



December, 2010

*Peace, Joy...*

## HCU UPDATE

The past year has been such a busy one - filled with interesting and exciting accomplishments.

In 2010 our team has trained many more community health workers in child health, nutrition and community development. HCU-trained volunteers now exceed 1000 (up from 350 this time last year) and you can imagine the impact of so many new advocates working tirelessly in their respective villages to improve the health and lives of children and their families.

This past year we have worked hard to document the progress and successes since HCU began over seven years ago. Our research and evaluation confirm that a very real difference is being made by our volunteers and community programs. Volunteers continue to report tremendous declines in deaths of children under five years old - 53% in one study. Illnesses and malnutrition in communities with HCU-trained volunteers have also dropped dramatically, according to household surveys. The numbers from our studies support what our field workers have been saying for years. This certainly is good motivation for all of our team and reinforces this great news story.



Above, recently trained community health workers (CHWs) dance in their new uniforms. Since we began, HCU has trained over 1000 active CHWs in more than 275 villages in Uganda.

Today HCU's impact is spreading as HCU extends its activities and the number of volunteers being trained. We continue to support training and infrastructure improvements at local health centres and provide mentoring and training in research for Ugandan university faculty and students related to community programming. One new community initiative is a pilot program where, beginning in 2011, groups of HCU-trained community health workers will be trained to distribute medicines in their villages to children suffering from malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea. Since most communities are rural and far from health facilities, this service can save many lives.

This year also marked significant changes in Uganda's child health policy. Community health workers (CHWs) are now officially recognized as a formal part of the national health care system, meaning that CHWs are being chosen and trained throughout the country. Given HCU's extensive experience with CHW programming, HCU has taken a leadership role in training, supporting and planning these nationwide, government CHW programs. In Canada, HCU is happy to have been present at a number of national meetings discussing global health policy, specifically Canada's new and exciting G8 maternal and newborn health commitment.

**The Fig Tree Foundation** donated ten cameras to HCU in November, 2009. The intended use of the cameras is to assist the HCU project and students in the Faculties of Medicine and Development Studies at Mbarara University (MUST) in promoting sustainable community development and capacity building through the use of photographic documentation of community events, initiatives and activities. The cameras have been used by students, health centre trainers and HCU field staff in a variety of ways, such as:

- highlighting good practices during CHW training to share with others;
- documenting construction of an Ecological Sanitation (EcoSan toilet).



Photographs taken by HCU field staff were included in an exhibition in February 2010 called "As We See It" that featured activities of Calgary-based international development organizations.

HCU is fortunate to have received support for its activities over the years from a number of sources - especially from private donations (through Healthy Generations, UEnd Poverty and the University of Calgary Annual Giving Program), Mayfield Rotary Club in Edmonton, Buy-A-Net (Kingston) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). While one current CIDA grant is coming to a close, we are privileged to be recipients of new funding from CIDA through two new research grants (via the International Development Research Centre) and the British Council. As well, new partnerships in Uganda have enabled us to work more closely with Save the Children-Uganda, UNICEF and the Ugandan Ministry of Health. Of course, in addition to this support for core operational activities, we still depend on and appreciate contributions from private donations which enable so many field activities, training and special initiatives.

There is so much more to share - - we are happy to announce that the HCU website has a brand new look. Please take a moment to catch up on recent progress, our new downloadable HCU CORPs report, video, photos and stories on our recently updated website: [www.healthychilduganda.org](http://www.healthychilduganda.org)

Once again, many thanks to all donors, supporters and so many volunteers. Each of you has played an important role in the many HCU successes of 2010.

Seasons' greetings to you and your family.

The Healthy Child Uganda Team  
[www.healthychilduganda.org](http://www.healthychilduganda.org)

**...and Goodwill Unto All!**