



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**

BUKIENDE, UGANDA

MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

 Communities:
**Bumutsopa, Bushiangi,
 Bungwaanyi, Burukuru**

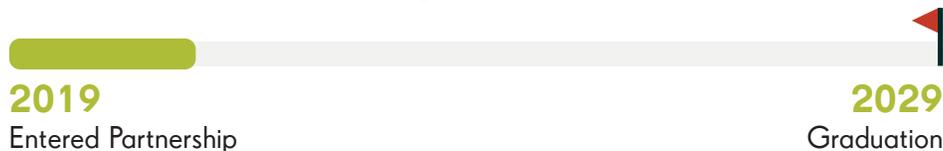
 Total Households:
3,196

 Total Population:
14,830

 Program Participants:
5,953
 4,217 females; 1,736 males



Walking with Bukiende



Food for the Hungry (FH) began walking with 3,196 households in four Bukiende communities in October 2019. Through FH's Child Focused Community Transformation (CFCT) program, families have already begun making positive changes in the areas of education, health, livelihoods, and leadership development. Gender equality, environmental care, and a biblical worldview are woven throughout each area of focus. Over the past six months, FH was pleased to form community Savings and Loans groups and start health training. The communities aim to graduate from partnership with FH in 2029.

General national elections were held across Uganda from January to February this year, resulting in the election of the president, members of parliament, special interest group leaders, district and sub-county chairpersons, and other councilors. While there was controversy and insecurity surrounding some election results, Mbale remained peaceful.



COVID-19 UPDATE

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to place a strain on the country. The FH team, however, works hard to ensure community activities continue to be carried out while being vigilant to follow COVID-19 safety protocols. One benefit to such protocols has been an increase in communities' general hygiene and sanitation, creating an overall healthier living environment for families.



“The coming of FH to our community is timely and gives us great hope of transforming our community. It’s the first of its kind here.”

—Francis, Deputy Headteacher at Bumaliro Primary School

Through the Ministry of Health, the government is reopening schools in phases, starting with those who need to take national exams to pass to the next grade. In Bukiendo, returning students were taught how to effectively wash their hands, social distance, and use masks.

FH trained community leaders on the importance of education and equipped them to share those messages with their communities. These leaders have played a key role in encouraging families to send their children to school. As a result of their encouragement, nearly all five partner schools have registered 95 percent of community children to return to school, in spite of the negative effects of COVID-19 on education.

School gardens are key to creating sustainable school lunch programs and raising the nutrition level of students. FH met with five school administrations to determine what they need to make their gardens a success. The schools requested seed for maize, beans, and soybeans which FH will provide. Local staff are excited to continue journeying with the schools as they establish their gardens.

To protect community children, FH conducted refresher training to help community members identify, prevent, and report abuse; refer and monitor incidents; and increase people’s capacity to respond to children’s issues. Teachers, social workers, elected officials, community leaders, and school children all participated. As a result of the training, participants decided to share the information with other stakeholders and form child protection committees. One outcome has been the support a girl received from the committee after she became pregnant over the Christmas holiday. The committee involved church leaders to support and counsel her grandmother to receive her back home and care for her during the pregnancy. They also encouraged the girl to enroll in antenatal care.



Philip, agricultural specialist with FH Uganda, walks farmers through a refresher course on proven farming methods that are new to some families.



EDUCATION

ACTIVITIES



40 community leaders attended workshops on the importance of education.



145 students trained in COVID-19 safety protocols for school.

5 school administrations provided feedback on school gardens and requested seed.



70 community members trained in child protection.

97 Grade 7 students participated in school meetings about human rights.



Education for mothers and teens is a key way to spread information on rights and equality to all families for long-term positive change.



HEALTH

Cascade health groups reach communities with life-saving health messages and strengthen existing support structures to sustain positive change. These groups are composed of 12 members trained by FH staff who later “cascade” their knowledge to their neighbours. Participants learn about better hygiene and sanitation, nutrition, and early childhood education.

This year, women have been learning about care for mothers and newborns in both pregnancy and postpartum. These sessions focus on antenatal care and health centre visits, nutrition for pregnant mothers, newborn care, and danger signs. The training is already having an impact as more pregnant women attend antenatal appointments and neighbours help mothers deliver in the health centre by contributing toward their transportation fares.



“The support from our group helped me to deliver a healthy baby and after delivery, group members were supporting me emotionally, socially and financially. For the first time, I managed to attend antenatal care and deliver my child at the hospital.”

—Sylvia

Read more about Sylvia’s journey on page 11

Kitchen gardens provide vegetables that support the community’s fight against malnutrition, especially in children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating mothers. The gardens can be easily managed by anyone, including the elderly or those living with disabilities. FH provided training and seeds for demonstration plots where community members come to learn. Hundreds of families are now growing spinach, collard greens, cow peas, amaranth, onions, cabbages, tomatoes, and other local vegetables. As households earn income by selling extra produce, they’re able to purchase items they need like soap, cooking oil, and salt and save a bit of money each week. One household was even able to purchase turkeys for rearing!

