"I am proud to share that the long-planned transformation for VHW is becoming a reality as the Kigutu Hospital and Women’s Health Pavilion is nearly complete."

–Deogratias Niyizonkiza, Founder and CEO of Village Health Works
Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you and all your loved ones safe and healthy. I am happy to share with you the enclosed 2022 Q2 Impact Report.

I am sending this message a day after returning from Kigutu, where I have been for the last six weeks. I am proud to share that the long-planned transformation for VHW is becoming a reality as the Kigutu Hospital and Women's Health Pavilion (WHP) is at last nearly complete. The structure is finished, only lacking furnishings, elevators, and ramps. Most medical equipment, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing are in place but require power to commission and operate. The government of Burundi has put VHW on the government grid, but the line still needs an 800 KVA transformer plus a cabin. Similarly, the new home of the Kigutu International Academy (KIA) is nearing completion and will stand ready to receive the third class of students that will arrive at the beginning of autumn. During this summer trip, I met with many senior government officials, including the Minister of Energy; the Minister of Interior and Community Development; and the Minister of Health who recently visited Village Health Works. She was extremely moved by the work we have done over the years.

During my trip, we received many visitors including several board members and other major donors for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. I also met with a number of senior diplomats and the Country Director at UNICEF which continues to have a strong partnership with VHW. I was extremely re-energized and touched by the words of gratitude and how much they said they are inspired by our accomplishments, as well as their pledge to become stronger partners in supporting our work.

I know that you join me in the aspiration to create a stronger, more resilient Burundi rooted in the dignity and worth of each and every person. This conviction is shared by our colleagues and friends throughout the world. The tools that will dramatically expand the possibilities of what we can do together are nearly in place. Together we will continue to strengthen the communities we serve in Burundi and enable VHW to become a model for sustainable impact in Burundi and beyond. Your continued support is a key part of this new chapter, one that will allow dramatic improvements in quality healthcare services, education based on critical thinking, and community wellbeing in every possible way.

Amahoro/Peace,

Deo
CEO and Founder
In Quarter 2, our staff continued to work diligently towards the opening of the Kigutu Hospital and Women’s Health Pavilion. The construction is nearly done. We are excited to be finalizing contracts with companies that will help us execute the microgrid that will power the hospital and the waste-water system that will help us keep things sanitized. Simultaneously, a nationwide fuel shortage has made it more difficult for the members of our community to find affordable transportation to our clinic — a reminder of the many challenges that are linked to our rural location, and one which we have sought to remedy through greater engagement at the community level.

**9,544**
patient consultations

**23,414**
home visits by Community Health Workers

**96.1%**
of malnourished children successfully cured

**88%**
of pregnant mothers screened for HIV and Hep B in their first antenatal care appointment

**100%**
of HIV patients on ARV treatment, with 98% viral load suppression

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**Medical Director Jean Baptiste and Doctor Joelle Participate in Training in the Netherlands**

As we look forward to the expanded maternal health capabilities that will be possible with the Kigutu Hospital and Women’s Health Pavilion (WHP), we are working to ensure that our staff has the knowledge and skills to provide world-class services. This is particularly important for the senior clinical leadership that will be expected to provide technical support and help guide the development of our clinical and mental health services.

As part of these efforts, our Medical Director Dr. Jean-Baptiste Mbonyingingo, and Dr. Joelle Bukeneza attended training courses at Utrecht Summer School in UMC Utrecht Medical Center from June 27 through July 15. This opportunity allowed them to improve knowledge and skills linked to the latest trends in maternal health as well as providing a greater understanding of the intersection of social determinants. Courses included Global Health Ethics & Equity; Global Surgery and OBGYN; Global Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; and Fundamentals of Global Health. A visit to the Wilhelmina Children’s Hospital (WKZ) — University of Utrecht was also a part of the activities.

This is the second time Dr. Jean Baptiste attended — he previously took part in 2019 as well.

“The integrative nature of these courses on the continuum of sexuality, reproduction, pregnancy, and childbirth has not only provided me with relevant information to better perform my duties but also allows me to understand how to respond to the complexities by learning best practices from colleagues around the world. The list of tutors on these courses was inspiring, and I have really been privileged to have the mentorship of these world-class experts.”

—Dr. Jean Baptiste
Not long after finishing their courses for the year, KIA students were already back on campus! By the end of June they were participating in a 4-week intensive summer program to get ahead on multiple courses. Outside of classes, students interned twice a week with a VHW department in which they were matched based on professional interests. They also participated in entrepreneurship workshops with Dennis Hanno, the founder of IDEA4Africa (in addition to many other things!) to grow their projects and skills. There were also lots of fun programs, like cooking classes and a trip to the beach.

