

"We are clean and healthy – no longer suffering from the dirty water that made us sick. We used to suffer from jiggers and lice. This is history. I am happy. My family of 6 children is happy going to school on time and doing well in their classes. I thank those people from where you [Rob] come from for their kindness and love for us."

Topist Nyamubi from the Nyakabungo Kamubeizi Efuzi (orphans) Tweyambe (selfhelp)



Photos: Rob Wayne and CCS

SUMMER STORY

By Gillian Southey, CWS communications coordinator.

WE HAVE PLANS

The Nyakabungo Kamubeizi Group turned out in full force when Rob Wayne from CWS International Programmes Working Group came to their village. Small subsistence farmers, they were eager to thank him for the new rainwater tanks they had built. The women greeted him with traditional dance and singing – it was their first opportunity to meet someone from CWS.

The Group is one of 25 local groups organized and supported by CWS partner, the Centre for Community Service in Uganda. CCS operates a vital programme for these families, all of whom include orphans who lost their parents to HIV and AIDS. Over the years, the groups have learned to work together to the benefit of everyone. So when the Nyakabungo Kamubeizi Group met with Rob they were keen to tell him their plans.

As funds and time allowed the Group made the bricks they needed to construct shops on the side of the road (pictured). Once complete, they plan to rent them out and in time earn enough to buy a mill to grind maize for the local market, saving the time needed to take the maize into town and keeping the profits in the community.

Each month members contribute NZ 38 cents to the group's savings scheme. Their savings go into a rainwater tank fund. When there are enough funds and the group is ready, they select one member to get the next tank. Sometimes this is done on the basis of need and other times by ballot – members choose a piece of paper and the one with the rainwater tank drawing is next in line.

When these widows and caregivers started to meet under the guidance of CCS, no one could have guessed they were would-be entrepreneurs. Working together, they learnt to trust each other and realise how much more they can achieve by pooling their resources.

CCS was started by director Charles Rwabambari, a



CCS Director, Charles (back right) stands with the Nyakabungo Kamubeizi Group of which Topist (fifth from left) is a member. Together they are building a block of shops (right) and are planning to buy a grain mill with the proceeds thanks to the skills learned from CCS.



former agricultural official determined to help families ravished by HIV and AIDS and struggling to grow enough in the dry conditions. He has a team of 15 trainers with a variety of skills who teach the group about HIV and AIDS, improved farming techniques, good hygiene and sanitation practices and rainwater tank building skills.

Families adopting sometimes five or more HIV and AIDS orphans face greatly increased costs. In Isingiro District 85% of people are dependent on subsistence agriculture so feeding the extra mouths often meant families went hungry. Grandmothers in particular slipped from poverty into misery no longer able to care for the orphans. Unable to tend their banana plantations, they found life increasingly difficult.





On the advice of CCS, Bruce learned carpentry skills. He now takes on other orphans as apprentices, volunteers for CCS and is the secretary of the Kajaho Association of which his grandmother is a member.

New tanks mean children freed from long and sometimes dangerous trips to the Kagera river or waterholes can go to school. The change for the children is dramatic. They are confident and many have gone on to complete primary school. The new challenge is to help those unable to afford high school find income earning opportunities. Ever resourceful, CCS and its volunteers are setting them up as apprentices to learn hairdressing, sewing, crochet, how to repair bicycle and motorbikes, brickmaking, carpentry and joinery. Last year Bruce Abaho, orphaned at primary school and raised by his grandmother, trained ten orphans in his carpentry workshop.

A few years ago CCS used part of the grant from CWS to buy 240 piglets which were distributed to the neediest families on the condition they passed on the first litter to others. Muslims could trade them for goats. Rob says he met some of the third generation of pigs which were continuing to earn income for these families.

When Rob visited, Isingiro was experiencing its third straight year of devastating drought. Riverbeds were drying up and the search for the heavily mineralized ground water was becoming more difficult. CCS has taught many of the groups conservation farming techniques to enable them to survive with greatly reduced water, but it has been tough. Without the rainwater tanks,



Bananas are the primary crop in this region but CCS pigs are adding to family income.

they might not have coped.

For CCS climate change has arrived. The lack of rain is sucking the life out of the soil and pushing farmers closer to the edge. Access to water is critical. The 675 rainwater tanks built by donors to CWS are a vital resource for the most vulnerable farmers across the community. Highly valued, each tank has a sign recognizing that contribution and most have locks on their taps to make sure not one drop is wasted.

Climate change makes the need for tanks urgent. CCS is committed to building another 520 tanks for the remaining group members. With a more secure water supply, the HIV and AIDS orphan families can focus on earning more income. Rob says funding support will help empower them and significantly relieve the burden they face.

Like CCS our partners are deeply committed to their communities. They help the most vulnerable first and help them respond to tough challenges like climate change and conflict. Many are telling us that it is harder to do their work now as options close. Having your support encourages them to keep going and makes sure no one is left behind. Please support the Summer Appeal to give the hope of water and a better future for families trapped in a spiral of poverty.

YES, I WANT TO HELP PEOPLE DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE AND POVERTY

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Postcode _____ Donations of \$5 and over are tax deductible

Telephone () _____

Email _____

I enclose: \$35 \$75 \$150 Other \$.....

Direct deposit to: 06 0817 0318646 00

Particulars: Your Name

Code: Summer Appeal

Reference: Your CWS Supporter ID no.

Email your postal details to cws@cws.org.nz for a tax receipt.

Please debit \$ _____ from my
 Visa Mastercard Diners Amex

Name on credit card _____

Signature _____ Expiry date ____ / ____

Card number
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Christian World Service

National Office
 PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140. Ph: 03 366 9274 0800 74 73 72
cws@cws.org.nz www.cws.org.nz

Auckland office: (09) 5719150

CWS is a registered charity: #CC22288

