

medcare newsletter

A lifeline for Ugandan children

Autumn Edition | September 2022

Providing a Rainbow of Hope to desperately needy Ugandan children

Rainbows give hope during times of darkness. When the rainbow breaks through the clouds, it shows the power of hope.



In Uganda, 41% of Ugandan people live in poverty, and almost half of Uganda's population is under the age of 15, representing one of the youngest populations in the world.

Nearly all possible consequences of poverty have an impact on children's lives resulting in lack of education, malnutrition, violence at home and outside, child labour, diseases of all kinds, transmitted by the family or through the environment.

Worldwide, the impact of COVID-19 on poverty has been significant. In Uganda, the enforced lengthy lockdown has led to lack of casual jobs which most of our parents need to sustain their families. The families with no land on which to farm are now starving. A prolonged drought has resulted in a lack of food such as maize and beans - the staple diet for the very poor in Uganda. In addition, the war in Ukraine is causing global food prices to rocket. All food costs have risen tremendously and have become unaffordable to many. Thousands of innocent Ugandan children are waking up each morning with no food in the house. For many children living in poverty in Ugandan villages, this serious lack of food has caused their hunger to be replaced by starvation.

41%
of Ugandan
people live in
poverty



It's not too late to save lives and rescue children from starvation!

In August, in response to the serious needs of the children living within the catchment of the Wellspring Children's Medical Centre, Medcare set up an appeal to raise funds to provide food, bedding and soap to 15 desperately poor families. These goods were distributed by the Medcare team who travelled to Uganda at the beginning of August.

For many of these families the food arrived at just the right time.



Abas

8 years old. Suffering from HIV.
His mother scavenges on rubbish tips.
No food in the house at all.



Jackson

5 years old. Suffering from
Sickle Cell Disease. Not eaten
for over 24 hours.



Trevor

10 years old. Suffering from HIV.
15 children in household. Cared for by
grandmother with no source of income.

Further funds were provided to buy maize for the 15 families for 2 more months.

Hunger

Since 2010, Africa has been the most affected continent of famine in the world. Recurring drought, conflict, and instability have led to severe food shortages.

The war in Ukraine is likely to make conditions worse in 2022, as conflict restricts global food supplies, drives up prices, and threatens the world's most vulnerable people and countries

- There is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone on the planet.
- As many as **829 million** people worldwide go to bed hungry each night - **10% of the world's population**.
- Small farmers, herders, and fishermen produce about **70% of the global food supply**, yet they are especially vulnerable to food insecurity - poverty and hunger are most acute among rural populations.
- Conflict is a cause and consequence of hunger. In 2020, conflict was the primary driver of hunger for **99.1 million** people in 23 countries.
- An estimated **14 million children under the age of five** worldwide suffer from severe acute malnutrition, also known as severe wasting, yet only 25 per cent of acutely malnourished children have access to lifesaving treatment.

Urgent assistance sent...

£2,000 was sent urgently to Uganda in September, to purchase sacks of maize for the starving families. This is to be given to those families with children under the age of 12 years and will provide food for a month for 118 families.

Local schools are to be contacted to ask for assistance in raising funds for the starving Ugandan children. If anyone has contacts with schools who would like to join us in this task please contact Pauline on **07720 848888**, or email admin.medcare@icloud.com

Medcare also proposes to set up a new Community Project, where those who are able can donate as much or as little as they can to help the children starving in the Ugandan communities, served by Wellspring. A bag of maize to feed a family of 5-8 for one month costs £15. All funds raised will be sent immediately to Uganda to feed the starving. Contact Pauline for more information.



medcare
£2,000
sent urgently to
Uganda to help
starving families



The Suffering of the Innocents - Cerebral Palsy

During the recent Medcare team visit to Uganda a visit was made to the Wellspring Home for Disabled and Disadvantaged children. Here we found a number of new children - all with extreme needs.

A number of the children previously living with Noeline have been relocated back to their families or into foster homes in the communities. This has taken place after rigorous counseling of both the families and the children and Noeline keeps a close eye on all of them, to ensure they are still thriving.

Many of the new children have surprisingly similar stories. Children with cerebral palsy and/or epilepsy shut in the home every day, with no light, no food, often no clothes. Neglect had caused the general health of all these children to deteriorate and the total lack of love or understanding has resulted in children being introverted, afraid or suspicious of others, many not even able to speak.

Here are 6 of such children now living with Noeline and the other disabled children:



Prossy

Age unknown



Carlos

8 years old



Tony

2 years old



Charles

8 years old



Hakim

Age unknown



Steven

8 years old

...All of these children are now well cared for and loved

They have 3 meals a day, new clothes, a comfortable bed of their own, medication for those who need it, and physiotherapy for them all.

They are all provided with nappies and are kept clean and comfortable. The most obvious change in the circumstances of these children is that everyone in the home, both adults and children, show them much love and compassion and try to help them in any way they can.

Seeing such needy children in Noeline's care, once again impressed on the Medcare team, the amazing, self sacrificing love and care given by Noeline to any child in need, whatever their circumstance. She is truly inspirational and deserves all the support we can raise for her and the children.



