



# Impact Report 2022-2023



Registered Charity no. 1154462

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Front: a village savings and loans group in Lyama, Uganda.

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# Our aims

We work with the very poor and disadvantaged in sub-Saharan Africa to relieve poverty and reduce economic and social vulnerability of local people by

- providing resources and training programmes that have been requested by local communities, designed locally and fit into local government development plans
- enabling local people to build savings, providing some protection for their families from health, economic or weather related shocks
- empowering the poorest women by enabling them to build viable livelihoods and a source of income so they can feed and educate their children and plan for the future
- building capacity and resilience in local communities through business and health training that promotes self-sustaining development.



*‘The opposite of poverty is not wealth.  
The opposite of poverty is enough’  
Dr Wess Stafford, Compassion International*




# New beginnings and farewells

2022 was a time of change for us here, as our focus moved from our longstanding and successful project in Kenya to its poorer neighbour, Uganda.

In Kenya, during 2021-22, a savings cooperative managed by our project staff was set up within our partner NGO, offering savings accounts and larger loans. The clients' savings and the loan book was transferred to this cooperative which now provides savings accounts and loans to the project's clients. The project has become self-sustaining and independent of Just Small Change, and is now being managed by our local partner charity in Kisumu, who continue to employ the project's staff. We are delighted that this work is continuing to help improve incomes and livelihoods for the very poor in East Kisumu.

Meanwhile, in July 2022, we started work in Eastern Uganda, in the rural district of Budaka

A group of smiling women and children in a rural setting, likely in Eastern Uganda. The women are dressed in colorful traditional and modern clothing. One woman in the foreground is holding a baby. The background shows a simple, open landscape with some trees.

Uganda is a landlocked and fertile country, with a moderate climate which allows two growing seasons per year. However, economic progress has been held back by long periods of internal conflict and of political and economic upheaval. In recent years, ongoing conflicts on its borders, climate change and the pandemic have all posed severe challenges, and almost half the population live below the UN poverty line of \$2.15, with many more in danger of falling into this group. Although the economy is now growing, the population is too, with 48% of Ugandans aged under 15 and 68% under 25. Around 75% of the population live in rural areas and rely on subsistence farming for their livelihood. Frequently lacking safe water and sanitation facilities, households suffer regularly with common illnesses such as malaria, diarrhoea, TB and fevers, as well as with the ongoing impact of HIV/AIDS and occasional outbreaks of cholera.



# Welcome to Budaka District!

Budaka district is in Eastern Uganda, close to the city of Mbale. A rural area, it is home to around 220,000 people, of whom almost half live in poverty (UN measure of less than \$2.15 per day). The population is also growing fast, with almost 40% under the age of nine, and 65% under the age of 20.

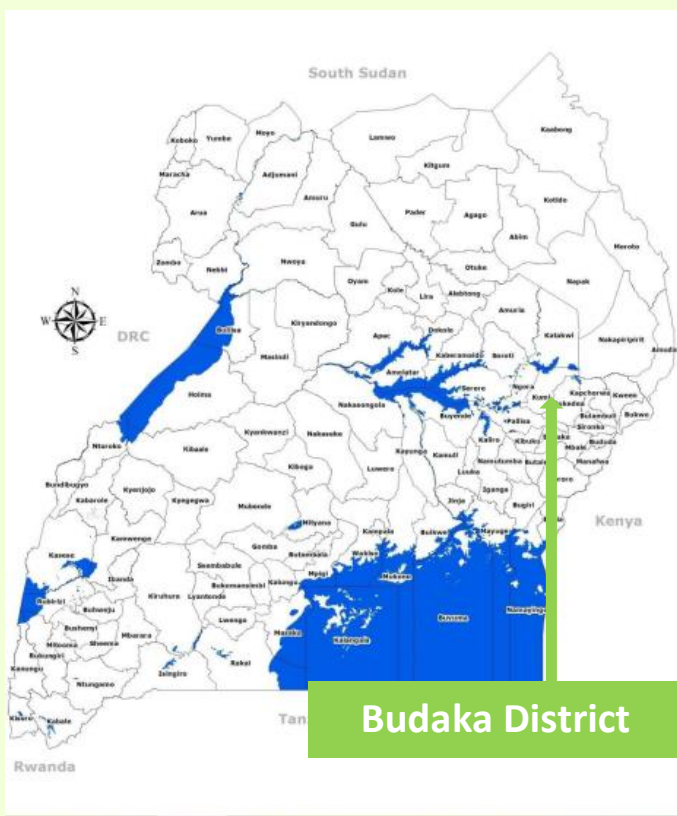
Although originally a fertile area, there are now serious signs of environmental stress in the district, resulting in poor crop yields and soil degradation in the arable fields. Over 70 percent of the wetland forests have been converted into

