



Children are our Hope and Future: Let the Children Live



For HIV and AIDS orphans in Uganda

Methodist and Presbyterian Women's Special Project 2017–18
with the Centre for Community Solidarity and Christian World Service

The community water pump is a gathering place for the village children. Every day they wait for their turn to pump water from the borehole. When water is in short supply, it takes longer to fill each jerry can, and they get up well before dawn to try to be the first in the queue. The water is hard, heavily mineralised and not good for drinking, cooking and washing.

In the dry season there is no water at all so they trek to the nearest water hole or to the Kagera River, up to 8 kilometres away from home. The walk is tiring in the dusty heat and can be dangerous if wild animals are around. Without adequate water, the children cannot clean themselves or their clothes and are often sick. Many hours spent waiting for water means they miss school. With a rainwater tank at home, their lives are transformed. They are clean, healthy, at school and have hope for a better future.



In a Nutshell:

The Centre for Community Solidarity assists 25 local associations of caregivers to HIV and AIDS orphans to improve their lives and livelihoods. With a staff of two, a board and a team of 12 volunteers skilled in aspects of development, CCS

- Supports the associations to make their own action plans for shared benefits
- Trains local members and organises the building of rainwater tanks
- Educates about HIV/AIDS prevention, and encourages testing and treatment
- Runs hygiene, sanitation, agricultural and financial training for the associations
- Supports the running of local credit schemes and setting up of small businesses, including mentoring young people into work
- Distributes affordable water filters, plants and livestock



Finding a Better Future for Children

A new rainwater tank has given Joy's five grandchildren (*pictured with Joy above*) big dreams. Of the five, two want to be doctors, two nurses and the youngest Ana an artist. A few years ago, it was water they were after and the opportunity to go to school.

Family by family rainwater tanks are lifting children affected by HIV and AIDS out of the misery of poverty. Having water on tap saves them hours of drudgery and improves their health and outlook.

For much of her 52 years, Joy's life has been full of sorrow. She lost her husband, two children, and then two grandchildren who died of cholera and typhoid from contaminated water. Left with five grandchildren, she joined the Kyabishaho Tworore Efuzi Association for people caring for orphans and vulnerable children. At each meeting, she learned new skills and contributed to the savings scheme. She was delighted when her name came up in the ballot for the next water tank.

She needed water for her farm: four chickens and three goats bought with the proceeds from selling the pig she was given through the CCS piggery scheme funded by CWS. Before she had her own tank, Joy would run out of water when the local stream dried up in the twice yearly dry seasons. Now her water supply is secure. With her own tank she has saved enough money to build a bathroom (*centre*).

"To have water and a bathroom in our home is a beautiful thing for my children... I pray that God may bless all those who contribute to the project." Joy

Centre for Community Solidarity

With two staff funded by CWS, CCS is making life better for people caring for orphans and vulnerable children affected by HIV and AIDS. CCS has organised them into 25 local associations. The first phase of the programme from 2008-2012 funded 495 rainwater tanks for 530 caregivers and 1742 children. In the second phase beginning in 2013, 200 new tanks have been built so far. Another 520 tanks are needed for members caring for 2321 children.

The local associations at the centre of the programme meet monthly to share their problems and learn new skills. CCS visits regularly to teach farming techniques to cope with changing weather patterns, train on improved hygiene and sanitation, and educate on HIV and AIDS. In addition they supervise the revolving credit fund and rainwater harvesting tank construction. CWS matches half the cost of a basic tank—the caregiver pays for the rest. Some contribute additional funds to build larger tanks. With water on tap families have expanded production and started new businesses to improve household income.

Rainwater tanks are freeing up time and resources so children can attend primary school. Caregivers cannot afford secondary education so their children are often exploited for cheap labour. In collaboration with caregivers, CCS has begun a new initiative to give young people new opportunities and respect.

Rob Wayne of CWS's International Programmes Group visited Uganda in 2016. He met Bruce (on the right) an HIV orphan who on the advice of CCS had taken up carpentry and now trains others.



