



A rainwater tank has been lifesaving for Rhoda (pictured right) and her family devastated by HIV and AIDS. She was one of the first recipients in her local association of caregivers of orphans and vulnerable children. All photos: CCS

Summer Story

CHANGE LIVES FOREVER

BY GILLIAN SOUTHEY | CWS COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR.

This story comes from south-western Uganda but could come from anywhere. Covid-19 has affected us all and changed the way we do things. For Rhoda her own rainwater tank was a blessing that made these challenges bearable.

COVID CATASTROPHE

“I have lived for so many years but have never seen a catastrophe like this – isolation, restricted movements, and curfew – demanding change to our cultural norms, attitudes and behaviours. We used to greet each other by shaking hands and hugging. We were told all these things would promote the transmission of the coronavirus disease.

“The Centre for Community Solidarity circulated messages on TV, radio and by phone, telling us to wash our hands regularly, be clean all the time, practise social distancing and put on a facemask in public. This message came when we were living under strict conditions. If we broke one order, soldiers were near and might beat people.”

Now 78, Rhoda has lost six of her seven children to AIDS and is supporting five of their children with help from her daughter. When her son-in-law died from the same virus, his family blamed her daughter Annet, kept their children and chased her away.

“I was lucky having a water tank at home so had water for handwashing... Water sources were congested as the demand for water increased. Social distancing was impossible. The restriction on movement paralysed the markets for our bananas which is the source of our income.”

Right: Every drop of clean and unmineralised water is precious in Isingiro, Uganda. Rhoda and her family wear masks made by her granddaughter.



Rhoda says she shares the water in her tank with neighbours.

During the lockdown, CCS taught association members how to make banana flour and feed the peels to their livestock using their unsold bananas. CCS ran workshops on Covid-19 protection as well as HIV and AIDS, hygiene and sanitation. They trained communities to make foot-operated handwashing machines.

“I don’t know [how CWS predicted] such a catastrophe as Covid-19 and decided to save us by supporting our rainwater tank project to access safe water when it was most needed. Thanks CWS. Thanks CCS for organising us to be prepared for this danger that has treacherously killed many and threatened the life of the whole world... May God bless New Zealand, CWS, and all New Zealanders with generous hearts. We pray for all of you and may the Almighty bless you,” she concludes.



L to R: CCS helped one granddaughter begin a sewing apprenticeship when she finished primary school. She makes cheap facemasks for her neighbours. One grandson collects water from the tank while another uses the foot-operated handwashing machine.



Above: Specioza is looking forward to the day when she and her grandchildren don't have to spend hours collecting the water they need.



THE WINNING TICKET

Specioza was so excited when she picked the paper with the picture of the rainwater tank on it at last month's meeting of her local caregiver association. She had been waiting a long time for her turn. With four grandchildren and one great grandchild to care for, safe water on tap will change her life. At 66 years, she is finding it harder to care for her family.

Already she has collected rocks and other raw materials. The cement, waterproof cement iron sheets for gutters, binding wire and tap system will arrive soon and CCS will supervise the construction. "God is with me. My family will soon be liberated from all forms of water suffering," she says.

Follow her progress on Facebook [facebook.com/christianworldservice/](https://www.facebook.com/christianworldservice/) or as a Partner for Life [cws.org.nz/get-involved/give/partner-for-life/](https://www.cws.org.nz/get-involved/give/partner-for-life/)

CWS Partner for Life

CWS has launched a new monthly giving option for supporters called Partner for Life. Partnership is the way we work with the Centre for Community Solidarity and other local organisations tackling global poverty to get results. It is at the heart of CWS. As a monthly giver you can join this partnership, working for people so they have what they need to survive with dignity, freedom and opportunities to have a say in their future.

Please consider becoming a CWS Partner for Life, so the world's most vulnerable people can meet their most urgent needs for water, food and justice. You can build the kinder, fairer world we all want to share.

Find out more or sign up at [cws.org.nz](https://www.cws.org.nz)

According to UN Water, only 71% of the world's population has access to safely managed water and 45% safe sanitation. Without adequate water, life is a challenge. People are thirsty and hungry. Children do not go to school and everyone is vulnerable to disease.

Your support for the Summer Appeal is a gift that will unlock opportunities for families facing drought, water shortages and Covid-19.

Please support our Summer Appeal for water today.

\$123

will fund a training workshop for 25 caregiver associations.

\$333.70

will pay the cost of a rainwater tank and training in maintenance.

\$4,464

will pay one year's salary for one of the two CCS staff.

Donate now at www.cws.org.nz.

Phone 0800 74 73 72 or post to CWS, PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140.



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