“My job is simply to be a bridge of information between Gitwe and VHW. I find this role rewarding because over the years I can clearly see the impact of this information sharing. We regularly have community meetings where we hear feedback that then shapes the future of VHW programs. I can see that there are far fewer malnourished children in Gitwe. If you walk around you will see many kitchen gardens everywhere, each growing various vegetables. This wasn’t the case a few years ago. We’ve also seen a huge improvement in reducing cholera outbreaks. In years past, at the beginning of each rainy season, we had a cholera outbreak. Every time. But last year, we didn’t have a single case. A lot of people from Gitwe participated in hygiene workshops and WASH training with VHW. This is how things change. Some people's behavior changes fast while others need reminding, but overall it’s good. It makes me proud. Other organizations sometimes distribute resources, then disappear and we never see them again. People from VHW come to check how we are doing; it is clear that VHW cares. As community leaders we see changes, but the community also sees it. When VHW organized the half marathon, many people from Gitwe were eager to participate. The event created a strong feeling of camaraderie and pride. VHW has become essential to creating this positive change throughout Gitwe.”

–Jean-Pierre Niyonzima

Meet Jean-Pierre

Meet Gitwe Community Leader, Jean-Pierre Niyonzima. Jean-Pierre was elected to be the head of his district years before Gitwe became a Colline (VHW services 18 Collines, or villages, in Southern Burundi) of Village Health Works (VHW) in 2014. Gitwe is one of the most densely populated and remote collines that VHW serves.
Dear Reader,

We are proud of being a community-led organization in Burundi that has been able to successfully adapt to unforeseen crises in the past. I have no doubt that, with the support of our community, we will be able to navigate these new challenges to the issues that we have been solving. We are working to improve and expand our programs by partnering with community leaders like Jean Pierre to ensure the healthcare services we are offering are able to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and the future challenges we will face. We have worked with our many partners, both local and global, to purchase hand sanitizer, protective masks, gloves and other gear that has proved essential in fighting the spread of this pandemic. Working together, we are building the sustainable systems and preparedness necessary for an effective response.

This collaborative approach is not new to VHW. We have always operated on the belief that we are so much stronger when we work together. In that spirit, we offer professional training at all levels, from carpentry to nursing, that enables members of all ages within our community to learn new skills and foster social connection. Community members receive hands-on training in basic construction skills as we build our hospital. The agricultural training program builds local capacity through its on-site demonstration garden and kitchen, the seed cultivation and distribution program, in-field support for home garden development, and the organization of agricultural and fishing cooperatives. We further support self-sufficiency through assisting with basic financial literacy and income-generating craft cooperatives, such as sewing and baking. We understand that to create a strong and resilient community, everyone must play a part. To enhance general communication, parenting, and conflict resolution we have established ongoing community-led support groups for women and men, including the popular Twiyugurure (“opening up”) series. At the same time, children are nurtured through sports, dance groups, and music composition and performance using traditional Burundian instruments.

In this report you also will hear more about the progression of the Kigutu International Academy and the Women’s Health Pavilion. These two major initiatives will develop the future leaders of Burundi. This Academy and teaching hospital are essential tools in our work to effectively address the many interrelated challenges that cause suffering in our community and across Burundi. Our organization was built in the face of tremendous adversity by people who realized they were stronger together rather than apart; we have been adapting to challenges from the onset. We will, once again, get through this together, and continue to bring healing and hope to Burundi.

Deogratias Niyizonkiza
Founder and CEO

As our world continues to grapple with the physical, political, economic and social fallout from COVID-19, VHW has taken steps to prepare for the pandemic while continuing to look to the future.
WHEN THE FIRST COVID-19 CASES were confirmed in Burundi in late March, VHW acted quickly and nimbly to minimize damage and mitigate risk.

Utilizing pre-positioned resources, we developed a strategy based on effective containment through protecting patients, health workers and community members, while mobilizing additional capacity for treatment. We thank funders that are helping us address immediate needs while considering our long term goals. While PPE and emergency relief are crucial, we realize this is only a temporary solution. In order to respond to COVID-19 and the next pandemic, we need to continue building a strong health system. This is why we continue to prioritize the building of the Women’s Health Pavilion.

$1M USD total donations with notable contributions from The Crown Family, PWDRF, and ELMA

5,200 N95 respirators purchased

124,000 gloves purchased

oxygen delivery system for hospital

continued progress made on 150-bed teaching hospital
Health & Medicine

HEALTHCARE IS AT THE CENTER OF everything that we do. Every day we reduce suffering, promote dignity, and advance hope through preventative care and treatment.

- 20,129 home visits by Community Health Workers with 852 referrals
- 92% of pregnant mothers screened for HIV, Hep B and Syphilis in their first antenatal care appointment, up from 80% in Q1
- 100% of HIV patients on ARV treatment with 89.4% viral load suppression
- 100% malnourished children on treatment with 77% success rate, up from 64% in Q1

11,131 patient consultations

HEAL THCARE IS AT THE CENTER OF everything that we do. Every day we reduce suffering, promote dignity, and advance hope through preventative care and treatment.