Later this year, FH will repair three water points (boreholes). In preparation, FH established and trained local water user committees to manage the water sources. The committee members are responsible to collect water user fees for maintenance of the water points.



HEALTH

ACTIVITIES

12 new Cascade health groups formed, making a total of 24 groups in Bukiendo.



3,168 women received health messages from their Cascade group leaders.



348 mothers attended antenatal classes in March—*nearly 3x the attendance in January!*

168 kitchen gardens established, benefiting over 800 people.

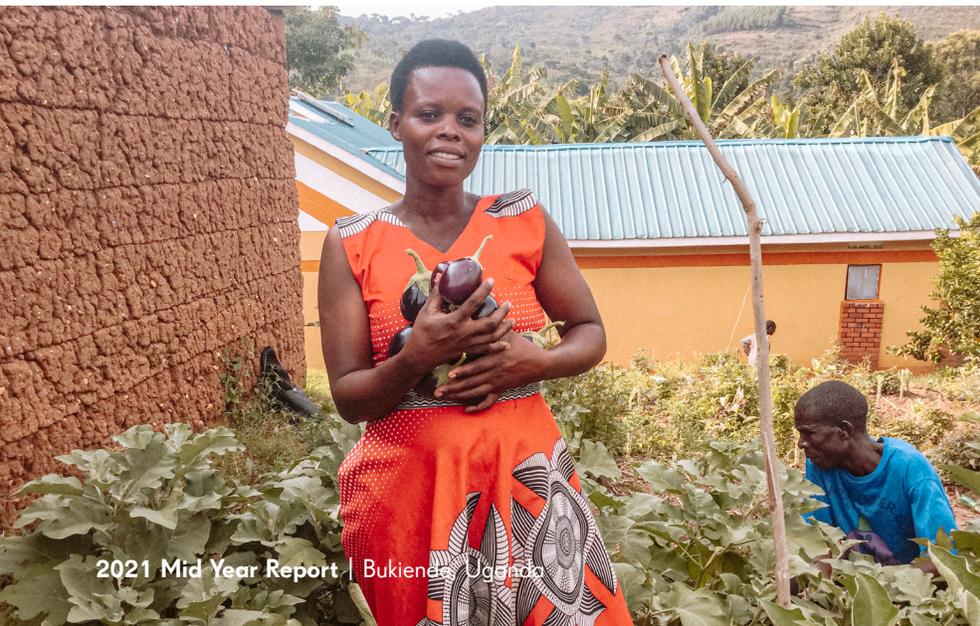


2 community health events reaching 1,200 people were held to facilitate health education, antenatal care for pregnant mothers, and immunizations.



30 water user committee members trained.

97 Male Change Agents (volunteer men willing to share important lessons with other men) trained in gender equality and women's issues.





LIVELIHOODS



"I am so happy with what FH is doing! My family's health is improving because of the knowledge of nutritional and medicinal plants. I now grow vegetables for eating and also earn money from it. Thanks to FH!"

—Oliver

Savings and Loans groups provide a supportive and collaborative environment in which community members can save money, gain access to low-interest loans, and learn financial and small business skills. FH staff trained the leaders from 51 groups on Savings and Loans methodology and group management. They discussed the benefits of saving, how to save and borrow, meeting procedures, loans, social funds, and cash box safety measures and record keeping. Leaders also learned financial literacy and independence which helps families with planning and budgeting for their daily lives and setting financial priorities including saving.

Farming remains the primary source of livelihoods for families in Bukiende. To address the problem of depleted soil caused by erosion and monoculture farming, FH trained Lead Farmers, including some church leaders, on conservation agriculture through demonstration plots and on-farm training. This methodology restores soil and helps it hold moisture. Lead Farmers will now take what they've learned, implement it in their own fields, and teach others to do the same.

As a result of the training, some Lead Farmers have started practicing conservation agriculture. Because the results of their efforts this planting season will either motivate or demotivate the farmers to adopt the new methodology, FH staff are attentively supporting the farmers so they don't give up.

SPECIAL REPORT ON FALL ARMYWORM

The fall armyworm has become a growing threat in Bukiende. This invasive species has the potential to devastate the livelihoods of farmers across Africa. To mitigate this crisis, FH is teaching community members about "push-pull" methods to naturally deal with this devastating pest. FH provided maize, soya bean, and fertilizers to 120 Lead Farmers to help them create push-pull demonstration gardens. Unfortunately, drought and pests damaged the plots before the crops could be established, but FH took measures to rescue them for the future. Lead Farmers were trained on how to grow Brachiaria and Desmodium to have cuttings for next season's push-pull demonstration gardens.

PUSH-PULL METHOD

Push-pull technology uses intercropping to control pests like the fall armyworm by planting repellent "push" plants and trap "pull" plants together. For example, planting Desmodium between rows of maize repels ("pushes") the pests away from the crops. Other grasses planted around the edges of the maize field attract ("pull") and trap the pests, preventing them from getting to the crop. This safe, natural technology was developed in Kenya and has been widely used by smallholder farmers around eastern Africa.

Photo Credit: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



LIVELIHOODS

ACTIVITIES

53 families started small businesses like grocery shops and raising chickens.



