

No Mother too Far

SAVE the
M&THERS.org

Gratitude Report 2020



MISSION

To train local leaders in the developing world to reduce maternal mortality within their own countries.

VISION

That no mother or child should die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

WE BELIEVE

That universal access to quality maternal care in pregnancy and childbirth is a basic human right.

WE WORK

In partnership with other like-minded groups and individuals.



TIME AND AGAIN, YOU'VE SAID "NO MOTHER TOO FAR"

Change sometimes happens slowly, but year upon year your commitment has made a difference not just for one mother, but for a nation of them. Read how you made a difference this year.



Maternal Mortality

From 1990 to 2017, the number of maternal deaths worldwide dropped by 35%.

Graduates

68 leaders in maternal health graduated this year.

COVID-19 Assistance

In addition to emergency health-care funding, you provided...

- 3750 pairs of surgical gloves
- 100 face shields
- 500 disposable masks

Mothers Served & Saved

Almost 1,000 mothers were served and saved in our High Dependency Units.

Our Thanks

Our gratitude is infinite.

When the world was in crisis, you continued to stand by mothers. There is still work to do, but together, we are making a difference.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Faithful Supporters,

Sixteen months into a crisis that hit unexpectedly, leaving so many of us wondering what the future would look like, we look back and see the ways that so many people have suffered. Some of the most vulnerable have been hit very hard. We have heard many stories of mothers dying not just from the virus, but because of their inability to get to a clinic or a midwife, due to lack of transportation with strict stay-at-home orders.

But, we at Save the Mothers also look back and see how people have given in ways that they may not have before, even sacrificially to help the most affected.

The Master's in Public Health Leadership Program (MPHL), which is the foundation of our work in East Africa was not able to continue when lockdowns swept Uganda. Most staff positions at the university were not sustained. But we were able to support Dr. Miriam Mutabazi, our East African Director who had the virus in January but made a full recovery– in her desire and calling to see the STM program continue.

To keep the program running, we launched online. This ensured that students who were enrolled could graduate. But, even better, now the MPHL is accessible to students across Africa, and perhaps beyond, who could not attend in-person classes. This will extend the reach of our alumni to benefit even more vulnerable women and their babies.

With our Mother's Day Walk and our yearly Gala cancelled, we looked for other ways to creatively continue our work. We asked for your support, and you gave it.

With so many Charities having to shut their doors, we were so grateful that we could carry on the work to save mothers and their babies in East Africa.

At the end of 2020, we were very sad to see our Executive Director Deborah Mensah leave us. With a baby on the way and preparations to move her family back to Ghana, we were happy to wish her well. Around the same time, we welcomed Janet Sampson, who has taken up the position of Manager of Operations. She has made a tremendous contribution already in her short tenure with us.

But we could not do this without you- a big thank you to our volunteers and our faithful and generous supporters.

In closing, I would like to thank you again for your gifts that have provided vital support for mothers this year. When I see my daughter who is due any day now, I know that she will have the support to deliver this precious new life. But there is still much to be done for moms in East Africa.

Together, we work to ensure "that no mother or child should die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth."

May God continue to bless you.

Full of Gratitude

Mary Harvey

**Mary Harvey
Chairperson**



UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES

At the onset, of COVID-19 pandemic, Uganda, like many countries, put in place extreme measures to control the pandemic, including lockdowns. This necessary measure led to unanticipated challenges for moms-to-be.

In response to our plea, Canadians helped to provide special support for women requiring special care, and by providing many of our partner facilities with personal protective equipment. Thank you!

SPECIAL ACTION

Meanwhile, in Canada, our annual 'Walk to Save a Mother' was cancelled as we endured restrictions and lockdowns. Some of our supporters organized COVID-safe fundraising campaigns. A special thanks to two young women, Oleyaa and Liz. They each organized a fundraiser in lieu of participating in the walk. Collectively, they raised over \$7,000.



A TRAGIC LOSS & A CALL TO ACTION

During the lockdown period in Uganda, travel was restricted to emergency response vehicles. All others who wished to travel were required to seek permission from the local officials– even if they were travelling for health services.

During this time, some of our clinician-faculty serving in the specialized maternal care centre in Kampala noted an increase in obstetric emergencies. One such mother was unable to travel to access vital care in time. Tragically, her uterus ruptured and her baby died. She was left with a terrible birth injury - a fistula and bilateral paralysis of her lower limbs. This fistula will cost as much as \$1500 to repair surgically. She delayed too long labouring at home because she did not have permission to travel. Her story is emblematic of many mothers for whom COVID-19 tragically delayed care, left them caught in transit, or placed an ill-equipped health centre in a tragic position for which it was not equipped.

