



# **The contribution of Luna Children's Charity to the Large Paired Institutional Partnership Project: Development and Implementation of Multi-disciplinary Training Programme in Child and Adolescent Mental Health for Mental Health Professionals in Uganda 2013-2015**

## **Report for THET and the Trustees of Luna Children's Charity March 2015**

### **1. Background**

This report describes the contribution of Luna Children's Charity to the development and implementation of CAMH training for mental health professionals in Uganda between 2013 and 2015. It is intended both to inform Luna Trustees and stakeholders, and to accompany the final report of the Project which will be sent to THET. Reporting arrangements for large paired institutional partnerships are currently not well designed to distinguish the voice or contribution of a minority partner from the third sector. This report is intended to remedy this and track the story of Luna's involvement in the Project.

Luna Children's Charity's primary focus is the provision of training of an innovative treatment (CATT) for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in children, to professional and front-line staff working with children in countries where this is not available or affordable. Luna's model is not only to train people to use CATT, but to train those who have been using it effectively to train others, thereby generating sustainability and growth of skills and knowledge over time. CATT may be used by people working with children who are not mental health professionals.

Luna's relationship with East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) and the Butabika Link began in 2011 when building on an introduction to Dr Alyson Hall and her colleagues in the

CAMHS workstream, it funded a training course at Butabika Hospital for 25 mental health workers, and awarded 21 of them a certificate as licensed CATT practitioners. Those using the technique subsequently reported good results and five participants submitted a proposal for follow up activity which later formed part of a (sadly unsuccessful) Comic Relief bid. Psychiatrist and Programme Director Dr Godfrey Zari Rukundo and psychologist James Roger Nsereko accepted an invitation to attend further training in the UK in July 2012 and July 2013 respectively. Dr James Okello was also invited by Luna but was unable to obtain his visa in time for the course in 2013.

The success of the initial training course led to a further partnership agreement to enable Luna's contribution to the Child and Adolescent Mental health (CAMH) Training Programme 2013-2015. Luna made a commitment to fund and deliver one module in each of the two years, and to send a delegate and make a presentation at the final conference in July 2015. In addition, Chair of Trustees Stella Charman personally volunteered to teach the 'training for trainers' course in November 2012 and the (then) Clinical Director Carly Raby taught the first module of the certificate course in 2013. As an already accredited CATT trainer, James Nsereko was able to teach the CATT technique on both modules, supported by another UK-based trainer (Marie Walker-John) recruited from among ELFT staff but trained and funded by Luna.



**Luna Junior Trustees Roo Slater and Ralph Robson with James Nsereko at Pennthorpe School, which paid for James to travel to UK  
(photograph and report courtesy of Jordan Caveney published in W Sussex County Times)**

## **2. 2013 - Year 1 Certificate Course, CATT Level 2**

In September 2013, James Nsereko and child psychotherapist Marie Walker-John, with the support of Chair of Trustees Stella Charman, taught CATT Level 2 at Butabika Hospital, Kampala to a total of 30 trainees. Of these, 24 trainees were part of the CAMHS certificate programme and together with one week's clinical practice on the children's ward, this constituted module 5 of the Certificate course. Some of the CAMHS Certificate trainees had already done Level 2 the previous year but were asked to re-attend to contribute cases and refresh their skills. Another 6 were the staff of local community and religious organisations working with traumatised children, invited to attend by Luna. These other organisations were the Bishop Asili Counselling Centre (Lira), Providence Children's Home (Nkokonjeru) Children for Tomorrow (Gulu), USAid (Kampala) and the Pader Orphans Caring Project (Kitgum). A total of 23 new Level 2 certificates were awarded at a total cost of £250 per person trained.



