

HEALTHY CHILD UGANDA UPDATE

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It Takes A Village to Raise a Child: Natamba

Natamba lives with her mother and five brothers and sisters on a small piece of land. When Natamba was 8 months old, her mother became pregnant and could not breastfeed her anymore. To make matters worse, the father deserted the family. Natamba's mother struggled to feed, care for the children, and get them to school. The family had no latrine and no kitchen. With two infants, Natamba's mother felt defeated. The project intervened when Natamba was two and a half years old. Natamba had severe malnutrition weighing only 7kgs. She could not stand or walk.



The HCU project team held a meeting with the village elders and relatives. It was decided to combine efforts and construct a latrine for the family. HCU supported Natamba with a litre of milk every day for 9 months. Volunteers visited the child regularly. Today, Natamba can run and is about to start school. Her family and the whole village had lost hope, but now can be congratulated that their efforts have made a difference in the life of a child.

Joel Muhindo, Trainer, Kinoni

A few facts: *According to data from a survey of 1200 mothers in new project areas in April 2006*

- 30% of mothers reported that a child previously born to them had died at less than five years old.
- Top causes of death included malaria/fever (40%), diarrhea (20%), pneumonia (10%), newborn deaths (20%)
- One third of children died before one month of age, another third between one month and one year and the other third between one year and their fifth birthday
- 70% of children died at home; 10% died on their way to or from the hospital or health centre



THANK YOU DONORS!

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www.healthygenerations.ca/interest/uganda.htm

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WORDS FROM OUR TEAM...

Katyazo CORPS Shine

Katyazo Community Owned Resource Persons (CORPS) are twenty in number. They are all women. Katyazo CORPS have worked so hard to improve the livelihood of women and their children.

To effectively achieve this they have initiated several income-generating projects in their villages including goat rearing. Goats are raised then used or sold for both milk and meat. By August 2006, they had over 38 goats they were raising, through funds they raised on their own. There was very happy news recently that they were successful in a grant application to the French Embassy and have received a donation of nearly 3 million UGS (\$2000 CDN) to buy more goats!



Thanks to everyone who made this a success!

Joy Mpirwe, CORPS Coordinator, Katyazo



Katyazo CORPs

Thought of the day:

Watch out for sustainable change!

My mission as a facilitator is to encourage rural communities in efforts to realize improved living conditions as they address their immediate and longer-term development needs. This can only be sustainably achieved by employing the bottom-up approach. All levels should be involved. At some level, even children have to be consulted if the project is to be successful.

Dennis Tumuranye, Project Facilitator

Terrifying! Child Deaths Threaten Bushwere, Mwizi Sub-County

HCU started working in a new area called Bushwere, in early June 2006. Within a month, the 26 newly trained volunteer CORPs reported 16 child deaths in their villages. This included 8 newborns and 8 others less than five years. When the volunteers and HCU team met with the community to discuss the situation, mothers explained these challenges:

- Bushwere is very hilly; pregnant mothers cannot easily go to health centres for delivery.
- Transportation is a problem. Special hires are expensive, and there is only one pickup truck that leaves in the morning and comes back in the evening.
- Mothers feel too poor to deliver at health units. They cannot afford to buy better clothes to put on to go to the hospital.
- Fears and attitudes in the community discourage hospital deliveries.

Bushwere CORPs believe that the project will help reduce death rates. More women will deliver at health units or the hospital due to increased awareness.

Joel Muhindo, Trainer, Kinoni health centre.



Training new CORPs with Puppets!

Since June 2006, 140 new volunteers (70% women) have been selected and trained and will be supporting HCU as CORPs (Community Owned Resource Persons).

As before, each new village selects two individuals who will represent parents and will receive training in child health and community health promotion. The selection process is rigorous and though there are guidelines, each community can select their own criteria. The selection is done at an open community meeting, and is democratic in nature.

The newly selected individuals then undergo an intensive five day training program, run by local trainers, who are also health care providers at community health centres (mainly nurses and midwives). Training is done in a participatory way, through singing, role plays and dramas, discussion groups and field trips. This is critical since most volunteers the community members work with do not have a high level of formal education.