paddy rice cultivation. Indiscriminate cutting of teak trees has greatly reduced tree cover and now fruit trees like mangoes and jackfruit are being cut down for wood. All this hugely affects the lives of poor communities. The distances walked by women and girls to fetch fuel wood are increasing, crop yields are falling, and with a rapidly expanding population, food insecurity is widespread.

Other challenges in this area include lack of safe water and of latrines. Poor housing is also a problem, with 99% of people 'not in decent homes' according to the most recent census, and around

one in five in a temporary dwelling.

Based in Budaka District, our three new projects link together to tackle poverty, malnutrition and illness. Two focus on improving the livelihoods and diets of the poorest in village communities by establishing village savings and loans groups alongside the introduction of livestock improvement projects. The third initiative will train village volunteer health workers, who will advise their communities on better health and hygiene practices as well as the prevention and treatment of common ailments.



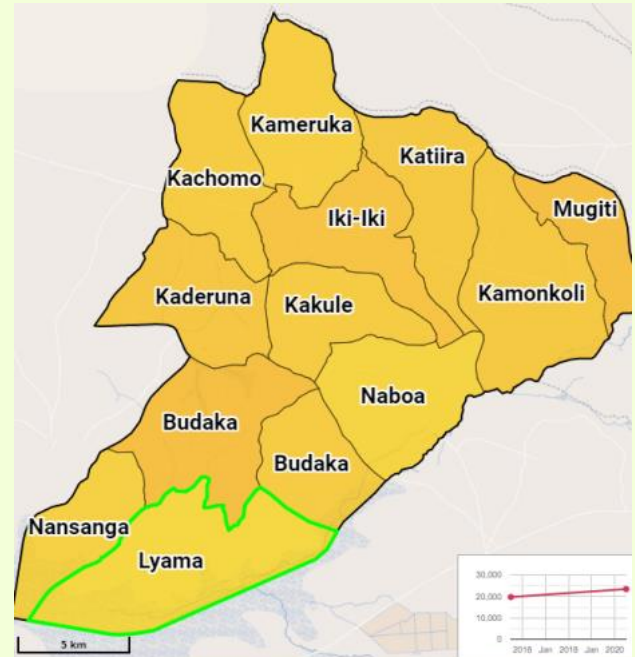
*'Those in the informal economy have been worst hit by lockdowns and curfews' World Bank 2021*

# Tackling poverty in three ways

Within Budaka district, our work at present is focused in four sub-counties: Kameruka, Katiira, Mugiti and Lyama.

Three programmes are now underway in these areas:

- A goat rearing project has been set up in each sub-county, each underpinned by a village savings and loan association (VSLA) for the members of the goat rearing project.
- Four further VSLA have been established in villages in Lyama sub county
- Village Health Teams have been set up in Lyama sub county as part of a new seven year programme to improve local health and nutrition outcomes in the area. This is delivered in coordination with the Ugandan Ministry of Health.



You can read more about each of these programmes on the following pages. This work supports the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



# Meet the people of Budaka



**42% of participants are single heads of household, struggling alone to provide for their many dependents. The remainder are in very low income households.**

**75% of Savings Group members and all the beneficiaries of the goat programmes are women**

**Houses are made of brick or mud, with a thatched or sheet metal roof.**

**20% of families have no access to safe water**

**54% have no access to a latrine**

**Over half of households live in a single room, while a further 35% have 2 rooms.**

**Average household size is 10, but can be as high as 27. In a typical household there will be three under 5's and four older children at school. Over a third of households have more than 10 members, and 15% of households include orphans, who may be grandchildren or children of relatives or of neighbours.**

**Over half of participants find every day is a struggle to provide for their family's needs, with a further third struggling most days to do this.**

**Just over half of all households only eat once a day, with a further one in six frequently having 'hungry' days when they don't eat at all**



# Village savings & loans associations

This is a simple but powerful programme which increases household income and resilience. It helps members to work together, combining their small savings to make a viable amount for one member to borrow, start a micro business and then repay with interest. This larger sum is then loaned out to another member and so on. Micro businesses such as frying chips by the roadside or hawking second hand clothes are very sought after, as most households survive on subsistence farming and very little else.