**James Nsereko and Marie Walker-John (left) teach CATT Level 2 at the Butabika Hospital PCO School**

Throughout the year, Luna Chair of Trustees Stella Charman and intern Siân Bolton attended regular meetings of the main Butabika Link Committee, as well as the CAMHS workstream, project meetings and workshops. This maintained Luna's relationship with ELFT and supported planning for the Level 3 training planned for September 2014 as part of the Diploma course. However, following the first module Carly Raby made a report to Luna Trustees about contraventions of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, which were taking place on the children's ward. This led to serious discussions at Trustee meetings about the ethical implications for the charity of engaging with and effectively



supporting an institutional model of care for children. Luna was very concerned about the low staffing levels, lack of effective safeguarding arrangements and standards of clinical practice on the ward. Although the many improvements made since the Link began work there in 2004 were recognised and acknowledged, Luna felt there were risks in being associated with the ward, which was being promoted as the national training centre for child mental health, as well as the main clinical site for the child and adolescent mental health-training programme. As a consequence, the Trustees felt that an independent initiative was required to open up the ward to wider community involvement and scrutiny, and to promote more community-based, child-centred models of mental health care for children. A spin-off project was therefore proposed to the Butabika Link, which was also addressing similar concerns raised by its own volunteers. Sian Bolton accompanied the trainers in September 2014 to spend time on the ward and develop this proposal (see next section).

### **3. The Friends of Butabika Children's Ward**

In June 2013 the 'Friends of Butabika Children's Ward' project was set up in response to these concerns raised about the care and treatment of child patients at Butabika Hospital. The 'Friends of Butabika Children's Ward' was established as a children's rights project, one of Luna's charitable objects being: *'the advancement of education of the public in children and young people's rights in part, but not exclusively, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child'*. The project aims to support the ongoing efforts of Ugandan professionals to promote changes in cultural attitudes and provide high quality care and treatment in the context of severe material limitations and very low staffing levels.

The objectives of the Friends are:

- a) To find ways to improve, promote and monitor observance of the rights of children who are patients on the children's ward of Butabika Hospital
- b) To improve the relationships and living conditions of children who are patients on the children's ward of Butabika Hospital
- c) To raise and provide funds which will further the achievement of a) and b)

The project received the support of Dr David Basangwa, Director of Butabika Hospital; Dr Alyson Hall, CAMHS Programme Project Director; Cerdic Hall, Chair of the Butabika Link Committee; Cecilia Dricuru, Children's Ward Manager and the London-based Ugandan Diaspora Groups. The Butabika Link Committee undertook to provide the Trustees of Luna Children's Charity with regular reports to reassure them that safeguarding and children's rights issues on the ward were being addressed more broadly. Formal approval for Luna's initiative was given by the Chair of the Link, and then by Luna Trustees in June 2013. A total of 18 people have subsequently committed themselves to becoming 'Friends', and Luna is continuously seeking to enlarge this number.

The Friends Project was awarded a start-up grant of £1000 by Chartwell Industries Ltd and the group voted that some of these funds should be spent on supporting a local church volunteer to spend 3 days a week with the children, running activities that would engage them both educationally and therapeutically. Subsequently, the Friends have also committed themselves to resourcing the sensory room, and some funds have been used to support a

social worker who has facilitated the discharge home of a number of children. The Friends have for the last two years also paid for a special meal for the children resident on the ward at Christmas.

Further recent fundraising events included a social evening kindly hosted by Dr Alyson Hall, which raised £362, of which £326 went to the Friends and £36 direct to the Link. CAMHS Programme volunteer Laura Roughan ran the Istanbul marathon in November 2014 and raised £520, and in the current year the children of Pennthorpe School in West Sussex have voted to make the Friends the recipients of their charitable fundraising efforts in 2015.

Donations of money and equipment are taken out to Butabika Hospital by volunteers travelling there as part of their work for the Link, or for personal reasons. Funds are administered primarily through the Reverend Dismas and St Luke's Church, which has made the ward its special project and sponsors the volunteer Rebecca Akello, who supplements the paid staff team and makes a major contribution to the lives of the children. Luna invested in her development by sponsoring her to learn the CATT technique in Arusha, Tanzania in April 2014.

