

Partnering to Develop Uganda's CHEW Program

The Community Health Extension Worker (CHEW) Program is an exciting government-led initiative to strengthen the community health system and improve health outcomes in Uganda. Since 2017, as part of its support towards community health work in Uganda, Living Goods, among other partners, has provided technical and financial support towards growth of the initiative.

Background

In 2015, based on the findings of the National Village Health Team (VHT) Assessment, the Government of Uganda conceived the CHEW program as part of overhauling the VHT program. During this time, the Ministry of Health (MoH) began to identify other countries with strong community health worker (CHW) programs towards learning best practices for adoption in Uganda. Senior officials from the ministry conducted a benchmarking visit to Ethiopia where the idea for CHEWs began to take form.

Uganda's CHEW program is closely modeled after Ethiopia's Health Extension Program. It is customized to fit the Ugandan context as well as incorporate best practices from other countries including Kenya, Mali, and Bangladesh. In Ethiopia, government-employed Health Extension Workers (HEWs) stationed at health centers carry out frequent visits to local communities as part of their activities to oversee Village Health Armies (Community Health Volunteers).

Living Goods support

Since 2007, Living Goods in Uganda has been gaining experience at the community level by supporting Community Health Workers (CHWs) in 20 districts in the country. Living Goods has collected lessons and best practices in supervision, performance management, motivation, and retention of CHWs as well as on improving real-time data collection, management and quality. By documenting these efforts, Living Goods has helped to inform district and national policy, strategy, and programming development and implementation towards a more robust community health system.

In 2017, at the Ministry's request, Living Goods joined the Uganda country delegation at the Institutionalizing Community Health Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. During this time, the delegation took a leadership role in institutionalizing the National Coordination Committee for CHEWs (NCCC) - the official steering committee for planning, implementing, and oversight of the CHEW program.

As a key member of the NCCC, Living Goods continues to be a key partner to the Government in moving forward the CHEW program. Technical assistance to key programmatic activities includes support towards developing:

- ⊕ the National CHEW Policy and National CHEW Strategy
- ⊕ CHEW training materials
- ⊕ CHEW supervision guidelines

Living Goods has also been instrumental in training elements of the program, most notably in training site assessment and recommendation and training of master trainers and supervisors.

Most recently, as part of ongoing support towards the program, Living Goods procured critical office equipment for the MOH CHEW team and also provided technical as well as financial support to MoH in undertaking a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for the CHEW program. The RIA is a costly and time-consuming, albeit mandatory, activity for any policy, bill, or legislation to be passed by Cabinet. MoH led the field work, research, and development of the RIA, while Living Goods provided critical technical assistance and financial support to ensure completion and submission to Cabinet.

Continued commitment

As a key MoH partner, and as part of supporting effective community health services in Uganda, Living Goods remains committed to supporting the Ministry in translating the National CHEW Policy into action. Living Goods has committed to supporting key training and implementation activities, including a supervision and performance management framework for CHEWs and VHTs.

On its part, MoH continues to regard Living Goods as a critical player with more than a decade's experience in applying best practices and lessons to support CHW programs in Uganda and the innovative use of digital health technology as a unique selling proposition. Living Goods continues to gain evidence

in real-time supervision, performance, and motivation best practices in implementing CHW programs for improved health outcomes. Living Goods will continue to apply and grow evidence and experience to inform the CHEW program once it is launched.

About Living Goods

Living Goods is a non-profit organization that seeks to drive lasting impact in community health through innovative approaches delivered in partnership with government. By leveraging cutting-edge technology and innovative approaches to transform the delivery of community health, Living Goods works to save and improve lives, particularly for mothers and for children under the age of five years. We partner with governments at different levels to transform access to essential healthcare by supporting the delivery of effective community health programs. Our approaches leverage the power of mHealth technology, including data-driven performance management, and motivated and compensated community health workers, to bridge critical healthcare gaps around some of the most easily treatable yet potentially deadly health issues for mothers and children including malaria, diarrhea, pneumonia, pregnancy and new-born care, family planning, undernutrition and immunization counseling. Since 2007, more than 8,700 Living Goods-supported community health workers in our counties of operation have reached nearly 7 million people with life-saving healthcare.

Contact Information

Dr. Diana Nambatya Nsubuga, PhD
Deputy Country Director – Community Health Partnerships

Living Goods, Uganda

Plot 8, Spring Road, Bugolobi, Kampala

Email: dnsbuga@livinggoods.org

AUTHOR:

Amanda Ottosson

Senior Community Health Technical Advisor

Living Goods, Uganda.

December 2018



www.livinggoods.org



info@livinggoods.org



[@livinggoods.org](https://www.facebook.com/livinggoods.org)



[@living_goods](https://twitter.com/living_goods)