Everyone benefits from earning interest on their savings, even if they don't borrow, so this encourages the savings pot to grow. Associations are self-selecting and choose their own officers; members trust and support each other, vetting and advising on each other's business ideas. Cash is kept in a strong-box with three key holders, chosen by the group.



By the end of March 2023, eight associations had been set up, with 240 members in total. Four of these are for the beneficiaries of the four goat rearing groups, to help them support each other and make the most of any extra income earned through their goats.

All members of new associations receive training, with additional training given to the group's officers.

Ongoing supervision and support will be provided for two years from each association's start.

The first VSLA to be set up, in October 2022, had saved a total of £84 within the first six weeks, and was ready to lend out to its first borrowers. The whole group was hugely enthusiastic about the opportunities ahead!

**'Young men and old women are now part of it...we do business and we will develop our lives. We never knew about saving, but now we do. We ask you to go on bringing this project to more people here' Chairperson, VSLA in Lyama**



# Goat rearing to improve diet and livelihoods

Surviving largely through subsistence farming, parents and grandparents struggle to feed their families. The main crops grown are maize, beans and millet, but yields are low. Diets lack protein and variety. Data gathered from participants in our programmes show that no households eat meat, fish or dairy; 71% eat only cassava and vegetables, and 21% regularly only eat cassava. The result is serious malnutrition, particularly among the under 5s, programmes, aimed at the poorest families, tackle these issues.

Why goats? They are relatively easy to raise and can thrive even during food and water shortages. They breed twice a year, have a short pregnancy of only five months and often produce twins.

Goat's milk provides protein and essential nutrients. It is also easy to digest, making it particularly good for children.

However, local goat breeds produce very little milk, so are not regarded as dairy animals. Cross breeding with a high quality dairy goat breed changes this, and brings about a big improvement in families diets, welfare and income.



The programme trains the poorest women in village communities in the care and successful breeding of goats. Each group has 30 beneficiaries who each receive a nanny goat of the local breed.

The programme also provides each village with two buck goats from a larger and stronger dairy

breed (Toggenburg) for cross breeding.





These must be securely housed and fed, as they are not so well adapted to the local environment, so the project also provides an buck shed, built on stilts for safety, and a trained local buck keeper whose job it is to care for the bucks and carefully manage the breeding programme, as well as to support the beneficiaries in their care of their goats. This produces goats that are faster

growing and produce more milk and meat than the local goats but which, as they are crossbred, are still easy to raise in the local environment.

Beneficiaries can earn income from small-scale goat-rearing, while at the same time improving their children's diets. One final benefit is that the goats provide useful manure for each household's vegetable gardens, again improving families' diets.

Each beneficiary must return her first born female cross bred kid to the buck



keeper. This kid will then be gifted to a new beneficiary, enabling the project to grow. The Toggenburg bucks are also rotated between villages as required, to prevent inbreeding.

By the end of March 2023, four groups, each with 30 beneficiaries, had been set up in Lyama, Mugiti, Katira and Kameruka. The first group, set up in October 2022, has already produced five kids, 3 females and 2 males, which was a great start!

*Raising levels of knowledge and skill is key to increasing the productivity and earnings of poor women (World Bank 2016)*

# Village health teams

Improvements in health, health awareness and healthcare make a huge contribution to improving families' wellbeing and living standards. In Uganda, the most common illnesses are communicable diseases such as malaria, TB, HIV/AIDS, respiratory diseases and diarrhoea. Healthcare provision is very sparse, especially in rural communities, where there is often little understanding of basic hygiene and of how to avoid transmission of disease. The Village Health Team programme tackles these issues head on.

Health care provision in Uganda relies on Village Health Teams to provide a crucial link between communities/households and the local Health Centres in each sub- county. Village Health Team members are volunteers who complete a one year Government healthcare training programme, delivered by trained health ministry staff. These volunteers then work within their villages, teaching their neighbours about hygiene and basic health maintenance, pre and post-natal care, care of infants, assisting with Government health programmes in the community, and making referrals to Health Centres. They are supervised by the local Health Centres.

When we were introduced to the Lyama area, there were no active VHTs operating there and only one understaffed local Health Centre providing basic health and maternity services to the local population of 24,000. When we were asked if we could support VHT training, we were keen to begin this new venture.

