



FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY



NAMUTUMBA, UGANDA

IMPROVING NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN AND MOTHERS

In Namutumba, Eastern Uganda, 42% of the population live in poverty (double the national figure) and 27% of children are stunted from malnutrition. Between 2018 and late 2021, Food for the Hungry was funded by UK Aid to address this. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has been extraordinarily effective.

This brochure summarises the successes of the project and highlights some key lessons learnt.



THE COMMUNITY

Improving nutrition for children and mothers

Magada sub-county in Namutumba District

has a population of 50,000 and relies on subsistence farming. The area has a history of neglect, poverty and high rates of child malnutrition. Agricultural production and food security are threatened by climate change, population growth, price fluctuations and post-harvest crop degradation through lack of appropriate storage. These issues lead to poor food quantity and quality, with serious consequences for health and income.

In 2013, Food for the Hungry began work in Magada by conducting a Holistic Community Appraisal. Based on this, local leaders and community members worked together to create their own Community Transformation Plan.

UK Aid funding enabled acceleration of the programme from 2018 to 2021. Post-harvest degradation of produce by heat, humidity and insects was addressed by offering farmers airtight grain silos at subsidised rates. Village Savings and Loan Associations (self-help groups) were set up and provided with training in enterprise and better methods of post-harvest handling. Alongside this, Care Groups provided training in household health and nutrition to volunteers, who then passed it on to their neighbours.

Progress was threatened by the emergence of COVID-19, but the FH local team (some of whom came from the target community) were able to adapt their methods to

comply with government safety guidelines. The use of radio messaging was particularly successful, reaching a wider audience than could have been achieved otherwise.

The figures in the next few pages illustrate the achievements of the programme, which was rated “A+” by the UK Aid fund managers. They observed that “significant highlights included improvements in underweight children (6-23 months), which declined from 19% at baseline to 6%, and in dietary diversity (children fed from four or more food groups), which increased from 23% to 92%. No farmers reported post-harvest losses at the end of the project (64% at Baseline) and savings through the VSLAs were reported to have increased by 44%.”

These are remarkable achievements in the midst of a global pandemic. They are a testimony to strong adaptive management by the local team and enthusiastic engagement by the local community.



A child uses a 'tippy-tap'

HEALTH



▲ Recognising and addressing acute malnutrition

120 Village Health Team volunteers have been trained to recognise and refer cases of acute and severe malnutrition.

Mary's story

“My child improved when I fed him with a balanced diet and started observing hygiene”



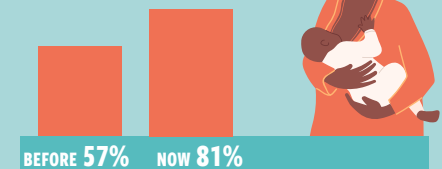
Mary is a mother living in Jaluko village. Like her neighbours, she had little idea of how to give her children a balanced diet or how to maintain family hygiene. In 2018, when she joined a Care Group neighbour circle started by FH, her 8-month-old son Daniel was showing signs of malnutrition and the family were constantly ill. Following training from her Care Group Volunteer, she started feeding Daniel (and his younger sister Deborah) three nutritious meals a day. She washed everyone's hands from a newly constructed tippy-tap* in her compound. Now, at the monthly neighbour circle meetings, everyone is reporting healthier children and reduced malnutrition.

* Photo of a tippy-tap on facing page

INFANT BREAST-FEEDING

The W.H.O. recommends exclusive breastfeeding of infants for the first 6 months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health.

Exclusive breast-feeding of infants 0-6months



HYGIENE: HAND WASHING FACILITIES

Peer-reviewed studies show that good hand washing reduces the incidence of diarrhoea by 23-40%.

Households with facilities



Appropriate hand washing actions



FAMILY PLANNING

Population growth impacts food security. UN studies show that in Uganda 44% of pregnancies are unplanned.

Households knowing/practising family planning methods



POST-HARVEST CROP WASTAGE

Pre-farm gate crop losses of 40% from infestation by mould, insects and rodents are common. This leads to poor food quality and quantity and affects health, diet and incomes.

Farmers experiencing some post-harvest crop loss



CHILDREN'S DIETARY DIVERSITY

The W.H.O. notes that inadequate food diversity and meal frequency expose young children to malnutrition, stunted growth and reduced life expectancy.

