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Dear Friends,

As I write this to you, times are tough. Many are feeling squeezed by inflation, not just in our country, but in many countries all over the world. Uganda has seen significant inflation, but right now the big issue is the Ebola virus.

After COVID kept me from visiting the Teso Safe Motherhood clinic at all in 2020, I was finally able to go back in September of 2021. I was there again this spring, and things felt as though they really were returning to normal. But on October 11, the day I was scheduled to make my next visit, the Ebola risk had become too significant for me to make the journey.

The arrangements for these trips are complicated, and so in hopes of the crisis beginning to resolve, I've begun making plans for a trip in December. But today, in November, it doesn't look very likely that I'll be able to go. The Ebola has spread, and it's going to take some time for it to come under control. It has me very concerned about the people at the Teso Safe Motherhood. Thankfully for now, the Ebola cases are not nearby.

Of course, difficult circumstances are what brought us to Soroti. If there weren't huge problems, we wouldn't be there. But I have to say, the composure that this staff shows in the face of what sometimes feels like a never-ending litany of disaster - I am humbled. The resilience, steadfastness, resolve, good humor, dedication, determination, commitment... the list of their admirable qualities could fill the rest of this page.

There were some things I really wanted to do in person in Soroti this October. Some meetings with Engineers Without Borders (building update on p. 3), a budgetary planning meeting with the senior management team, to name a couple. But our disappointment about not being able to meet in person is completely overshadowed by the very real risk that Ebola is currently posing to Uganda. It will end though, eventually, and I am committed to staying as helpful as possible to our people there as I can from here.

So, this year, as you read about what the clinic staff has accomplished, what they've been doing, I hope I have imparted a sense of how amazing what they've accomplished is, especially under the circumstances.

Peace,
Jennifer Elizabeth Braun

IMA's Teso Safe Motherhood Project



How We Stay Connected

By Jennifer Braun

When COVID restrictions lessened in 2021 and I was finally able to travel to Soroti, I had been away for two whole years. It felt unbelievable, but that is what happened. The pandemic was tough, but it also illustrated what an outstanding job the staff is doing, particularly management. All the new protocols, all the extra steps and safety procedures were handled with grace and good humor. They are very able. They rely on our support, for sure, but also do an excellent job being autonomous.

I was there again this last March, and was on my way again in October when more unforeseen trouble emerged: the Ebola outbreak. The Ebola virus is a "hemorrhagic" virus. While it doesn't travel by air, it is extremely easy to get through direct contact with people who are infected. It has a high mortality rate, and health care workers are at increased risk due to caring for the sick. It is a huge danger.

The very real possibility that I won't be able to get back to Soroti until 2023 has inspired me to tell you about how we – the clinic staff and I – stay in touch, regardless of upcoming or canceled visits.





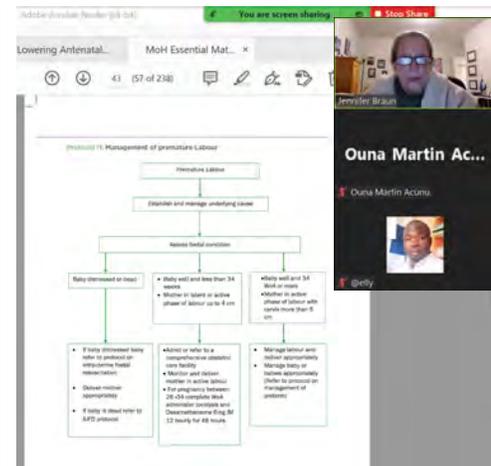
How We Stay Connected

Every day

Through the amazing WhatsApp technology, I can communicate with Teso Safe Motherhood clinic's chief administrator, Martin Oteger, and our medical director, Dr. Martin Ouna, most every day. We chat about news from the clinic, the region, and whatever details they need support with. It allows me to know what is happening in real time, and for them to have access to information they need from me, from questions about the American take on a midwifery issue, to the specific date a volunteer is due to arrive.

Every week

Every Thursday night, which is Friday morning in Soroti, I teach an hour of continuing education over Zoom. The maternity staff, a group of almost three dozen, gathers in the waiting room in the family planning department. As well as teaching, this gives me an opportunity to say hello and check in with the big group. They project the laptop screen onto a wall, I "screen share" and show the material as I teach. This year we've been focusing on the Helping Mothers Survive curriculum developed by JHPIEGO – the Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics. The curriculum echoes all the excellence of the Helping Babies Survive program from the American Academy of Pediatrics that we have been using for more than 10 years.



Every month

Martin Oteger (our chief administrator) sends me several files each month, including scans of bank statements and Excel sheets with details of every expenditure. Since the internet connection in Soroti doesn't allow him to use QuickBooks very well, I use the files to do all the entry into QuickBooks. This gives me the opportunity to go over all the financials regularly and stay completely in touch with the costs of our essential supplies.

