and motivations of a community changes over the course of its history. So when members of the “aid industry” propose the same tired solutions today as they did 40 years ago, it is no wonder why the practice of international development has been so heavily criticized for its ineffectiveness as of late.

At CVAP, we do not have the same restrictions as larger, more complex organizations; we have the luxury of adapting to new situations and realities unencumbered by bureaucratic hoops. Our board and staff understand that to be effective in our mission, we must always be listening to our surroundings and be willing to make the necessary changes when better options are presented to us.

The town of Gulu is different today than when I first visited in 2008. 7 years ago, the region was rebuilding after more than two decades of civil war. The priorities in those days were developing infrastructure and shelters, resettling people on their traditional land, and emergency crews continued to deliver food and supplies to the still active internally displaced person’s (IDP) camps.

Today, Gulu is a booming town with its sights set on reaching city status. Upscale bars, restaurants, and shops are propagating at a torrid pace and a new, modern market has Gulu’s residents inspired and bursting with pride. All this, however, cannot keep up with the growing need for jobs, particularly for the region’s youth. With more than 75% of the country’s population under the age of 30, young people are increasingly moving into urban centers looking for work, training, and opportunity, and with more than 60% of these youth currently unemployed, the time to act is now.

In 2014, CVAP made a firm decision to dedicate our resources towards being an effective and efficient community partner. This meant adapting to changing realities in Gulu town and at Concordia University, the two communities within which we serve. Through a large visioning process that engaged and consulted with more than 50 stakeholders, we decided to focus our resources on youth and to help find creative solutions that can benefit young people in both Canada and Uganda.

Like the communities in which we work, CVAP is a living, breathing organism. We grow, we make mistakes, and we learn from them. And like most organisms, we must adapt to our surroundings. We cannot be successful in our work if we don’t pay attention to our communities and consistently ask ourselves: how can we improve? When we participate in our communities as active members, our path becomes crystal clear.

Here’s to a bright future for today’s youth, our agents for positive change.

Apwoyo Matek,



**Daniel Lavigneur**  
Executive Director



# ABOUT CVAP



The Concordia Volunteer Abroad Program – CVAP is a registered not-for-profit organization located in Montreal, Canada with a majority of its activities taking place in its sister office in Gulu, Uganda. We pride ourselves on being a dynamic and accessible organization that reaches a wide youth demographic through our community projects, internships, and training programs. Our programs are adapted to the communities within which we are located, and thus respond to local needs and the availability of resources.

In Montreal, we serve the Concordia University community through internship placements, trainings, and public awareness events for undergraduate and graduate students alike. A majority of our internship placements are located in Gulu where students support community programs based on their skills and interests. Students have an opportunity to earn academic credit while participating in our program through the mandatory pre-departure course entitled “Orientation to International Community Service” – a course developed and run by CVAP. In addition, CVAP is a training ground for young professionals, offering students management and governance experience through our Board of Directors and staff team. In any given year, our program directly benefits more than 50 Concordia University students through our holistic, experiential approach.

In Uganda, CVAP responds to a large youth population that is increasingly being marginalized through a lack of adequate training and support for work and livelihood. CVAP engages youth through a wide array of programs from radio talk shows and forums to entrepreneurship trainings and grants. These programs are managed by a team of Ugandans from Gulu who understand the local context and are well placed to effectively engage with their peers. Our programs in Uganda reach thousands of community members, provide Ugandan University students with hands-on project management and cross-cultural experiential internships, and supports 10 local staff who manage and maintain the program.

## VISION

We see youth as change agents in their communities

## MISSION

We foster community engagement through youth skills development and information sharing

## VALUES

- Equality
- Sustainability
- Integrity
- Social Justice

# YEAR IN REVIEW



## MBA STUDENTS LEAD RESEARCH ON ENERGY IN GULU

Tara Walker and Vinay Nawani, both MBA students at the John Molson School of Business, partnered up with CVAP, the International Community Outreach Program (ICOP) and Gulu University to look at how power inconsistency affects small and medium-sized businesses in Gulu district. Walker and Nawani had hypothesized that, because of frequent rolling blackouts, the cost of doing business in Gulu climbs significantly, ultimately leaving the consumer to shoulder the resulting price increases. They were largely correct, and they believe their data can offer solutions for Uganda and other countries facing similar infrastructure challenges.



