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Dear Friends,

Wow. What a year. I know I am not alone when I say that 2023 has been a very challenging one. Changes in the Ugandan political environment, along with problems in the clinic administration caused us to make the difficult decision not to build a permanent facility in Soroti. While it's easy for me to list all the ways that choice is sad and disappointing, it is also true that this type of situation isn't uncommon and is sometimes necessary when working in places that need our help. It is part of the kind of work we do.

IMA is not leaving Uganda entirely. We are modifying our work there to keep volunteers out of potential harm's way. We won't be building a hospital, but instead, we will make another kind of capital investment: education. Some of Teso Safe Motherhood's staff, a small group of extremely capable individuals, are incorporating a CBO, a Community Based Organization. This is a specific type of charitable organization that works to address local needs. The Eema Care Centre will be incorporated under this formal structure. Eema is a fitting name, as it is the phonetic spelling of IMA and the Hebrew word for mother. Eema Care Center will oversee the new Employee Education Project. Funded and overseen by IMA, Eema Care Center will sponsor former Teso Safe Motherhood staff to continue their educations. I hope you enjoy reading about their plans as much as I have.

It's an ambitious project, but I'm very confident we will do it well. We will track and monitor everyone's progress and grades. We will provide comprehensive support, so no one fails due to lack of resources. There will be a clear and discrete timeline for each degree program chosen because we will measure success by their graduation rates. We will support the educational goals of these outstanding individuals by providing what they need to get to school and stay in school.

It seemed that at the very moment we decided building a permanent facility in Uganda was not going to be a good choice, I was contacted and asked to participate in several meetings about how we might create a remote curriculum for Afghan midwives living under the Taliban. I immediately asked Shakila Haidari, who worked with IMA in Bamiyan from 2004 to 2006, to join our conversations. She graciously accepted. She has been making contact with some remarkable people who are working to educate midwives during this Talib regime. This project is in the very early stages with some very exciting partners. It's likely to become another focus for IMA this upcoming year.

While not building in Uganda makes me quite sad, I feel very confident that just as in Afghanistan, we made a long-term impact. Educating nurses and midwives with skills to save lives is something that endures long past our departure. As importantly, educating nurses and midwives about creating cultures of kindness not only endures for the long term, but also has a profound ripple effect out into the whole community. And now to have an opportunity once again to contribute to the training of Afghan midwives does feel very good.



IMA midwives cared for many mothers in Afghanistan from 2004 through 2006. We are very excited at the possibility of being able to provide something for them now.



Jennifer Braun and Sheila Haidari teaching Bamiyan midwifery students about shoulder dystocia in the winter of 2005. They have been working together again as part of a group exploring possible remote education for Afghan midwifery students living under the Taliban.

All we've learned and accomplished in other countries may just have a role to play here in the US now as well. Maternal mortality in the US has been on a troubling upward trend. We are very interested in contributing to the solution to this problem here at home.

So there is much to do. I hope you enjoy reading about what we are continuing to do in Uganda, and I look forward to sharing more about our prospective project in Afghanistan, as well as any developments in US-based projects. I hope you enjoy the holidays and that 2024 is a better year for all people all over the world. May you and your family enjoy love and health this holiday season. Thank you so much for your continued support of our mission to save mothers' and babies' lives.

Peace,
Jennifer Elizabeth Braun



"My name is **Among Annet**. I worked at the TSMP clinic as a cleaner. I am intending to do a Certificate in Hotel Management, a weekend program at the YMCA Kampala. I am so grateful for the opportunity to go to school. It has been my dream to get myself this skill that I will use to create a job for myself. I can start up a restaurant after the course and be able to feed myself and the people under my care. I will also be able to give employment to a few people who will be working with me. Thank you IMA for this great opportunity."



"My name is **Eyanu George**. I am a comprehensive nurse and I want to continue my education by studying pharmacy. I want to study at Victoria University because it's the university with advanced technology in education and is up to date with global trends. I believe that my dreams shall be fulfilled, and I will contribute to dealing with the issue of drug resistance. Specifically, malaria's growing resistance to our first-line medications. This is a big burden in Uganda and leads to mortality and morbidity, and it interests me so much."