Stella Charman was delighted to see some very significant improvements to the internal and external environment of the children's ward during her visit in February 2015, which coincided with the completion and opening of the playground. It is clear that the way in which the ward is used has changed radically, with most children staying for a short time and then returned to their homes and communities following treatment. This is a significant achievement for the Link's CAMHS Project as a whole, independently of the outcomes of the training programme itself.

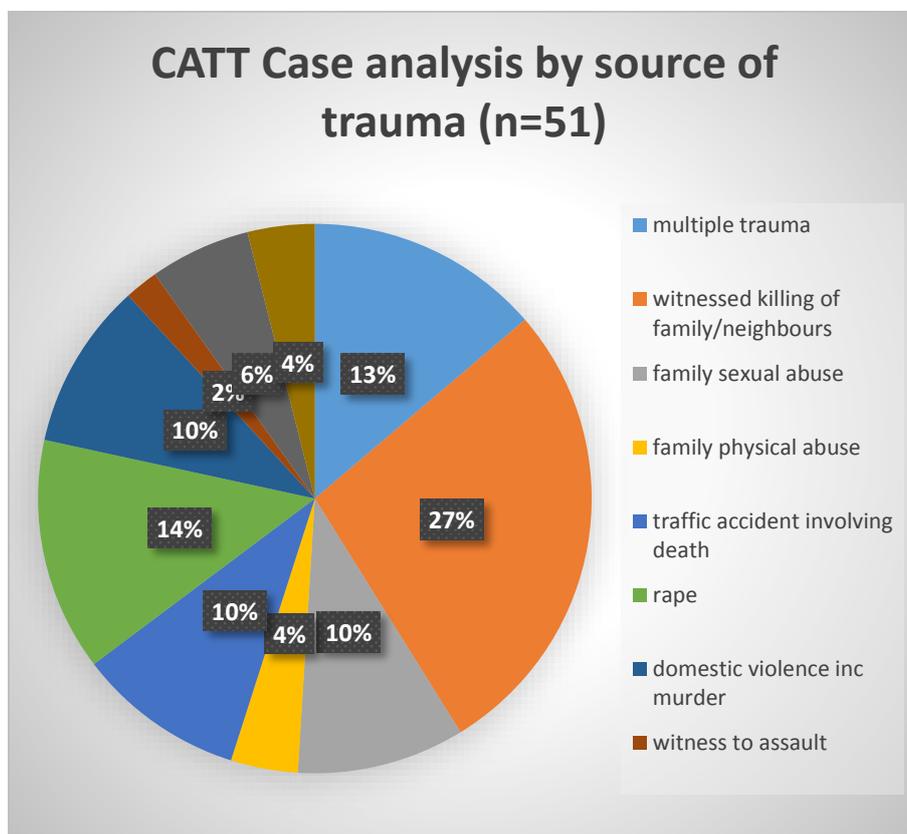


**In the sensory room and view of new playground for children's ward at Butabika Hospital**

#### 4. 2014 - Year 2 Diploma Course, CATT Level 3

In September 2014, as part of the Diploma programme module 5, Stella Charman and James Nsereko ran a CATT Level 3 (trainer level) course with skype input from Carly Raby and Robin Bennett. Unfortunately a third trainer, Luna Trustee Brenda Graham, was unable to join the team as planned due to a broken wrist. The course was delivered to the 12 remaining Diploma trainees plus another CATT practitioner from the UK with experience of using the technique in the Middle East. However, in this second year Luna did not contribute to the clinical placements or second teaching week of the module. Instead, an allowance was provided to enable the trainees to travel to community locations and refugee camps to identify and engage with children suffering from PTSD and who were suitable for treatment using CATT. The aim was to encourage the development of outreach and non-institutional models care and treatment.

