



Soft Power Health

ALLAN STONE COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC



Prior to the pandemic lockdown the malaria team made 57 mosquito net use follow up's during Q1 2020.

Coronavirus Impact in Uganda and Soft Power Health

The Covid-19 pandemic has created unique challenges for Soft Power Health but also provided many opportunities for positive change.

Within a few days we had to become experts on coronavirus, acquire ample PPE and develop safe protocols for our staff and patients. Misinformation about the virus spread like wildfire causing enormous fear throughout the local communities. With a full lockdown in place for 10 weeks, a curfew and only foot traffic permitted, we had to plan transportation for staff and patients as well drug and lab re-orders in order to keep the clinic open.

With great teamwork, we were able to do it! The clinic ran a six-day-a-week schedule and received special driving permission for the SPH vehicle. By year end, over 25,000 patients will have been seen at the Allan Stone Community Health Clinic and another 1,000 referred for surgery and tertiary care. Additionally, over 10,000 people will receive education and preventative care through our community based health education outreach programs.

A strictly enforced lockdown meant that the majority of Ugandans who rely on a daily wage could not buy food for their families. Hunger and starvation quickly became major unanticipated consequences. Malaria and malnutrition diagnosis climbed as patients arrived at the clinic by foot to be treated. If left untreated, Falciparum malaria is fatal, so some patients presented as critically ill. After a dip in patient numbers, the clinic is now averaging 100 patients per day.

Lockdown's Fallout

Besides treating increased rates of malnutrition and malaria, SPH provided emergency food relief for needy families all of whom rely on daily wage jobs and home gardens to survive. Once movement restrictions lifted, people went to work in their gardens and food security improved – although the situation remains tenuous.



Malaria team head Sarah visits a community patient, Namulinda's garden.

Luckily during this time SPH kept our entire staff fully employed. Since each staff member is frequently the primary family bread winner, being able to extend care to whole families during such extreme times as the pandemic has made the difference between survival and destitution for many.

Family Planning During a Pandemic

For communities wanting family planning – outreach and clinic administration continued and we met new demand by adding Bubugo Bulongo village. Though gatherings of six or more were banned during lockdown, the 3 family planning outreach teams were allowed to continue community work. This is critical as five times more family planning occurs in outreaches than at the clinic. In 2020 SPH provided longterm family planning for more than 4,000 women. Thank you to all our dedicated teams!



Family Planning Outreach done by nurses Annet and Esther during the pandemic.

Gould Family Foundation and Segal Family Foundation

We want to extend a big thank you to Gould Family Foundation (GFF) for providing regular and much needed PPE during the pandemic. This is HUGE as there are ongoing shortages throughout Uganda! Thank you GFF!

The Segal Family Foundation (SFF) has provided longterm and generous support to SPH. During the pandemic SFF's grant allowed us to focus on getting all our work done. Thank you SFF for your generous and committed partnership. We couldn't do our work without you!

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In January, Dr. Laura MacLssac, OB/GYN professor from Mt. Sinai in NYC, returned to Uganda with her partner and longtime SPH supporter Price Lowenstein. What a treat for us! Dr. Laura consulted on patients at the clinic, visited the new surgery center and with Price, attended a family planning outreach in Kivubuka. Nurses Esther Jane, Jane, and Sarah soaked up Dr. Laura’s insights and shared their challenges in the field. Finally, Dr. Laura’s CME on pelvic bleeding (an extremely common issue in women’s health) captivated everyone’s attention and inspired many thoughtful questions. Thank you Price and Dr. Laura, please come back again soon!



Dr. Laura discusses family planning methods with nurses Jane and Esther Jane at outreach.



Dr. Laura and Price visit the clinic in February 2020.

Mosquito Nets Arrive Thank you Hillsdale Fund Grant



Julius Cesear holds up a newly arrived net.



Net follow up home visit reveals proper net use.

The demand for mosquito nets has paralleled the rise in malaria rates over the last few years. With this ever increasing demand, SPH sold the final net from its last procurement in early 2020. With a generous grant from the Hillsdale Fund, we were able to purchase a new container of 14,000 mosquito nets. Since the July arrival, the nets have been selling like hot cakes with more than 2,500 new mosquito nets sold - for a total of almost 4,000 nets sold in 2020.

Thank you Hillsdale Fund!

Hypertension: The Silent Epidemic

The most commonly treated disease has changed dramatically since SPH began working in Uganda. By a huge margin, hypertension (HTN), commonly known as high blood pressure, is now the most treated condition. In 2020, HTN accounted for 20% of all diseases diagnosed for a total of 5,000 cases. Originally, malaria was the number one treated disease, but has been firmly replaced by HTN. Making up 40% of our annual drug budget, anti-hypertensives are the most expensive medications SPH purchases. Most Ugandans we treat are not overweight, eat a healthy diet and get ample daily exercise, so what is the cause of so much high blood pressure? Though we don't have answers, how to tackle this enormous problem with realistic and sustainable options for patients and SPH is challenging.



