

## OKORA SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PROJECT

### **Project Background:**

Kitgum and Lamwo Districts are located in northern Uganda. These districts were severely affected by more than two decades of insurgency by the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Thousands of civilians lost their lives, were beaten, and taken as captives. As a result, the population was forced to live in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. The camps were associated with many hardships including lack of safe water, food, health services and education. Life in the IDP camps was suffocating and dehumanizing.

Over the past two years, the residents of Okora, Uganda have been resettling in their villages. First Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) in Eau Claire, Wisconsin supports them in this complex task and is collaborating with Lutheran World Federation in supporting resettlement. The Okora Sustainable Community Project will support the people of Okora as they rebuild their community and develop solutions to the post-war issues in their village.

A representative group from First Congregational UCC traveled to northern Uganda in 2010. Our goal was to listen to what the people in the village of Okora, Uganda say are their needs. In partnership with Lutheran World Federation, First Congregational UCC conducted focus group discussions with the leaders, school personnel, adult men and women, youth and school children of Okora.

The focus groups' analyses of community needs along with extensive research on the regions and its history helped guide and establish four key objectives to be achieved in Okora over the next five years. The total cost for this project is \$116,627, beginning April, 2011. First Congregational UCC has planned carefully to ensure that this mission ministry is sustainable in nature. The training will be provided in the community, where it will be shared with other families and leaders. Resources and knowledge gained by Okora's citizens through this project will enable them to improve their standard of living and lay the groundwork for their future advancements.

The costs are distributed across the following four objectives:

### **Objective 1: Sustainable Agriculture**

Improve knowledge and skills in agricultural production, farm management, diversity, and marketing at the household and community levels to increase food security, nutritional values of the food consumed, and provide income generating opportunities.

### **Objective 2: Education**

Increase the ability of parents, school administration, and the community to support the education and development of the children of Okora to become productive members of society.

### **Objective 3: Village Health Teams**

Support the Village Health Team in their work to build awareness and understanding of preventable health issues and to create health seeking behaviors in the community.

### **Objective 4: Energy**

Support the use of energy saving Rocket Lorena Stoves (RLS) to reduce the negative impact on the environment and the lives of community members.