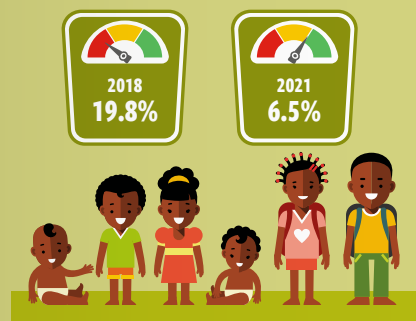
Under-5s fed with at least 4 food groups



CHILDREN UNDERWEIGHT

Globally, around 45% of deaths among children under 5 are linked to malnutrition.

Weight /age less than norm for under-5s



NUTRITION



▲ Silos and kitchen gardens

600 households have purchased airtight grain storage silos.

4,000 households now grow healthy fruit and vegetables in kitchen gardens.

Christine's story

"Now my children's future is bright"



Christine and her husband Alex adopted ten children when their fathers (Alex's two brothers) died. They struggled to feed such a large family, especially as their carefully harvested maize, rice and beans were going bad. During the pandemic, Christine borrowed money from her Savings Group to buy a drying tarpaulin and hermetic silo, as FH were offering them at a subsidised price. Now they can eat or sell all of their harvest. They are planning to use the extra income for school fees and to rent more land.



INCLUSION



▲ Signing for hearing-impaired people

Disability inclusion, such as in this skills training setting, offers accessibility for everyone to participate fully in society.

Recognising gender inequality

FH has ensured women's inclusion in Namutumba and encouraged economic and social empowerment.



Umar's story



"Now I don't have to depend on anyone to pump water for me"

Umar Mutema has two 3-year old daughters. His legs were paralysed by an illness, and as a result both his wives left him. His disability prevented him from accessing water from the local borehole – and then the borehole failed. This left him unable to practise necessary hygiene during the COVID pandemic, and dependent on neighbours to fetch drinking and cooking water. FH repaired the borehole and modified it to make it accessible in a wheelchair. Now Umar can fetch his own water and has more time to enrol in enterprise training – knitting and sewing.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Food for the Hungry is committed to supporting the most vulnerable and ensuring no-one is left behind in the drive to support thriving communities.

13% of people included in the programme are disabled. This is a total of 1,600 out of 12,000 beneficiaries.



Extra resources such as signers are provided in Village Savings and Loan Associations for people with disabilities and one additional VSLA was set up exclusively for people with disabilities.

5 water access points have been upgraded to make them accessible.

64 Care Groups have been set up

780 Care Group Volunteers have been trained

Who in total reach **8,580** households.

WOMEN AND TEENAGE GIRLS

The closure of schools as a result of the pandemic led to increased gender-based violence, early marriage and teenage pregnancy. Programmes were adapted to address this:

- Awareness training built into CG programme.
- Reporting system set up/widely promoted.
- Regular feedback of figures from District Probation Officer.
- **200** menstrual hygiene kits distributed to teenage schoolgirls.



ECONOMY

SAVINGS AND ENTERPRISE

Village Savings and Loan Associations serve the poorest who have no access to formal financial services. Loans, plus a social fund offering small but important grants to members (mostly women) in distress, amount to a form of self-insurance. Savings give them the chance to generate income for themselves, to invest in new enterprises and increase resilience to external shocks

Average annual savings per household



Savings group members operating non-farm businesses

BEFORE 9% NOW 19%



SAVINGS GROUPS

137 Village Savings and Loan Associations established, with over **4,000** members. They improve social cohesion and enable the most vulnerable to develop financial and business skills.

COVID-19

800 people trained to make and sell soap.

28 students trained to make and sell school hand-washing stations.



▲ Cooperatives

4 cooperatives set up to promote producer marketing power.

Peter's story

"I am able to pay school fees for my children"



Peter Kabweru is a farmer with 8 children and about an acre of land. He joined a Savings Group set up by FH and has received training in post-harvest handling, kitchen gardening and running a small business. In addition to his farming activities (bananas, oranges and livestock), he has established a bee-keeping business. By borrowing money from the VSLA he has purchased timber and constructed some beehives and also bought more hives in the local market. The additional income from selling the honey covers school fees and medical bills for his family.



WHAT'S NEXT?

SUSTAINABILITY

By setting up cooperatives, FH have established a means for the farmers of Magada to use their purchasing power. They can obtain higher quality supplies such as seeds, good quality tarpaulins for drying their crops and better storage facilities.

Although the UK Aid-funded project was finished in July 2021, the basic education programme will continue until the community graduates in 2025.

NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITIES

FH would like to extend the benefits of this programme to neighbouring, equally neglected communities within Namutumba District. To do this, they are currently seeking additional funding.



THANK YOU!



FH Uganda's Namutumba staff

If you are interested in finding out more or supporting Food for the Hungry UK's work, our contact details are as follows:



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