Building Tanks

CCS supplies the materials and expertise to make each tank. The first step is to lay a hardcore base into which a double layered mesh cylinder is cemented. On the next day the women wrap the cylinder with papyrus mats before packing a mix of fine sand and cement between the layers of mesh to form the tank. After two days the inside cylinder is set and a sand-cement coating is put on the outside. A final coat of cement is applied to the inside of the cylinder to make a smooth finish.

On the fifth day a top cover is made in a similar fashion with a metal lid for easy access. The lower part of the tank is finished in rough cast and a label made including the name of the association,

CWS New Zealand, CCS and the date. A nylon sieve is fitted at the entrance to the tank to block foreign materials.

At the base an outlet for easy cleaning and the removal of sediment and a padlocked metal door—to stop children wasting water—are inserted. Within seven days the tank is ready to receive water from newly installed gutters.

The beneficiary is involved in construction so she learns maintenance and how to make simple repairs. After each dry season, tank owners are advised to disconnect the gutters from the tank and use the first rain to flush dust and bird droppings from the system.

CCS sells low cost water filters made from local clay mixed with sawdust. The filters are coated inside with silver nitrate to remove pathogens. The filter is placed in a plastic bucket with a tap on and filled with water. The quality of water is regularly tested and has government approval.



Molly (far right) a volunteer worker with CCS says the rainwater tank has made a huge difference for Merida (second from the right) and her family. They live at a village situated on the top of the high hills of Ngarama.

Merida lost her husband and spent long days caring for the children with no hope of a better future. Merida and the children used to spend many hours collecting water from the valley each day. Without enough water, the family went for days without washing themselves or their clothes. In such a sorry situation the children could not go to school reported Molly.

After joining the local association supported by CCS, Merida received a new rainwater tank, cutting much of the drudgery of household chores. The children attend school and she is learning better hygiene and new farming techniques to feed her family. She has discovered strength, confidence and happiness and wishes others in the group can soon get their water tanks.





About Uganda

Uganda has a population of around 40 million people. 19.7% of Ugandans live below the national poverty line: 6.7 million in “absolute poverty” and a further 14.7 million remain vulnerable. Uganda is host to over 1 million refugees from South Sudan alone. In May 2017, UNHCR [reported](#) 2,200 new refugees were arriving every day.

Primary school enrolment has increased from 3.1 million pupils in 1996 to 8.4 million in 2013 thanks to a massive investment in education associated with debt relief packages and other international funding. 8% or 660,000 children are not enrolled in primary school. Only 25% of children complete the final year. 20% go on to secondary school. Poor families may not be able to afford school materials, clothing, lunch, sanitary pads for girls, or contribute to school costs so children dropout. According to government statistics, there is one latrine for every 71 students in schools. A shortage of trained and motivated teachers also contributes to the fall in attendance —teachers are among the lowest paid public servants in Uganda.

In Isingiro District where CCS works, close to 98% of people, rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. In Uganda’s southwest corner, the climate is getting warmer and drought more

severe. The farmers are coping with changing weather patterns. Many small farmers have one acre (.4 hectare) of their two to five acre plots planted in bananas, a staple for many Ugandans. Safe drinking water is very scarce and the little water available contains unacceptably high levels of mineral salts.

In 2015, UNAIDS [estimated](#) 1.5 million people in Uganda were living with HIV of whom 96,000 were under 15 years old. 660,000 children under the age of 18 were orphaned by AIDS.

Message from CCS

“Our hearts were filled with joy and happiness when we received good news from CWS that you are raising funds to help the needy orphans and vulnerable children in Isingiro district in Uganda. Your generous contributions to CWS for CCS will be a God blessed wonderful supplemental support and enable us to reach many unserved needy, sad and miserable children in their struggle for survival. This will help to improve their conditions of living, create hope for their future and increase love for their merciful God.

We thank you in advance for choosing CCS.

May God reward you for your kindness, care, love and the concern you have for these people.” Charles Rwabambari, Coordinator

CWS has produced a PowerPoint about the work of CCS. It comes with a talk that you can adapt. Contact us for a copy.



Photos: Rob Wayne and CCS



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