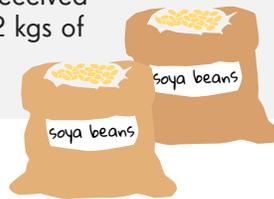
120 farmers trained in conservation agriculture and cascading information to 3,000 farmers.

988 new savings group members (38 new groups formed).

80 demonstration plots established.



120 Lead Farmers each received 3 kgs of maize and 2 kgs of soya beans.



Demonstration gardens were established at sites across the communities, focused on teaching "conservation agriculture" and ways to protect soil health and save water while still yielding better crops.



LEADERSHIP

“FH has played a great role in Mbale district. It educated communities on COVID-19, helping the district reach many communities with health messages to promote hygiene and sanitation in the communities.”

—Agnes, local government health worker

Persons with special needs are marginalized in the communities and not well represented in government and cultural administrations. FH is working to ensure their representation in the program by conducting educational meetings with communities on the involvement of vulnerable groups in decision making processes. These meetings also help FH identify ways of engaging people with special needs.

The government of Uganda has many programs and policies to support citizens in bettering their lives, however, communities are often unaware of such opportunities. To address this gap, FH staff, together with community leaders, are conducting a widespread public information campaign to help everyday community members learn about and advocate for their rights under Ugandan law. Knowing this information helps community members elect leaders that represent their views, hold their elected leaders accountable, and participate in government programs.

Church leaders play a significant role in the development of their communities. FH has identified 70 churches spanning three denominations—Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal—spread throughout the communities. FH trained church leaders in practical ways to demonstrate God’s love through human acts of love. The participants have done a great job encouraging their members to get involved in supporting the poor and visiting the sick in their communities.

FH staff and community change agents participated in four days of joint workshops to learn the ins and outs of equipping community leaders. The training was then rolled out to political and civil leaders, teachers, school management committees, parent-teacher association representatives, religious leaders, and child representatives in all four communities. This first phase of training looked at project planning and management with the result of leaders developing projects in their communities. Ongoing training will be co-funded by community leaders and last for 12 months.





LEADERSHIP

ACTIVITIES

16 community meetings were held.



4 community awareness meetings on the inclusion of people with special needs.



71 church leaders trained.

25 churches started supporting the poor and visiting the sick.

115 community leaders trained on project planning and management.



Community gatherings for training, idea sharing, and unity building are essential to growing a thriving community.

FRIENDS ON THE JOURNEY

Nabukhoma Village, Bukiende, Uganda

It's often said that the day a woman gives birth is the most dangerous day of her life. Sylvia Namakoye knows all too well the dangers of pregnancy and birth.

Living in the rural village of Nabukhoma, Bukiende, Sylvia's home was too far from the closest health centre to walk to her antenatal appointments. Nor could she afford to pay for transportation. As a result, she suffered sickness during her complicated pregnancy. "I did not do any work since I was very sick at home. My legs were swollen and my blood pressure was very high and I could not even walk. I hated myself because of what I was going through. I thought that God had forgotten about me."

While Sylvia is a committed Christian, her circumstances caused her to be isolated during her pregnancies. She delivered her first five children at home without the help of a trained health worker.

With her sixth pregnancy, Sylvia was in trouble. She needed help. Thankfully, one of her neighbours is a Cascade health group leader who encouraged her to join her neighbourhood circle group and get connected to other mothers. At the time, they were being trained on maternal and child health.

For the first month, Sylvia never missed a meeting. But as her pregnancy progressed, so did her illness. Cascade group members visited her at home and realized she was very sick and should not—in fact, could not—walk to meetings anymore. Her new friends rallied around her and collected money to pay her transportation fare to the closest health centre. They made sure she had food to eat. They even moved their meetings



closer to her house so she could still benefit from the health training.

“The support from our group helped me to deliver a healthy baby, and after delivery, group members were supporting me emotionally, socially, and financially. For the first time, I managed to attend antenatal care and deliver my child at the hospital,” Sylvia says.

FH staff, health centre workers, and Sylvia’s Cascade group worked together to save not only her life, but also her baby’s. At the clinic, she was treated for high blood pressure and safely delivered her sixth child. Her group even used their personal funds to pay for her medication until she had fully recovered at home. FH staff connected Sylvia to the Rotary Club of Mbale who visited her at home, bringing food and other basic care items. “I felt loved and got to meet

new people and friends,” Sylvia says. “I am now saved. I thank God for having enabled me to make it through life.”

“Before, people largely used local medication and they would go to traditional birth attendants to deliver,” Sylvia continues. “Some women would die and others would get obstetric complications. After FH intervention in our community, many people now believe going to hospital for antenatal care and delivery services is good and they have hope that they will always be well when in the hands of health workers.”

“My baby is inspirational to me and the entire community. I learned that there are those who are willing to help the less privileged.”



Thank You

FH Canada and FH Uganda, together with the families of Bukiendo, thank you for walking with them on this journey out of poverty! Your generous support is helping increase child protection, grow more nutritious food, create sources of family income, and train leaders for the future. We couldn’t do this without you!