- 20,129 home visits by Community Health Workers with 852 referrals
- 92% of pregnant mothers screened for HIV, Hep B and Syphilis in their first antenatal care appointment, up from 80% in Q1
- 100% of HIV patients on ARV treatment with 89.4% viral load suppression
- 100% malnourished children on treatment with 77% success rate, up from 64% in Q1

11,131 patient consultations
OUR EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVES the quality of teaching and learning through critical support services to students, teacher training, and upgraded education infrastructure to help our young people reach their full potential.

Meet Niyonkuru Rusi

“My name is Niyonkuru Rusi. I am married and have 5 children and also take care of 4 orphans. I have been with VHW since the beginning, and all of my children went to school in Kigutu.

Before VHW intervened, the school was in bad shape. During the rainy season the children could not study because of problems with the roof and even the columns. The teachers could not come to give lessons because most of them lived far from Kigutu and the roads became impassable. Sometimes teachers had to postpone exams. There was also limited space, with some students studying in the morning and others in the afternoon.

VHW radically changed the infrastructure of this school. Now we have 12 classrooms, with enough space for all the children. There is better infrastructure and during the rainy season we are no longer afraid that everything will get wet. The classroom furniture is made of durable materials, not like before.

Most importantly I would like to thank VHW for the hardworking, well-trained teachers we have now. Our children are more focused and fewer drop out. They are competitive in the national tests and obtain the best places. As parents, it makes me happy because education is everything.”

12,760 nutritious meals given to students

100% ACCESS passing rate compared to 85% in Q1
(ACCESS is a program administered by the US State Department to improve English skills)

0% global acute malnutrition rate compared to 5% nationally in Burundi

78% of adolescent girls equipped with adequate sexual reproductive health knowledge
(859 total MUTIMA participants)
WE GIVE COMMUNITY MEMBERS THE SKILLS AND TOOLS TO START small businesses. Cooperatives and on-campus agriculture generate income as well as provide nutritious food to patients, students, and communities.

VHW WAS FOUNDED WITH THE AIM OF FACILITATING trust and empathy among the people in our catchment area and beyond. Through our community’s shared commitment to our mission we have expanded our reach, improved infrastructure, and promoted reconciliation and peace.

In Quarter Two, the MUTIMA program expanded to three additional collines: Kirungu, Mugara and Karagara. With this expansion, the program will now serve about 1,500 adolescents.

“\n"The first time I had my period I didn’t dare tell my mom, and said I was sick so I wouldn’t have to go to school. I stayed at home all day, not knowing what to do. On the second day, my mother said she would take me to the hospital; then I told her not to worry, that I was fine. I went to school and asked a friend, who gave me some advice. The MUTIMA program is critical because it helps us better understand our bodies and how to best avoid infections. I am glad that now instead of using the old method of a simple cloth during my period I can make my own sanitary pads, which will be more comfortable to wear."

Meet
Niyonsenga Bella

6,534 kg
fresh produce farmed

$4,165 USD
monetary value to offset feeding costs

604 inpatients
served nutritious meals

Our community did not harvest in Quarter 2, but stand by for the results of what our community members are growing in later reports.

588 youth participants
in cultural and sports activities

4,182 community members
trained in social and cultural issues

Food Security & Community Engagement
Looking Ahead

FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR
The Kigutu International Academy

KIA is an innovative secondary boarding school that will open in late October and aims to develop a new generation of problem-solvers, entrepreneurial leaders and innovators for Burundi. Many preparations are underway from renovating the physical space to the arrival of the teaching team. The teaching team includes educators from Burundi, Kenya, France and the US. We also completed a rigorous admissions process and selected our pioneering first class of 32 young boys and girls from across Burundi who demonstrate academic performance, commitment to their community and entrepreneurial spirit. Below are snapshots of this impressive group of young people:

Belle is a star in the classroom and is committed to improving access to healthcare across Burundi. She has a deep understanding and appreciation for the core values of both VHW and KIA.

Alain runs a chicken enterprise to help his mother. He works with the Red Cross club and is passionate about science. He wants to change the way pregnant students are treated in Burundi.

Chris was mute until age four. His family was too poor to afford care, but through deep personal resilience and a love of sports, he taught himself to speak.

Anne Princess is 9th of 10 siblings and an orphan; she was extremely articulate about her commitment and plans to help the most vulnerable children in Burundi.

KIA’s admissions is need-blind and all students receive scholarships. KIA has received generous support for scholarships from the King Baudouin Foundation, the MasterCard Foundation and numerous private donors.

AN UPDATE ON THE
Women’s Health Pavilion

We are making incredible progress on the Woman’s Health Pavilion. We have finished the roof and have even started painting.

At its core, the WHP will provide dignified, patient-centered medical services, through four general operating theaters; a maternity wing with private delivery rooms; neonatal and adult intensive care units; general pediatric, adult and emergency wards; isolation rooms to house patients with highly communicable infectious diseases such as TB or COVID-19; an observation/triage room.

It will provide inpatient medical and surgical care for over 10,000 additional patients, and anchor community outreach throughout the catchment area. When it is fully functional, the WHP will have the capacity of safely delivering approximately 2,000 babies every year, immediately saving lives and reducing hardship for our community and beyond.

Hospital construction is now more than 80% completed, and we have raised nearly 90% of the required $18 million for phase one of the project. The $16 million donated or pledged to date includes five contributions of over $1 million, including grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Cummings Foundation, and the Pharo Foundation.
Village Health Works is a 501(c)(3) organization based in Burundi and New York. All donations are tax-deductible.*

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