One of the really exciting new initiatives in the training program has been the introduction of 'puppets' to training. A first, Canadian puppets were introduced by Dr. Kay Wotton, who coordinated the training program for CORPs. They were such a big hit that now puppets are being locally made and puppeteering is becoming a key skill introduced in the workshops.



Dalhousie University International Development Students visit Healthy Child Uganda

Seventeen students from Dalhousie University's Developments studies program recently visited Healthy Child Uganda (HCU). For many students, the only experience they have had with development has been in the classroom through lectures and readings. By visiting this project, the students were able to see development in action, while learning about the workings of a child health project. The day began with a quick orientation about the project while in transit to Rugazi. Upon arrival the students were given a tour of the health centre before splitting into two groups, one to Mugambo and the other Rugazi. The group in Rugazi was shown the winner of the model home competition.



This home demonstrated easy and efficient ways to improve sanitation and health. For example, the installation of a tippy tap— a simple mechanism using a rope, a bar of soap, and an old plastic container— allows hands-free hand washing after using the toilet or after working in the garden.

The Rugazi group was also shown a few micro projects, which allow the community to earn extra income. For instance community members raise pigs to be sold for slaughter, and sell honey from a bee hive they created. These simple yet profitable projects are ideal for creating the extra needed income. Following a brief lunch, the students met many of the volunteer Community Owned Resource Persons (CORPS) who make the success of HCU possible. The students were treated to some traditional dance, and were invited to join the CORPS in dancing before concluding the day. It was a great opportunity for the students to see development in action. Dalhousie IDS graduate coordinator and professor of the East Africa field studies tour, Owen Willis, says that visits to working development projects are crucial for one simple reason. "You have got to get students out of the classroom... (there has to be) a jump between theory and practice."



Alex Sancton, Dalhousie University Student

Faculty Workshop: research methods and promoting your work

In January, three experienced Canadian researchers conducted a five day research workshop at Mbarara University, supported by the project. The HCU partnership aims not only to strengthen community programming in child health, but also to develop capacity in academic areas at Mbarara University, so local faculty can better implement and evaluate programs such as the community based education programs offered by HCU. HCU aims to be a model for other programming in the country, so conducting field research and getting the word out about this research to other national and international organizations is critical. Our communities are rich with information about how programs can and do run and it is important that the excellent work of Mbarara researchers is highlighted internationally. Thanks to Dr. Nalini Singhal from University of Calgary and Drs. KS Joseph and Doug McMillan from Dalhousie for leading the workshop.

Message from the Canadian Project

Director- Jenn Brenner

2006 was extremely busy for the Healthy Child Uganda project team and expectations for the rest of 2007 are equally high. Project volunteers now number over 250 and many new trainers and staff members have joined--welcome to all of you!



I would especially like to thank all the authors who contributed to articles in this edition. For the past two editions, all Ugandan team members were invited with equal opportunity to make contributions, and to tell us from all angles what is happening on the ground. Despite long hours of work and volunteering, they have put energy into writing—for most, this is their first time being published. The stories are so interesting from faculty, facilitators, health centre staff, our driver and

volunteers themselves! Positive change is really happening at all levels for HCU thanks to the volunteers, trainers, project team and others who support the project in so many ways. The university has supported workshops, children with special needs and conducted a very large health survey in 2006.

Volunteers carry out health talks to their communities and do numerous home visits daily. The story of Natamba on page 1 illustrates how a village can work together to help an individual child. The great news about the success of the Katyazo CORPs group goat project demonstrates the real potential and motivation of volunteers to make change happen for their own families. Over 500 families participated in model home competitions last year and a new contest is set to start shortly.



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Last spring, I saw for myself amazing innovations in place, all constructed from locally available materials, such as energy efficient stoves, latrines, new vegetable gardens, water facilities and tippy taps (local hand washing device). It always amazes me how resilient the families in our project areas are. I can't wait to see what the rest of 2007 will bring!