## 30 CONCORDIA STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE SUMMER 2014 PROGRAM IN GULU

In 2014, 30 students from Concordia University joined CVAP's summer program in Gulu, 2 of whom were graduates. The students traveled in two groups: the first group traveled in May and June, and the second in July and August. While in Gulu, they worked in project teams alongside Ugandan interns, and executed a variety of community projects. The project teams included:

- St. Jude Children's Home
- Sports Outreach Ministry
- Freedom in Creation
- Community Grant Project
- Media Division/ Film Festival



## CVAP UNDERGOES A SIGNIFICANT RE-VISIONING PROCESS

Between March and August 2014, CVAP underwent a re-visioning of its program; a critical self-analysis that looked at its impact on core beneficiaries. In all, more than 50 stakeholders, including former program participants, staff, board members, and community partners, provided input toward the final result through surveys, stakeholder meetings, and consultation sessions. The result was a series of recommendations for a new structure, mission, vision, and programs that will be unveiled in August 2016, coinciding with the program's 10-year anniversary.



## CVAP HIRES A NEW LEADER

Our organization is proud to announce the hiring of Labeja Julius Acire as CVAP-Uganda's new Director of Operations. Labeja is excited to lead the organization into a new chapter of our history, bringing his background in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation to develop new programs that benefit youth in the region. Labeja becomes CVAP's third Director of Operations following Jimmy Otim and Awel Uwhanganye.

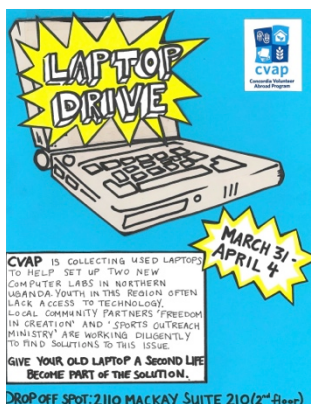
# EVENTS



## FIRST ANNUAL LAPTOP DRIVE

Following requests for computer equipment from our partners in Uganda, CVAP launched its first laptop drive in March 2014. A total of 22 computers were collected and were delivered to community partners Freedom in Creation and Sports Outreach Ministry to set up computer learning centers and to be shared amongst their members. The computers were formatted and installed with Linux-based Ubuntu operating systems, reducing the risk of viruses and eliminating the need for paid system upgrades.

Following the immense success of the first laptop drive, CVAP has committed to making this an annual event, providing a second life for our used electronics and allowing many from Northern Uganda gain access to these machines and improve computer literacy in the region.



## STORIES FROM THE RED EARTH

*Stories from the Red Earth* was a 4-day photo exhibition, vernissage, and multi-medium presentation that showcased Northern Uganda through the eyes of former CVAP participants. Dozens of beautiful photographs, some of which were tied to unique poetry, were on display in the atrium of Concordia's Engineering and Fine Arts building. On the final day of the event, a number of presenters played music, read poetry, showcased videos, and spoke about their experiences working and living in Acholi-land.

The event was organized by student interns Royder Rutihinda and Simon Banderob who were enrolled in the interdisciplinary HIV/AIDS course: Cultural, Social and Scientific Aspects of the Pandemic, and overseen by CVAP Project Coordinator Megan Michaud. The event was a huge success thanks to their efforts!



## PARTNER APPRECIATION

CVAP recognizes that none of the work it undertakes in the north of Uganda would be possible without the support of its partners. In light of this, we regularly celebrate all the people and community organizations that contribute to our success at our annual Partner Appreciation party. Food, song and dances were on display last August 2014 and everyone from the volunteers to the staff got loose on the dance floor. Good times had by all!



# CVAP COURSE



## ORIENTATION TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE – SELC 294

**This cross-faculty and multidisciplinary course explores critical perspectives on intercultural engagement with local and international communities, addressing issues of ‘development’ theory, collaboration, volunteerism, collective action, sustainability and entrepreneurship. Topics are explored through guest lectures, research and experiential learning.**

CVAP’s pre-departure training course is an inter-disciplinary lecture series registered as [SELC 294](#) in Concordia University’s School of Extended Learning (SEL) and is offered during the winter semester. The course has been designed in conjunction with CVAP in order to address the specific needs of our volunteers traveling to Uganda.

Students who are accepted to the CVAP program must attend a minimum of 7 of the 13 weekly classes, which, through the lectures and presentations of a number of professionals, present a broad overview of various topics pertaining to community work abroad, including culture, health, sustainability, social economy, and many more.