Physiotherapy in Uganda

In Uganda, children with disabilities are discriminated against almost from birth, denied access to early medical interventions from health facilities, and neglect from families is more prevalent due to poverty levels and a distinct lack of knowledge on disability.

In most cases, disability discrimination is accelerated by widespread community beliefs. People in Uganda see disability as a curse; they think something must be wrong with the family to produce a child with disability. This stigma runs through the whole community and causes fear and exclusion. Because of these negative beliefs, there is little engagement or investment into opportunities for children with disabilities and they are seen as having no potential for the future.

In Uganda there are only 216 practicing physiotherapists, the majority of these working in and around the capital Kampala. 84% of the population is rural, living with high levels of poverty, making services unaffordable and unreachable. Around 80% of children attending the Wellspring physiotherapy department live in very poor conditions. Having a child with a disability has economic consequences on families when a family member needs to be a full time carer and hence cannot take up employment.



The Wellspring physiotherapy department is well known for the tremendous work and services it provides to the precious special needs children in the greater Masaka districts, at a completely free cost, funded by Medcare. After ten years of operation it has continued to be the only unit providing specialist pediatric physiotherapy services in the greater Masaka district. In addition, referrals come from a wide area, including local health centres and hospitals.

Approximately
13%
of children in
Uganda are living
with a disability

Great news!

Medcare has been provided with generous funds which will enable the Wellspring physiotherapy department to begin a 2-year outreach programme, named the Community Based Rehabilitation project (CBR).

CBR is a community development strategy, that aims at enhancing the lives of children living with disabilities within their community. It is a multi-sectoral approach working to improve the equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of people with disabilities while combating the perpetual cycle of poverty and disability. CBR is to be implemented through the combined efforts of the Wellspring physiotherapy team, children's families and communities, and relevant government and non-government health, education, vocational, social and other services.

Our main goal is to ensure children with disabilities have access to equal opportunities and can thrive without stigma and discrimination in their communities, using a holistic, community-based approach which includes: provision of specialist therapy services both in clinic and on outreach into the villages; improving the nutritional status of disabled children suffering from malnutrition; providing training to raise awareness of disability amongst community members; providing support to caregivers through parent education and peer support groups; providing training to healthcare workers and teachers; and providing economic empowerment training to caregivers of disabled children.

Plans are being made to begin this important outreach work by November this year. We will keep you posted!



Fundraising The smartie challenge!

When you are next passing the confectionery row in your local supermarket - why not reach out and buy a packet of Smarties. We are calling all Medcare supporters to join us in the 'Smartie Challenge'. A smartie tube will hold around 28 £1 coins. When sorting through your small change we are asking that any £1 coins are put into your smartie tube. Eventually you will have saved £28, which will help provide food for 2 hungry families for one month. You will be helping to provide hope at the end of their rainbow - and you can eat your Smarties too!

Please send any funds raised by cheque to Medcare; PO Box 163, Frodsham, WA6 1DF; or deposit the amount into Medcare's account: Medcare, 20-29-50. Ref: Smartie Challenge



Medcare Christmas Fair!

Come and get into the Christmas spirit early this year!

This highly popular Medcare Christmas Fair is to be held once again at the Frodsham Parish Hall, (Church Street, Frodsham) on November 10th from 9.30am - 1pm. Come and enjoy an early mulled wine and mince pie, or a hot chocolate and a biscuit. Coffee and tea are also available, as are soft drinks for the children. Lots of lovely stalls to browse through for early Christmas gifts.

Help Medcare raise urgently needed funds to feed starving Ugandan children this Christmas.



A Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II

Medcare joins with all those around the world, mourning the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II and paying tribute to her remarkable reign of 70 years.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, paid tribute to the Queen with the following words, "In The Late Queen's life, we saw what it means to receive the gift of life we have been given by God and – through patient, humble, selfless service - share it as a gift to others."

"Her Late Majesty found great joy and fulfillment in the service of her people and her God" ... "The Late Queen leaves behind a truly extraordinary legacy: one that is found in almost every corner of our national life, as well as the lives of so many nations around the world, and especially in the Commonwealth."

The late Queen's dedication and faith is an example to us all.



"It is my prayer that we all may find room in our lives for the love of God through Christ Our Lord."

HM Queen Elizabeth II

A message of hope for Ugandan children

Malaria is the biggest killer of Ugandan children and, for those who survive cerebral malaria, epilepsy, hydrocephalus and cerebral palsy are often the result.

The Oxford University malaria vaccine becomes the first to achieve WHO-specified 75% efficacy goal.

- High-level vaccine efficacy of 77% in African children achieve WHO-specified efficacy goal of 75%
- Vaccine, trialed in 450 children, shows favourable safety profile and was well-tolerated
- Vaccine candidate, R21/Matrix-M, has excellent potential for large-scale manufacturing and low-cost supply

Researchers from the University of Oxford and their partners have today reported findings from a Phase IIb trial of a candidate malaria vaccine, R21/Matrix-M, which demonstrated high-level efficacy of 77% over 12-months of follow-up. In their findings they note that they are the first to meet the World Health Organization's Malaria Vaccine Technology Roadmap goal of a vaccine with at least 75% efficacy.

