

# Life for the Aringa

In its quest to minister to the whole person, Here is Life (hereislifearinga@yahoo.co.uk) discovered the need for publishing.

Unforeseen conditions have affected our work," says Isaac J. Anguyo, executive director of Here is Life in Arua, Uganda. These include "wounding and killing our missionaries; unreliable weather; wild pigs, baboons, and monkeys destroying our crops; [and] competition in the open market." These are not the typical problems of a publisher!

Here is Life, an indigenous Christian organization, aims to eradicate spiritual and physical poverty among the Aringa people of Northwestern Uganda, bordering Southern Sudan. There are approximately 600,000 Aringa. About 80 percent are Muslims, but there is a Christian minority comprised by members of the Evangelical Anglican Church of Uganda.

"Our ministry was founded by a few Christians out of deep concern for the high rates of poverty, illiteracy, hunger, mistrust, and disease that prevail among the Aringa," says Anguyo. Here is Life's many activities include agricultural development, vocational training, radio programming, health education, and more.

"We want an integrated approach," says Anguyo, "where the whole person is targeted." As a result, Here is Life has also become a publisher. How did this happen?

First, the organization discovered the value of literature in community development. "We started with four English shoebox libraries in 1990," says Anguyo, "but now we have over 6,000 books." Here is Life has established library services for the region. "Adult students have passed their examinations by just reading from our six library centers," he adds.

Next, Here is Life ventured into language development. "We want the Aringa to be proud of their history and build on their culture and tradition," says Anguyo, "but Aringa, a dialect of Lugbara, has had no written language. Therefore, with help from the Summer Institute of Linguistics, we developed orthography."

Publishing was the next step. "In 1996," continues Anguyo, "with funding from the Dutch Embassy in Uganda, Here is Life published the first primer in Aringa. Since then, we have developed several ABC books and tested them in eight primary schools. The local and central governments have helped us both in good times and bad. We hope to supply books to all the schools in the Yumbe district."

Here is Life is also working on translating the Bible into the Aringa language. "Our vision is to see a prosperous Aringa and West Nile guided by biblical principles," says Anguyo. "We want to share the love of Jesus with all, including Muslims, and call the willing to make a commitment to Jesus Christ."

The organization is also hoping to train writers and expand its publishing program. "Here is Life seeks to help the Aringa know who they are. With books about people's experiences, both real life stories and fiction, we want to consolidate peace and stability in the region," says Anguyo.

He is realistic about the many challenges ahead. "Funding our projects has not been easy," says Anguyo. "Some do not support them because so much of Here is Life's work is humanitarian; others do not support us because they do not fund religious organizations. We face outright spiritual warfare. Satan is not happy with the progress we have made. We want to avoid experimenting on projects which have no future, but with the help of our God and support from partners, Here is Life will continue to invest in building the Kingdom of God in Aringa and the West Nile region." ❖