Alex Enkerli, part-time faculty member at Concordia’s Department of Sociology and Anthropology, led the CVAP course in both 2013 and 2014 bringing stability, leadership, and a good understanding of cross-cultural issues. The fledgling course, having been offered for credit for the first time in 2011, had really found its footing under Mr. Enkerli’s guidance.

In 2015, the course will be hosted in the Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability and will be offered to students outside the CVAP program for the first time.

# UGANDA



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

To ensure that our work is effective, we rely on community leadership. All of CVAP's projects are planned and implemented in consultation with community partners in Gulu, and volunteers, both National and International, work with these partner organizations to help them achieve their goals. Throughout the year, we provide financial and logistical support to their initiatives.



### ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S HOME

The St. Jude Children's Home provides a safe haven for children who have been abandoned or orphaned, or have disabilities. Over 120 children are cared for at St. Jude, where they are provided with education (through the onsite school), health care, and a secure and loving environment. Currently CVAP supports the St. Jude Children's Home Health Project through the provision of human resources and material donations and helps to fund two onsite nurses and medical supplies for their onsite clinic.



### SPORTS OUTREACH MINISTRY

SOM aims to support and empower the community of Gulu through education, employment, and health care. At their community center in Koro, they provide daycare, agricultural training, scholarships, medical treatment, revolving loans, counseling, and a caring community. CVAP supports these efforts primarily by providing financial assistance for their revolving loan program, building projects, and supporting their community outreach efforts.



### FREEDOM IN CREATION

Freedom in Creation was founded in January 2007 and has focused on four main areas of work: art as therapy, education, water, and sustainability. They inspire a healthy sustainable community with art, water and global education. Through grassroots community development, they empower youth and women with art as therapy and entrepreneurship education, enabling them to bring vital resources to their communities. Connecting development programs with international classrooms, they enrich global education with participatory service learning.

# UGANDA



## CVAP-LED PROJECTS



### COMMUNITY GRANT

With the help of a generous grant by Kathy Assayag and Richard J. Renaud, CVAP has helped support community groups in their small business ventures through a revolving loan system. In 2012, CVAP supported 18 discordant couples, where one partner is HIV-positive and the other is not, to have access to financing. These community members are part of the Ruabanga- Tek Discordance Group and are associated with The AIDS Support Organization (TASO). In 2014, CVAP volunteers identified two new beneficiary groups to receive funding: the Pece Kogar Village Savings and Loan Association and TASO Minakulu. CVAP volunteers and local staff help to manage the fund and develop a variety of workshops on personal finance and bookkeeping.



### MEDIA/FILM FESTIVAL

In 2012, a group of CVAP volunteers held fundraisers in order to purchase film equipment that was subsequently donated to CVAP and is currently held at the office in Gulu. In an effort to make this equipment accessible to the general public, the media team has developed a lending and training system. Volunteers also work alongside community partners to develop videos and short films and in 2014, hosted the first public film festival in Northern Uganda.

### 2014 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- 30 Concordia students traveled to Gulu in 2 groups - worked with 10 Ugandan Interns
- Filmed short videos for community groups Faith Foundation, Freedom in Creation, and U-Touch
- Organized the first ever Film Festival in northern Uganda, Yubo' Anyim - thousands attended
- Painted beautiful murals at Freedom in Creation and St. Jude Children's Home
- Set up a computer learning centre at Freedom in Creation
- Conducted a Health Assessment at St. Jude
- Organized HIV testing for the infants at St. Jude
- Organized a mother appreciation party at St. Jude
- Engaged in the construction of the Daycare and Clinic facility at SOM
- Released grants totaling \$3000 to two community groups in Gulu

# SUSTAINABILITY



## CVAP'S CARBON OFFSET PROGRAM

Our organization recognizes the importance of taking care of our planet. *Environmental sustainability* is one of our core values and as such, we are mindful of our carbon footprint. Recognizing that air travel is a large contributor of greenhouse gas emissions, CVAP instilled a carbon offset policy in 2013, asking that all participants and staff traveling with the program offset their emissions by contributing to carbon-negative or carbon-neutral programs. Through an audit of our travel, it is estimated that an investment of \$85 per traveler is sufficient to offset return-flight emissions from Montreal to Entebbe.

In the first year of our carbon-offset program, we invested in a portfolio of alternative energy projects through a Canadian organization called Offsetters. In 2014, our team decided to invest the carbon-offset fund to support environmentally sustainable programs in Gulu, bringing with it a number of added benefits, including: increasing CVAP's investment and support to the local community; allowing for students to participate in the implementation of the programs; creating visibility and awareness of environmental issues in the community; and the ability to see the results of the investment first-hand.