"My name is **Nathan Ojur**, and my intention is to enroll for a bachelor's in anesthesia from a public university in Uganda, preferably Busitema University. Uganda has very few physicians for anesthesia. Maternal and child mortality and morbidity is still high here in Uganda as most health units lack anesthesia practitioners. Enrolling for the course will help combat the problem."



A Focus On Education

By **Jennifer Braun**

Our new program in Uganda is educational. Any staff member from Teso Safe Motherhood is eligible for sponsorship to the school of their choice. A small group of trusted individuals is incorporating a Community Based Organization (CBO) they are calling the Eema Care Centre. "Eema" is of course the phonetic spelling of IMA, and the Hebrew word for mother. As we evolve to support an education-focused organization in Soroti, a few of the beneficiaries have written about their professional goals and dreams.



"My name is **Caroline Aguti**, and I am so passionate about doing advanced degrees in midwifery and administration to enhance my leadership skills. Aga Khan University would be a dream come true for me. I will work so hard to attain the qualification to enable me to work better, I call it ministry."

"Hello, I am **Mary Magdalene Auma**, from Soroti, Uganda. I am a 23 year old student at Soroti School of Comprehensive Nursing, pursuing a diploma in midwifery.



Being a midwife has been my dream since I was a child and I got inspired more when I was in the motherly hands of a great mentor, Sister Jennifer Braun.

Hearing about IMA's Education Project is one of my greatest joys because through this program, I believe I am set to complete my diploma. Before, it was a challenge raising tuition on my own. I will forever be grateful for this great opportunity to be under this Education Project. Thank you IMA, thank you Sister Jennifer Braun."



"Greetings from Soroti family, I hope this message finds you well. I am called **Edimu Julius**. I am humbly forwarding a voice of thanks to you for the great role you play in building my career. May the good Lord bless your daily hard work. Anesthesia is a new developing medical profession in Uganda. Anesthesiologists are only found in Regional Referral hospitals and in inadequate numbers. District hospitals and Health Centre IVs do not have anesthesiologists. I thank you again for the great opportunity you have given me to study for this degree, I promise to use the opportunity with all my heart and strength. My dream is to become an anesthesiologist and be an advocate for quality and safe anaesthesia for the vulnerable. Thank you."

"My name is **Esther Aseno**, I am 37 years old, married and a mother of 3 boys. I am a registered midwife with a diploma in midwifery. I dedicated all my career to working with Teso Safe Motherhood since its initial inception, with the aim of providing comprehensive humanitarian lifesaving health care services to internally displaced people (IDPs). IDPs were displaced by Kony rebel group invasion of the Lango and Teso sub-regions in 2003/2004. My parents and family members from the indigenous land (Amuria district) were also affected and displaced during the height of the insurgency. During this period, I managed to complete my senior four (4) secondary education but didn't have the financial support to further my education. I therefore decided to settle for the certificate in nursing assistant (a lower cadre course that has currently been abolished in the Ugandan healthcare training and practice). Fortunately, I had secured my first employment with Teso Safe Motherhood, funded by IMA.



Amazingly, I realized a lot of transformation in my life because I was able to establish our humble family together with my husband. Incidentally, the project was "a game changer" in my life and career, because through my dedicated efforts and commitment to work, the project donor (Jennifer) sponsored me for another certificate in enrolled comprehensive nursing which I was able to complete between 2011 and 2013. In addition, by the wonderful Grace of the Lord, the sponsor (Jennifer), again through our continued engagement and trust, sponsored me for a Diploma in Midwifery which I also completed between 2019 and 2021. And since completion of the course, I have continued working with TSM as a midwife. I am very passionate about and have extreme love and desire to work with mothers and newborn babies to promote safe motherhood.

I am very humbled by the continued opportunity TSMP and IMA donors granted me to serve my own needy and suffering people with love and passion for a period spanning over 15 years. This has greatly impacted my growth professionally, mentally and spiritually. I am honest that the skills, knowledge, and values I have learned over time have ably prepared me personally to face life situations, appreciate the love for humanity and prosper my career in the nursing and midwifery fields. I am looking forward to continued collaboration and engagement with the donors and have very strong ambitions of continuing my career education as a Nurse at the bachelor's level and beyond."



