

UGANDA - INTERNATIONAL NEEDS

Since 2009 we have been partnering with International Needs (IN) Uganda in Buikwe, Uganda, whose vision is:

'TRANSFORMED LIVES, CHANGED COMMUNITIES'

Our partnership focus has mainly been through CHAP (Community HIV/AIDS Program), which works with people in the rural areas in and around Buikwe. In this part of southeast Uganda, the population is over 200,000 with up to 7.5 % of the population living with HIV. As the area has a higher HIV infection rate than the national average, it is home to a large number of orphans and single moms, often with numerous children. In response to this and other compounding issues in the region, CHAP has three main objectives:

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE INTERVENTION: 40 Anti-AIDS clubs have been formed in 40 schools. The clubs are assisted by CHAP in the conduction of sport galas, debates and health talks. These are aimed at improving the life skills and increasing awareness of adolescent sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS information and services. 1,019 youths both in and out of school have been reached.



ACCESS TO HIV/AIDS SERVICES: Critical services such as HIV counselling and testing (HCT), and antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV positive persons was brought closer to the people. The project continues to fully engage local church and district government's leaders to ensure sustainability and full ownership. Additional focus objectives:

- the prevention of mother to child transmission;
- helping to equip the church to initiate HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and care, which is pivotal in eradicating the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS;
- caring for vulnerable children;
- initiating the generation of income.



ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) AND THEIR CAREGIVERS IMPROVED:

Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA)

CHAP has used funds from CrossRoads to assist in VSLAs, which help people implement savings and loan programs so that they can meet their own needs, such as school fees, medical costs, house repair, business start-up, etc. This program especially benefits women and vulnerable families.

- Over \$7000 CAD has been saved by the 9 VSLA's
- The members of these groups are recruited from the church, specifically those affected/infected by HIV/AIDS.



A Village Savings and Loan Association Kit

Irene Nekesa is a resident of Kiyagi village. The CHAP staff identified Irene during one of the community HIV counselling and testing outreaches. She needed immediate medical intervention at St. Lwanga Hospital and was enrolled in antiretroviral therapy immediately because she was HIV positive. During routine follow-up home visits by the project staff, Irene was discovered to be a widow with 5 children. CHAP counselled her to make sure that all her children were tested for HIV; luckily all the children were negative which she thanked God for, but she was left struggling to take care of the children's education and livelihood.

Irene and other people formed a saving group named "Twesiga Mukama Saving and Loans Association," found in Buikwe Town.

In September 2015, Irene borrowed Ush 100,000 (\$35 CDN) and started a small fish selling project. She buys fish from the lake and then sells it to the neighbours; her stock is growing and she is now able to take care of the children's needs such as paying school fees. She feels empowered and not worried because she has a steady business, which she foresees will be able to maintain her and all of her children's needs.

Nalongo Fridah a female widow aged 54 and a resident of Lubanyi village in Buikwe Town has six children affected by the impact of HIV/AIDS and poverty; they couldn't continue with their education due to a lack of funds to pay school dues and procure scholastic materials.

In February 2015, Fridah was encouraged by her pastor to join the Village Saving Loan Association (VSLA). She managed to borrow USH 50,000 (\$20 CDN) from the group savings to start a small vegetable business at her home. After 3 months, she now manages to support all her children with basic scholastic materials.

Food and Nutrition Security Empowerment Program for Affected/Infected Households

30 backyard demonstration (learning) sites were established in four church support zones to guide HIV positive clients' caregivers on food production. These backyard farms provide an opportunity for the caregivers to increase their alternate income generation activity as well as food production. The provision of beans, cassava cuttings, maize and cabbages form the foundation of these backyard farms.



In the past couple of years, International Needs identified other areas, apart from CHAP, where our support could make a significant impact. In response to this, CrossRoads was able to assist in building chemistry and biology labs in the IN Uganda high school in Buikwe. These labs allow young people to develop unprecedented skills, resulting in potential career opportunities. Students have been benefiting from the new labs and are excited for the future. We believe investing in a child's education is directly related to building the future of the country.



CrossRoads has also been a supporter of the Hope Trade School, a part of the IN strategy for building skills and a future into the youth of the region. We were able to locally purchase a wide variety of equipment and improve the facilities, which enhanced the programs of the school. It currently operates out of a church. Through this, the tailoring, hairdressing, auto mechanics, and building construction programs were greatly enriched.

Overall, International Needs Uganda is doing amazing work while sharing the gospel, through Word and Deed, with those in the Buikwe area. We are grateful to be able to partner with them as they build relationships, demonstrate compassion and represent the love of Christ to those in need.