A hypertensive stroke patient does rehabilitation exercises with Soft Power Health physiotherapists at her home in 2019.

The American Heart Association recommends isometric handgrip exercise as one mechanism to reduce HTN by up to 30%. Working with Dr. Philip Levy, Dr. Cheri McGowan, and Dr. Kate Zinser, SPH is planning to roll out an isometric handgrip exercise acceptability study to ascertain if this method can help reduce the HTN rate. Isometric handgrip exercises would significantly reduce treatment costs (stress balls are far less expensive than anti-hypertensive medication) and give people easy at home tools to manage their own health.



Rheumatic Heart Disease

Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) is a common health problem in Uganda affecting mostly young people. The only cure for RHD is heart valve replacement surgery which only recently became available in Uganda. Soft Power Health has medically managed numerous RHD patients over the years, who all met sad early endings. Not surprisingly the demand for this surgery is great, but cost and limited number of surgeries performed mean that few of the needy have access. Each surgery runs close to \$6,500 USD – a king's ransom for 99% of Ugandans.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Widgeon Point Foundation and the wonderful collaborative efforts of Dr. Craig Sable, Dr. Heather and Matt Demirci and our own Dr. Stella, 21-year-old Brenda, a rheumatic heart disease patient, will be in line for surgery soon. We are grateful to everyone who helped create this life saving opportunity for Brenda! Additionally, Dr. Stella has agreed to help design a community based education and prevention program for rheumatic heart disease so in the future we may see fewer RHD patients.

Patient Spotlight: Katherine

In July, Joseph, our head driver and patient liaison, discovered a mother and four children in desperate circumstances. This family of Katherine, a single mother, and her children live in a rural village near the Nile. During lockdown, Katherine was unable to get food or medical help for her children or herself. Complicating matters, Katherine has an underlying cardiac condition, her husband had abandoned the family and her extended family was in dire straits as well.

Luckily, Joseph brought her and her four severely malnourished children to the clinic for treatment. Katherine's situation was emblematic of what has happened to many impoverished Ugandans during the lockdown. The entire family received treatment for malnutrition and malaria and were educated about the correct use of mosquito nets as well as what constitutes a nutritious meal. Katherine and her children continue to have regular follow-up care ensuring their health continues to improve!



Community patient Katherine with her newborn prior to treatment.



Katherine with her 4 children after regular follow up.

Staff Spotlight: Dr. Henry

Dr. Isabirye Henry is our medical officer on duty five days a week at the clinic. Dr. Henry, always wanting to do the best for his patients, exemplifies hard work, dedication and excellent ethics. His natural curiosity inspires him to constantly update his knowledge. Before the lockdown was established, Dr. Henry diligently educated and reassured the staff about Covid-19 and has followed up carefully on the many complicated patients that are seen. We thank Dr. Henry for his service and we know his patients thank him very much too!



Dr. Henry consulting on a patient prior to lockdown.

Angel Donor Agnes Gund

During this most unusual year, Soft Power Health had the extraordinary good fortune to receive a very generous donation from Agnes Gund. Her donation will go very far in helping SPH sustain its long term operations. It is hard to describe Aggie's genuine desire to help make the world a more equitable and just place, but it is her life's work and she is very dedicated to this mission. We have been extremely fortunate to continue our work during the pandemic when many very worthy organizations have been forced to close their doors. Without the support of incredible donors like Agnes Gund we would not be able to continue.

Thank you, Aggie, for being our Angel!



New Eco-Friendly Stove

An area of little known public health concern in Uganda is in-home cooking over charcoal burning stoves. Lung disease caused by lifelong cooking over such stoves is a major health problem for Ugandan women, as they are frequently the family cooks. In January 2020, Emily Jackson, a three-time World Champion in Freestyle Kayaking, returned to volunteer with SPH and help solve our own stove problem. Working with a Ugandan clean burning stove manufacturer, within a few days, Emily had sorted out our set-up and even raised the money to get our new stove purchased and installed! Thank you, Emily! SPH's cooks love the new stove and we love Emily for helping us solve this problem!



Soft Power Health cook, Irene, enjoys using the new clean-burning stove.

Green Grants Fund Donation

With the help of International Rivers, a river conservation and humanitarian advocacy organization, SPH was able to access a grant to help people who live in the former Kalagala Offset Area, now Special Conservation Area (SCA) to access food and medical assistance. This grant came at the most opportune time. During the initial 10 week lockdown; hunger, malaria and a sequelae of untreated diseases took hold throughout these communities. Seeing the problem firsthand, SPH quietly provided emergency food and medical aid to patients living in the SCA. With the wonderful help of Green Grants and International Rivers we could help many who had no hope.