"Greetings to you here! I am **Ario Moris**, and I have been working in Teso Safe

Motherhood as a psychosocial support officer under the ART department, which serves HIV/AIDS patients. We offered counseling, testing, adherence counseling, emotional support, to name a few. Through IMA's support for my education, I will achieve a bachelor's degree in public health from Islamic University in Uganda. This will help me very much to achieve advanced skills, a career and knowledge in the health field."

"My name is **Nambozo Brenda**, and I am a midwife. I want to continue with a bachelor's in midwifery from Victoria University. My dream is if I do this course, I believe that I will achieve the best in life in advanced care of the mother and the baby. That will mean I will help maternal mortality and morbidity come down and I will gain more knowledge and broaden the way I do things towards care of mother and the baby. The society and community at large around me will benefit."

"I am **Okello Augustine**, aged 28 years, with the dream of being an orthopedic surgeon.



I aim to restore hope to the lame and broken poor who are having hardships in accessing quality ortho services in this country. Pursuing a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery in this country is one of the most expensive courses to be pursued. Most of us from humble backgrounds fail to attain due to no funds. I am enthusiastic that with your support I will surely achieve my dream so as to serve humanity at that level."



"**Akello Sarah** is my name.

Currently, I have a bachelor's in business administration, with a bias in Accounts and Audit. Studying for an ACCA accountancy qualification with an ACCA approved learning partner in Uganda has been one of my major dreams. This would make it possible for me to be recognized as an Auditor here in Uganda. I love transparency and value honesty and integrity. I love accountability in terms of both time and value.

Apart from having the opportunity to manage the Education Fund locally here in Soroti, I am so humbled and excited that I am one of the beneficiaries of the fund. Thank you IMA for the opportunity to me as an individual and for my people. This is going to improve the quality of services my people are going to receive."

"My name is **Epilu Elly**, a registered nurse, a third born out of four and a Rotaractor (a member of the Rotary Club's program for younger members). I plan to study a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery. I grew up in a community with quite a number of challenges, poor healthcare services being the most pressing. Being able to see that this problem can gradually be made better gives me the inspiration to take this career path.



Graduating as a medical doctor definitely means acquiring more skills and being able to do more. All these will help expand my reach and ability to impact positively more lives, families and communities. As a firm believer in the Rotary slogan "Service Above Self," this will increase my ability to serve humanity and have a greater impact in my community and around the world.

I really want to thank IMA for granting me a chance to serve and interact with my communities. This has given me the opportunity to learn and understand the challenges our people struggle with on a daily basis. The urge in me to be part of the solution to these challenges gives me a great push to study."



"My name is **Oneo Emmanuel**, a Ugandan who has been so glad working with IMA. It's been an honor meeting and interacting with Sister Jennifer who brought more joy and hope to my life.



Having completed my diploma in comprehensive nursing, I still haven't achieved my goal of becoming a pediatrician in this country. But with the hope and trust that I have in IMA, I believe I'll achieve that and help my community acquire great health and contribute to the country's Sustainable Development Goal Number 3. (The Sustainable Developments Goals are seventeen goals designed to be a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet...." Number 3 is good health and well-being.) I look forward to furthering myself in studies from Busitema University which I know will come into fulfillment with support from IMA.

I thank God for IMA for their generous support which has contributed a lot in many peoples' lives and still believe with their help more lives will get transformed."

Beauty of Education

It's no secret world over that the greatest gift one can give a person is empowerment in the form of education. Education opens doors to the world and creates a lasting impact. Having worked with IMA for over a decade and seen love and compassion in whatever they do, whether in antenatal, maternity, or postnatal, the commitment by IMA to mobilize resources to further educate the health service providers in Uganda is a noble task worth supporting.

Well educated and skilled health providers help to save lives of both babies and their mothers. Reduction in maternal mortality is proven to improve both the likelihood that a child survives and the child's quality of life. There is no better place and people to benefit than those rural health workers in the least developed parts of the world like Uganda. A well-educated provider is seen as a role model. This is important in our setting where many still live in extreme poverty.

Helping educate a health provider is helping humanity at its best.

Dr. Ouna Martin,

Obstetrician and Gynecologist,
Eema, Uganda.



One of the things we will continue to do in Uganda is support Marion Toepke's work.

She began with a research project studying maternal mortality in the rural villages that surround Soroti. As she continued her research, she and her project manager Richard Ocen saw the need to develop a system to educate the village women on safer pregnancy and childbirth practices. They now do "Village Women Conferences," each one attended by hundreds of women who live in these rural areas. Each time a village hosts a conference, they tackle a different topic about saving mothers' and babies' lives.