In order to obtain their Level 3 certificates, trainees had to write up a total of five CATT cases with their CRIES-8 scores. As a result, Luna received information about 51 cases, consisting of 32 girls and 19 boys aged from 6 to 17 years. Some had very severe problems caused by multiple trauma. The graph below shows the different sources of trauma. Improvement based on pre- and post-treatment CRIES-8 scores showed that all improved by between 3 and 21 points, and only 8 remained above the level indicative of PTSD post-treatment. A number of these were refugees with multiple sources of trauma.



As a result of the course, a further 7 Ugandans became fully accredited CATT trainers following scrutiny of their cases and successful completion of all the teaching practice exercises. Trainees who had not completed all five cases and did not obtain Level 3 certificates, nevertheless strengthened their skills in the use of CATT and improved their understanding of complex trauma.

## **5. First Ugandan CAMH Conference**

In February 2015 the two year programme concluded with a conference designed to showcase the past two year's work and attended by around 130 people. Stella Charman gave a presentation on the use and effectiveness in Uganda of Children's Accelerated Trauma Treatment (CATT). This described the nature and development of CATT and went on to explain how Luna Children's Charity, in partnership with the Butabika Link, has now trained 43 practitioners in Uganda to use CATT with 8 ready to train others. The presentation demonstrated the overwhelmingly positive outcomes of treatment, using Children and War's CRIES-8 scale and provided a brief analysis of the 51 cases submitted by Ugandan trainees. This raised awareness and interest in CAT and has resulted in offers of support for further research. Stella praised the work and commitment of the Diploma trainees (now graduates) to relieving the ongoing suffering to children caused by the symptoms of trauma. The conference was also attended by CATT practitioners who had not been able to access the Diploma programme, but have growing experience in the use of the technique.



**Diploma graduates at the Conference in February 2015**



## 6. Financial contribution and evaluation

The table below shows Luna's expenditure on activities relating to its partnership with ELFT and the Butabika Link, and its total financial contribution to the CAMHS Training Programme over the past two years of nearly £15,000 from monies raised through personal and corporate donations. This figure should be added to the total sum spent by THET on this Large Paired Institutional Partnership Project, in order to gain an accurate picture of the total costs.

### Luna expenditure 2013-15

2013 L2 (CAMHS Certificate course)	5745
2014 L3 (CAMHS Diploma course)	3898
training of Ugandans in UK & Tanzania	2300
Friends project	1893
Conference 2015	944
<b>Total</b>	<b>14780</b>

In addition to Luna's financial investment in the programme, several individuals working as Luna volunteers have committed a significant amount of their time and energy, and have also given practical and emotional support to the ELFT volunteers and Ugandan partners. Everyone involved has learned a great deal from the experience. At times there have been tensions, especially when Luna's values and objectives seemed to diverge from those of the Link. Luna has found it hard work to influence the design and implementation of the Project, and has experienced its governance and decision-making arrangements as lacking in transparency, overly centralised and time-consuming. However, recent changes have considerably improved the management arrangements.

Despite the challenges experienced, the partnership with the Butabika Link's CAMHS Project has been a successful one for Luna Children's Charity. It has been able to establish a strong grouping of CATT practitioners and trainers across Uganda, who will be able to train and support others in their turn. The next phase of THET-funded CAMH training in Uganda will now be able to proceed without significant support from Luna, using the skills and resources within the group. At the same time, interest in and demand for the technique is growing internationally and Luna has been presented with a number of other opportunities to partner other agencies working with children suffering from PTSD. Some of the Ugandan trainers will be invited to train for Luna both within and outside Uganda in the future.

This report has described how Luna in partnership with the Butabika Link's CAMHS Project has introduced CATT into Uganda, which is now arguably the country where there is the greatest experience of treating children with PTSD using this innovative and cost-effective approach. It is hoped that this will lead to further local research and development activity. However, as this report demonstrates it has not always been an easy road to travel and there have been strains and stresses along the way. But the partnership has been sustained due to the hard work, positive relationships and commitment of volunteers working for both partners. It has been challenging but also fun and rewarding and a great privilege to have been able to work with so many inspirational people in both countries, volunteers and trainees alike.

**Stella Charman 12.03.15**