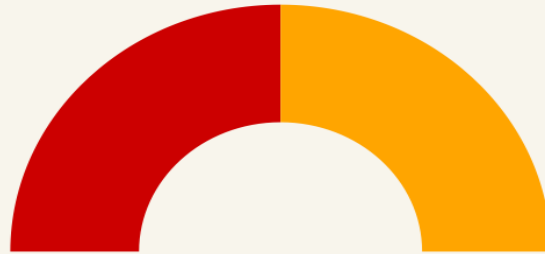
Community partner Freedom in Creation was identified as an ideal partner in the inaugural project as they had a number of innovative environmental projects in place, including a biogas digester and water filtration system, as well as plans for future sustainable projects. With CVAP's fund, FIC was able to set up a tree nursery that acted as: 1) a public education tool, 2) an income-generating activity for community members., and 3) it increased the greening of Gulu municipality.

We are proud of this initiative and are looking forward to expanding its reach in the coming years.

# CVAP BY THE NUMBERS

## Annual Program Expenses

Where is our money spent?



Canada (50%) Uganda (50%)



Average number of Concordia students who travel to Uganda annually (2007 - 2014)

32

\$137,000

Average annual cost of CVAP's Program in Uganda



Local Staff  
22%



Community Projects  
30%



Student Expenses  
11%



Administrative Costs  
37%



90%

Percentage of CVAP's budget derived from Concordia University undergraduate students through a fee-levy

# THANK YOU

## **PROFESSORS**

Alex Enkerli  
pk Langshaw  
Rosemary Shade  
Raymond Paquin  
Satoshi Ikeda  
Peter Odoch  
Rosemary Reilley

## **COLLABORATORS**

Eryn Fitzgerald  
Anuska Martins  
Hellen Mshilla  
Susan Oketa  
Hellen Downie  
Rachel Speiran  
Thomas Prince  
Laura Francois  
Royder Rutihinda  
Simon Banderob  
Louisa Gonzalez  
Kit Malo

## **DONORS**

Concordia Undergrads  
Kathy Assayag  
Richard Renaud  
McConnell Family Foundation  
CASA Cares  
CUSGP

## **DEPARTMENTS/COLLEGES**

Centre for Oral History and  
Digital Storytelling  
Loyola College for Diversity  
and Sustainability  
School of Community and  
Public Affairs  
School of Extended Learning  
Concordia University Office of  
Community Engagement  
Dean of Students Office

## **UNIVERSITY GROUPS**

International Community  
Outreach Program (ICOP)  
CASA Cares

Community Service Initiative JMSB  
Sustainable Internship  
Program  
LIVE Centre  
Fee-levy Advocacy Group  
(FLAC)

## **UGANDAN PARTNERS**

St. Jude Children's Home  
Sports Outreach – Koro  
TASO – Gulu  
Freedom in Creation  
Gulu University

## **CANADIAN PARTNERS**

Abacode  
Teasdale-Corti Foundation  
Beads of Awareness  
The Mercy Project  
Anyim  
Rose Marie Whalley  
The Centre for Community  
Organizations – Coco  
The TASO documentary team

*And finally, all staff, volunteers, board members, and supporters – past and present; you know who you are!*



Photo Credit: Hannah Palmer

# CVAP 2014

## CANADIAN TEAM

Daniel Lavigueur – Executive Director  
Cassandra Monette – Volunteer Coordinator  
Megan Michaud – Project Coordinator  
Miriam Mokrusa – Communications  
Coordinator  
Lea Lacroix – Events Coordinator

## UGANDAN TEAM

Labeja Julius Acire – Director of Operations  
Richard Ojok – Program Officer  
Carole Achen – Accounts Assistant  
Bidong Sunday – Security  
Charles Onen – Security  
Lamex Simon – Security  
Eunice Akello – Cook  
Miriam Ayoo – Office Assistant

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kaoutar Dehbi  
Mohamed Fathi Gouasmia  
Janice LaGiorgia  
pk Langshaw  
David Li  
Peter Schiefke  
Tiawentinon Canadian  
Sophy Johnston  
Christopher Webster – Chair  
Lucas de Givenchy – Secretary

Awel Uwihanganye – Chair  
Joshua Byabashaija – Legal Counsel/  
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Philippa Mbonye  
Muzaaya Godfrey  
Maureen Ninsiima  
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