Lynsey Bilsland, from Wellcome, which helped fund the research, said:



'Despite global efforts against malaria, too many lives are still lost to this disease, especially babies and young children. Vaccines could change this. This is an extremely promising result showing high efficacy of a safe, low-cost, scalable vaccine designed to reach the huge numbers of children who are most at risk of the devastating impact of malaria. Whilst further studies are required, this marks a significant and exciting step forward on an critical global health challenge.'



A new era for Medcare and the world

For many people, change brings about uncertainty and fear of the unknown. This can cause a great deal of anxiety and stress. When people feel that they have no control over a situation, it can leave them feeling powerless. But everyone's situation will be unique.

When Queen Elizabeth II was first announced Queen in 1952, she was faced with huge changes in her life, not the least being the enormous responsibilities of being the Queen of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. Immense responsibilities for a 25 year old mother with 2 young children. When Queen Elizabeth II was born, she was never expected to sit on the throne. But when she did, she reigned for longer than any British Monarch before her.

During her 70 years as monarch, Queen Elizabeth II witnessed and experienced many changes - in the world, in her country and in her own family. But the one stable influence in her life was the steadfast love of her God. To mark her 90th birthday in April 2016, the book *'The Servant Queen And The King She Serves'* was published by the Bible Society. Most unusually, the book contains a forward written by Her Majesty, in which she writes, "I have been - and remain - very grateful to you for your prayers and to God for his steadfast love. I have indeed seen His faithfulness." The loss of our Queen in the UK marks yet another period of change.

The past few years have seen tremendous changes worldwide - the COVID-19 pandemic, Ukraine war, famine

and drought, floods and earthquakes, forest fires and other natural disasters, killing millions, and resulting in uncertainty for the future for us all. The results of these changes were clearly seen by the Medcare team when they visited Uganda in August this year. A huge rise in the cost of living in one of the poorest countries in the world, has resulted in the transition from children going hungry every day into many now dying of starvation, with the additional risk of lack of access to medical care and life saving medicines.

Within Medcare there have also been changes this year. In June, following much prayer and consideration, I stepped down as Chair of the Board of Trustees. In my place the Board have appointed **Mr Mike Taylor** as our new Chairman. The Board were unanimous in their agreement for this new appointment. Mike has travelled to Uganda on a number of occasions, mostly as advisor to the Board. He is a sponsor and has, together with his wife Sarah, been a supporter of the work of Medcare for many years. (Sarah, is one of the present Medcare Trustees.) I have remained as a Trustee and medical advisor to the Board and continue with my work with sponsorship and in administration and fund raising.

In July **Jane Tomkinson** stepped down as Trustee. On behalf of the Medicare Board, I want to sincerely thank Jane for her invaluable assistance to the Board for over 10 years. She is greatly missed and we wish her every success in the future.



Rick Hutchinson

The Medicare Board, under Mike's leadership, have been looking for new Board members and we are happy to announce that **Mr Rick Hutchinson** is to join the Board as Trustee. Rick is a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon with an interest in cerebral palsy. His medical expertise and knowledge of Uganda will prove invaluable to the Board and the work of Medicare in Uganda.

I am aware that the report I sent to many of our supporters following my last visit to Uganda was often difficult to read. So many Ugandan children are now suffering and the Medicare Board is meeting regularly to discuss how we can address the children's increasing and serious needs. Within this newsletter I have tried to engender a sense of hope despite all the difficulties and changes. There is still so much we can do to save a child's life. The amazing continued support of all our supporters and sponsors, despite these difficult times we are facing, has encouraged us to work even harder to fulfill the Medicare Mission Statement: 'To ensure sustainable, high quality health and social care for Ugandan children, sharing God's compassion and providing hope for the future.'

On the evening of the announcement of the death of her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, a rainbow was seen above Balmoral and Windsor Castle and a double rainbow over Buckingham Palace. The rainbow was the symbol of hope during the pandemic and continues to be a symbol of hope, even in the face of tragedy and loss.

Together with our late Queen, I too believe in the constancy of God. Since the opening of Wellspring in 2008 I have seen amazing examples of God's faithful provision which has enabled Medicare to continue to, not only provide medical care for hundreds of thousands of Ugandan children, but to continue to develop and provide for those in greatest need. Humbly I want to echo the statement made by Queen Elizabeth II in 2016, "I have been - and remain - very grateful to you for your prayers and to God for his steadfast love. I have indeed seen His faithfulness."

Thank you for your support. I look forward to continuing to work with you all to save the lives of needy Ugandan children. With every good wish,

Pauline Hutchinson

Medicare Founder and Trustee



Mike Taylor distributing bedding and maize to the desperately poor



Rainbow over Windsor Castle



Report on the work of The Wellspring Children's Medical Centre & The Wellspring Home for Disabled and Disadvantaged Children

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