Meet Simplice

Irantije Simplice is a student from Mugara in Grade 12. Through his participation in the ACCESS English-learning program at VHW, he was selected to attend the Pan African Youth Leadership Program, a US government initiative designed to provide secondary school youth the opportunity to explore themes linked to youth leadership and community development with their peers in other countries. Before the disruptions of Covid-19, students would travel to the United States, but now the program happens online.

“I learned about this program through the ACCESS program and was selected to apply based on my performance in school and on my resume. I expect to bring my experience from Burundi and specifically my Mugara community to the conversations,” said Simplice.

The lectures during the event will be linked to leadership and American culture, and will also include a focus on Problems Identification and how to develop a project that can contribute to addressing an important issue in the community.

“I never realized that I had potential until I got selected for that program. It will considerably boost my self-esteem and my contribution to the welfare of my community as well,” concluded Simplice.
Nutrition & Food Security

During Quarter 2, there were multiple outside forces that affected the daily lives of our community members. The war in Ukraine continues to drive food insecurity across the globe. A nationwide fuel shortage created additional challenges for farmers looking to buy and sell goods. Even with these added obstacles, Village Health Works continues to prioritize a holistic approach to the well-being of our community, recognizing the interconnectedness of our programs and their power to help break the cycle of intergenerational trauma and to aid in post-conflict recovery.

VHW staff continued working to demonstrate to community members that all the food grown on campus can be grown on their land as well. Two times a week, patients receive training sessions. In this way, the nutrition and food security team provide patients leaving the clinic with knowledge that will help them maintain a healthy and balanced diet at home, which will help prevent future illness and injury.

Meet Renathe

Renathe is one of our most experienced Model Farmers and has reached an impressive level of development in her agriculture and livestock. She also shares her knowledge with her neighbors, providing them with a vital source of nutrition and income.

Renathe lives in Gatete, one of the villages in VHW’s catchment area. She has been able to purchase cattle from the money she earned farming — as she says, “The recent harvests have allowed me to buy another cow to generate even more manure and improve the upcoming harvest. Now that I have three cows and five pigs, I hope that the harvest this season will be more than enough.”

She saw the interest of the neighbors to whom she was selling her vegetables and offered to help them set up kitchen gardens for themselves. A year later the impact has been noticeable, and even local leaders noticed that vegetables are now less expensive for the members of the community. On her own, she has already trained more than 300 Model Farmers in the Gatete area, and continues to provide advice on improved farming methods as well as on how to best use the harvest for household consumption or income generation. A real entrepreneur, Renathe also provides suggestions on how to track income and expenses, and on investments (like her manure-producing cows) that can improve production in the future.

One of Renathe’s neighbors has even built his own home through farming. Nahimana Ferdinand is a young man who started with a small kitchen garden, but who is now harvesting more than 150 kg of cabbages and other vegetables on only a half-hectare plot. “During this season, I am planning to build my own house,” he commented.

Renathe can also guarantee neighbors like Ferdinand a market for their vegetables — as one of the Model Farmers who supplies vegetables to VHW, she can take as much as they can produce. This provides a powerful incentive to increase production in order to generate even more income, meaning food security for many families.
Meet Concilie

Hatungimana Concilie, a farmer from Mugara, has overcome many challenges in her life. Years ago, the repatriation of former refugees coming from Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo made owning land much more competitive which put her family under immense financial stress. In an act of desperation, her husband borrowed money from a neighbor to start a new business. He quickly lost the money and abandoned Concilie and their five children to try and escape the fallout.

Concilie was unsure how she would feed her children as a single parent without a stable income. In search of help and free healthcare, she visited Village Health Works’ clinic. She then started volunteering with our community engagement team to show her appreciation. When a job at the WHP construction site opened up in 2020, Concilie jumped at the opportunity. Since starting her job, Concilie’s situation has greatly improved; she can now afford to feed and clothe her family and does not have to rely on the charity of others. Concilie is an incredible pillar of strength and an inspiration to many in the community.
Join Our Team

We are hiring for a number of positions at Village Health Works. Come join our team of dedicated and passionate individuals committed to bringing dignified and comprehensive healthcare to thousands in Burundi.

See Current Openings →

Village Health Works is a 501(c)(3) organization based in Burundi and New York. All donations are tax deductible.*

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