She represents several mothers who lost their babies, their own life, or had near misses. This was a dire unanticipated consequence of the pandemic.

This is why your investment in strengthening maternal health care across East Africa is so vital.

NO MOTHER IS TOO FAR.



UPDATE: MOTHER BABY FRIENDLY HOSPITALS

In 2019, we launched a new Mother Baby Friendly Hospital site at Jinja Regional Referral Hospital. In 2020, a generous Canadian established a High Dependency Unit to serve the maternity department. This unit is equipped with critical care equipment and beds for mothers facing birth trauma.

Sister Agirie Lubega, an alumnus of our Master's in Public Health Leadership heads the Maternal and Child Health Department at this hospital.



"When I started working at this hospital there was a need to improve maternal services," Lubega reported.

Relying on skills developed in the MPH, Lubega went to work adapting the physical hospital space to serve mothers better. She also created a mentorship structure for nurses and midwives.

"But the final piece was the HDU equipment that would save lives," said Lubega, **"I am so grateful for supporters who have stepped in to help the mothers in my community. Thank you!"**



OFFERING DOUBLE PROTECTION

When news of global shortages of personal protective equipment, like gloves and masks began to circulate, it was impossible not to think about the centres participating in our Mother Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (MBFHI). Unfortunately, what we feared was true: this vital equipment was in short supply.

We asked you to respond to ensure that staff, mothers, and babies would be protected not only from COVID-19, but also from the spread of other communicable diseases that these tools protect against.

The donations were particularly timely at Nakaseke Hospital, an MBFHI. As the equipment was being delivered by our team, a midwife dashed into the office of the head nurse. She was urgently asking for gloves so that she could help a mother who was bleeding after delivery. The Head Nurse informed this midwife that there were no gloves, but Dr. Miriam Mutabazi who was on hand to drop off the supplies swiftly cut open one of the boxes and gave gloves to the midwife in need.

"These supplies will help us with double protection during these times of COVID-19," said the Head Nurse.

At another MBFHI, the emergency supplies that you provided are offering that same double protection.

"I would like to appreciate this donation. We were out of surgical masks and disposable gloves. It was so timely at the peak of COVID-19," said one nurse. "Face shields are also useful during procedures that result in fluid splashes, such as blood. This donation will help to protect us," she added.

This hospital sees 700 mothers a month for delivery.

THANK YOU FOR ENSURING THE SAFETY OF OUR PARTNERS.



UPDATE:

MASTER'S IN PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP

The year began normally, with MPHL Uganda and International classes conducted on campus in January and February. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic the lectures continued online from March onward.

The first of the 2020 graduation ceremonies were conducted by Uganda Christian University just before the pandemic was declared. 48 MPHL students graduated. There were visitors from Canada in attendance, including Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese.



Following the virtual graduation ceremony, in her message to one of the graduates Dr Eve said: *"Anthony from Mwanza, Tanzania: Not even COVID-19 could stop your smile! So proud of you."*

In December, however, 20 students graduated at an online ceremony which marked the first-ever virtual graduation ceremony in the history of Uganda Christian University and Save the Mothers.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR TEEN PARENTS

When Medie Mohamed finished the Save the Mothers Master's in Public Health Leadership program, he knew that he wanted to reach some of the many young Ugandans who become parents as teenagers.

He founded 256 Youth Platform, an organization that engages youth in meaningful activities with the aim of improving maternal and child health in the community. *"We empower communities to be responsible when they are pregnant, delivering, and thereafter."*

256 Youth Platform creates systems in communities to support pregnant girls and the boys responsible for these pregnancies, by employing them within the project and providing them mentorship. *"Through [the] '256' [program] I am heading a team of young people determined to learn and address the bigger challenges of our times. Our leadership is built on a concept of values, hard work, and trying to do what the community thinks is impossible."*

I'm so happy that I was empowered by STM to be able to support my community."

Joseph is an expectant father: "I'm a rapper of 256 and also a co-ordinator of health at 256. I've been able to take my girlfriend for antenatal care. I have a job so I can earn some money and save. This is because I had a mentor (Medie) who gave me a chance to know about the three delays. I'm now responsible for every action that I take."



No Mother too Far

Gratitude Report 2020

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This report presents programmatic highlights of our work in 2020.
For a complete copy of Save the Mothers audited financial statements for the fiscal year 2019/2020 please email info@savethemothers.org

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