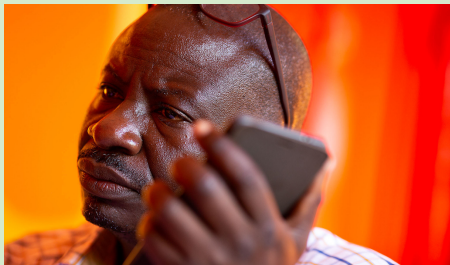
Fast Facts

We provided 900 courses of prescriptive high energy milk to 667 severely malnourished patients and 250 families benefitted from the malnutrition education outreach program in 2020!



Prescriptive HEM being made.

Head driver and patient liaison, Joseph, transported and coordinated surgery for 46 patients during the pandemic period. With restrictions on transport and few surgeries performed, this was a remarkable feat! Thank you, Joseph for your incredible work!



Head driver Joseph plans logistics.

In 2020 Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, designated the Kalagala Offset Area as the Special Conservation Area, theoretically protecting this fragile Nile river corridor from further destruction forever. Promised support by the World Bank for the SCA with compensation for the displaced, vulnerable communities has not been delivered.



Isimba dam after impoundment.

SPH outreach programs for malaria, family planning, malnutrition, organic gardening, domestic violence, and emergency food aid reached another 10,000 people with health education, prevention and treatment this year!



Malaria education session pre-covid.

Thanks to Vitamin Angels, we provided essential vitamin A supplementation, prenatal vitamins and deworming treatment to over 10,000 mothers and children.



Deworming before lockdown.

Our dentist, Dr. Paul, treated over 250 patients in 2020. Extractions, periodontal disease and filling cavities are major dental problems in Uganda where most don't own a toothbrush.



Dr. Paul teaches brushing.

Vaccinations could not occur during Covid lockdown due to enormous supply chain interruption. However, SPH administered 300 rounds of vaccines during the first quarter.



Immunization before lockdown!

Following an increase in domestic abuse during lockdown, Florence, SPH's domestic violence counselor, worked with 600 people, providing very important services!



Florence guides a client pre-pandemic.

Our physiotherapists Rachel, Flavia and Stephen Kato treated over 2,500 patients in 2020.



Physiotherapist Rachel at a home visit, pre-covid.



SPH's Loy instructs a patient on proper mask use at the clinic.

What Your Donations Pay For

- \$5 = medicines for one patient's visit to the clinic.**
- \$7 = one mosquito net covering 3 children, preventing life threatening malaria for up to 5 years.**
- \$11 = one patient's visit to the clinic including doctor consultation, lab work and all medication.**
- \$15 = the cost of one month's supply of anti-hypertensive medicines for one patient.**
- \$20 = 1 month's supply of prescriptive HEM for one patient.**
- \$55 = 1 domestic violence counselor's salary for one month.**
- \$110 = 1 month's transport of a community patient family to and from the clinic.**
- \$160 = 1 laboratory assistant's salary for one month.**
- \$200 = 1 physical therapist's salary for one month.**
- \$260 = 1 nurse's salary for 1 month.**
- \$300 = the salary of a nurse practitioner for one month.**
- \$400 = the salary of our ultrasonographer for one month.**
- \$600 = corrective surgery for one patient with chronic osteomyelitis.**
- \$800 = the salary of a medical doctor for one month.**
- \$1,200 = the head malaria outreach educator's salary for one year.**
- \$3,300 = a life changing hip replacement surgery for one patient.**
- \$6,500 = life saving valve replacement surgery for a patient with rheumatic heart disease.**
- \$10,000 = the DIG Organic garden program for one year. Includes maintenance of 30 outreach gardens, the community demonstration/food security garden plus SPH's home garden which supplies lunchtime meals for our staff six days per week.**
- \$40,000 = a newer model car/ambulance. Essential transportation for outreach staff and patients.**
- \$45,000 = one year supply of anti-hypertensive medicine to treat 6,600 high blood pressure cases.**

*We welcome donations of any size and every contribution makes a big difference, especially during this challenging time! Thank you very much for helping to make Soft Power Health what it is today. We would not be where we are without you!
Thank You Very Much!!!*

Partner With Us! Two Ways to Give

Send check payable to:

Soft Power Health
2887 Purchase Street
Purchase, NY 10577
USA

Click the **DONATE button at: www.softpowerhealth.org**

Soft Power Health is a registered 501(c)(3) and all contributions are tax deductible. Tax ID #: 20-6195776

jessie@softpowerhealth.org
www.softpowerhealth.org