"When I go to outreach locations, the mothers are facing a lot of challenges. One big problem is transport. When they need to get to a health center, there is a delay due to distance because most of them use bicycles. We are working now on emergency transportation for them while we are also continuing to go to the villages to teach. Since we have received some generous gifts, we are looking into how we might provide transport in urgent situations."

Richard Ocen
Project Manager



Maternal Mortality Research & Prevention is still going strong in Soroti, Uganda.

By Marion Toepke, Certified Nurse Midwife

In 2021 we completed our basic research into the deaths of pregnant and birthing women in Soroti District, Uganda. After conducting over 300 interviews with people who lost a loved one to childbearing, we spent 2022 setting up a series of conferences to report our findings to the people in the villages. This year we began. We had an amazing reception and delivered our message to well over 3,000 people.

We focused on networking, as we learned that in an emergency, people often found themselves alone and isolated. We also discussed postpartum hemorrhage - the risks and how it can be treated. The conferences are interactive, and the local attendees are enthusiastic participants.

Our plan for 2024 is to proceed with a new series of Village Women Conferences focusing on direct birthing emergencies. Accompanying this topic we will have practical sessions that address the problem of transport and the unique challenges of each location, be it lack of a road or a river crossing.

We thank all of you for your support, especially International Midwife Assistance, Jennifer Braun, and the Bruce and Shirley Sutherland Estate represented by my nieces and nephews, Lori O'Brien, Joan Burke, Bill Sutherland and Bob Sutherland. May you all be blessed for the work you are supporting.



In Memoriam

Most any successful not-for-profit has at least one "angel" donor. Our bright angel was **Dale Halton**, who passed away on March 21, 2023. She was a remarkable person, not easy to capture in a paragraph. She was a consummate philanthropist. She was a shrewd businesswoman before it was considered acceptable for a woman to be in business. She was devoted to helping mothers and babies and was a huge support to IMA. There was very little she valued more than education.

She was commemorated in a number of articles from a variety of news outlets. Click the links to view >

Barksdale "Dale" Fowler
Halton Obituary
kennethpoeservices.com

Dale F. Halton:
"Her Legacy Will Last Forever"
charlotte49ers.com

Pillars of NC:
Dale Halton, the Charlotte
trailblazer put the fizz back in
her family business
businessnc.com



Thank You!

Every year we are blessed with so many generous donors, and we thank each and every one of you. **You** make this work possible. Every student you read about in this newsletter, you've helped make the dream possible. There are a few folks we'd like to thank here for their extra support.

The **construction donors** have been amazingly flexible and generous in pivoting to support the Education Fund. Their willingness to commit to this special capital investment is admirable. The appreciation the former TSM employees feel for their new opportunity is boundless.



Carmela Weber, a founding director of IMA, has donated countless hours this year. She provided her expertise performing internal audit due diligence work in Soroti. Her work brought to light crucial information for IMA, and she became a mentor to accounting staff. She has been so generous with her time. It's not an understatement to say that it's very unlikely that there would be an IMA without Carmela, and we are deeply grateful.

The **Longmont Rotary Club** Satellite chapter deserves a big thank you for their help with this mailing.

Elke Adler has provided top-shelf accounting for IMA for so long. But more than that, she provides a lot of support for Jennifer and the board. We are very, very thankful for Elke.

Vehicle Donation

Do you have a car, truck, trailer, boat, RV, or motorcycle, working or not, that you might choose to donate rather than sell, or deal with having towed away? Do you know someone who might?



Support IMA when you donate it! Visit midwifeassist.org and click the donation icon up top or simply call (855) 500-7433

Donate Appreciated Stock

We are now able to receive your gift of appreciated stock.

Please contact Jennifer at (303) 588-1663 or jbmidwife@midwifeassist.org



Donate Online

This year, Community First Foundation and FirstBank will present Colorado Gives Day on **Tuesday, December 5**. Every donation given to IMA on CO Gives Day is increased by a portion of a one-million-dollar incentive fund.

Busy on the 5th? You can schedule your Colorado Gives Day donation ahead of time. **Click here to donate at coloradogives.org**