This programme involves, in the first year, training 66 village health team members from the four parishes of the Lyama area and deploying them within their communities. The training, which involves four weeks' full time training over the course of a year, started in November 2022. By end March 2023, the initial training and induction process had been completed for 17 volunteers, and they are now carrying out their first household visits in their villages, initially under the supervision of trained Health Centre staff.

Each newly trained VHT received a graduation package including a VHT record book, an umbrella, gumboots, heavy-duty gloves, a T-shirt, an identification card and a qualification certificate. During 2023, 49 more VHTs will be trained.



**In future years, ongoing training of the 66 VHT members will continue; some will be selected for further training at a higher level, and additional VHTs trained to take their place.**



**Here are the new volunteers on their induction course, November 2022.**



**Graduation Day, March 2023, for 17 new Village Health Team volunteers.**

# Improving sanitation

Three quarters of participants in our projects do not have access even to a communal pit latrine anywhere near their homes. Because all our programmes involve gathering groups together for training or for community meetings, we have also provided four community pit latrines, one in each sub county in which we work. These have been very well received by our participants and also by the local communities they serve. They have all been built in line with local government health and sanitation requirements, and will serve the local people for many years to come.



**Mugiti**



**Katira**



**Kameruka**



**Lyama**

## Future plans for 2023-24

- During the coming year, four further goat programmes will be set up. Each will support 30 of the poorest women in the local community where it is established.
- Four Village Savings and Loans Association will be set up, one alongside each new goat programme. These will be supported and supervised for two years. They will enable the participants to make the most of any income they earn from their goat breeding, and will also encourage mutual support within the group and the empowerment of its members.
- Four additional Village Savings and Loan Associations, each of about 30 members will be set up in other areas, and each of these will also be supported and supervised for two years.
- 49 additional Village Health Team volunteers will be trained and deployed.





# Just Small Change

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38, Orchard Way, Stratford upon Avon CV37 9QE

**Can you help? With your support, we can do more.**

**We have no costs in the UK.**

**Your full donation, plus any gift aid, will be spent on one of our programmes. Whatever you can spare will make a difference to the lives of the very poor.**

**£60 will provide a nanny goat to a very poor family**

**£25 will provide a reference book and bag for a Village Health Team volunteer**

**£11 will provide a goat keeper or VHT volunteer with gumboots and a t-shirt**

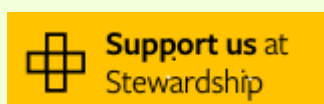
**£4.50 will provide an umbrella for a VHT volunteer**

**£2.10 will provide a VHT volunteer with a pair of heavy duty gloves**

**Every pound helps....it's Just Small Change!**

**You can write to us at the address above, or give online :**

**We have accounts with both CAF  
(Charities Aid Foundation) and  
Stewardship.org. It's possible to  
donate online through either of these  
organisations, via the links on our  
website.**



**Online banking with HSBC:**

**Account name: Just Small Change**

**Account no. 32134314**

**Sort Code 40-43-19**

**HSBC Bank, Chapel St,  
Stratford upon Avon.**

**If you wish to gift aid your donation,  
please email us at the address above  
so we can send you a gift aid form.**

**Thank you for your support!**

## OUTPUTS APRIL 2022 TO MARCH 2023

**What has been achieved with your donations in the period:**

- **New partnership created with NGO in Eastern Uganda**
- **Consultation with officials of Budaka District and with local councils to identify appropriate areas and interventions**
- **Four goat rearing and livestock improvement projects set up, with 120 beneficiaries in total**
- **8 exotic bucks and 120 local nanny goats purchased and distributed**
- **4 goat keepers recruited and trained**
- **120 beneficiaries trained and supported in goat rearing and breeding**
- **These 120 beneficiaries also trained in how to run a VSLA, and 4 all-female VSLA set up to underpin the goat rearing projects**
- **4 further mixed gender VSLA established in other areas, involving a further 120 members of local communities**
- **All 8 VSLA groups received further training in financial awareness**
- **Officers of all 8 VSLA groups received training in book-keeping and leadership skills**
- **17 volunteer Village Health Team members have completed initial training and started work in their communities, advising on basic health care and hygiene**



### METHODOLOGY

**Baseline data is collected from each client when they join. Individual reviews take place after 12 months. This report is based on data available up to end March 2023.**