Throughout the year

Volunteers travel to Teso Safe Motherhood on a regular basis. Marion Toepke continues working on her research project. Residents from the Ventura County Medical Center do rotations at the clinic, and we are always happy to hear from new volunteers.

We could really benefit from the help of a nurse experienced in newborn care, and especially a neonatal nurse practitioner.

And of course, I travel there a couple of times of year myself, and am still hoping to be there this December.



Thoughts on Construction

As often happens in the US, our building project is taking longer than we had hoped. We are building Teso Safe Motherhood a new, permanent home that will include an operating room – “theater” in Uganda – so that we can provide cesarean sections for mothers who need them. This year we have been finalizing architectural plans, and the permits and permissions have taken a long time. But we have received them all. The fence and guardhouse are up, and construction of buildings will commence very soon.



Martin Oteger
Chief Administrator:

"The new Teso Safe Motherhood Facility will surely mean a lot to me personally because first, a dream will come to pass. Secondly, it will enable us to serve our clients better since it will come with the additional services that are missing in our current premises, namely, an operating theater.

The Eastern Part of Uganda is one of the most affected in terms of poverty because of war and incursions by the Karamojong cattle rustlers who don't only steal cattle, they also murder people. A poor society is a sick society and having this facility constructed here means that there will be a lot of improvement in maternal and child health services. That helps the region recover. My gratitude goes to our ever giving donors."



Dr. Martin Ouna
Medical Director:

"The new facility would give real meaning to the idea of emergency obstetrics. The delay to intervene surgically will be nearly eliminated. This will save the lives of mothers and neonates who otherwise meet challenges at the referral facilities. The working environment will be spacious and motivating to staffs to offer high quality skilled care for mothers and neonates. It will also give us an increased opportunity for collaborations, training and research."



Grace Akio
Administrator:

"Building a permanent home for us will mean a lot in that the first thing to look at is a theater (operating room). Recently a mother was transferred to the hospital for surgery, and she met her death there because of negligence. We know that if the theater was in Teso Safe Motherhood, she would be taking care of her baby now. Also we have been of late receiving more new mothers from the community, and because of the overwhelming number of mothers this rented place is now too small for us. Building a permanent home will be of great help."

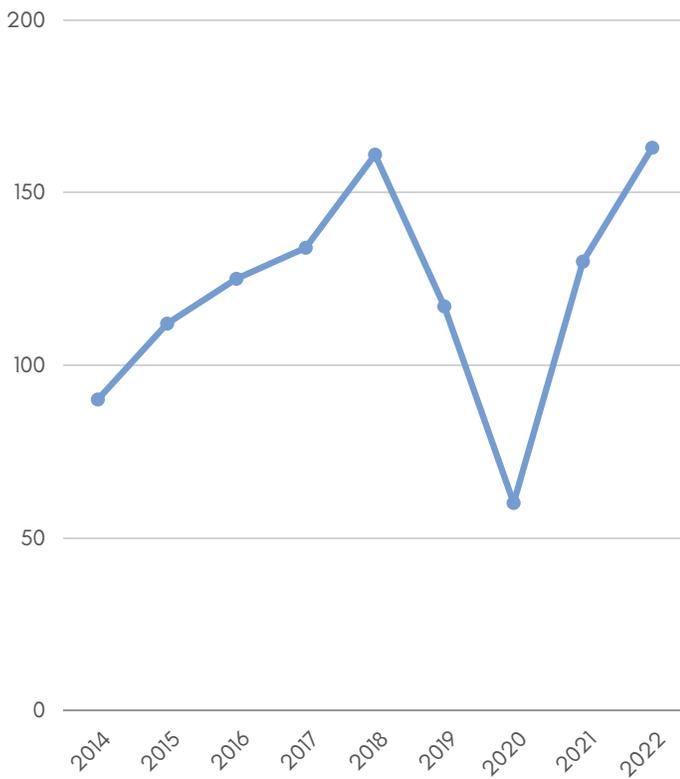


The Numbers

Coming Back After COVID

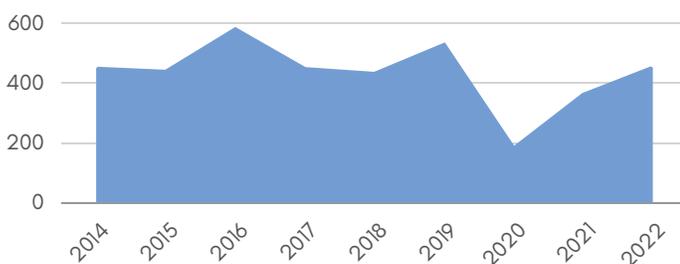
September is usually a busy month in the labor suite. It's easy to see the effect of the lockdown in 2020, and how much women wanted to return to the birth center in 2021. Numbers are clearly back to normal!

Number of babies born in September of:



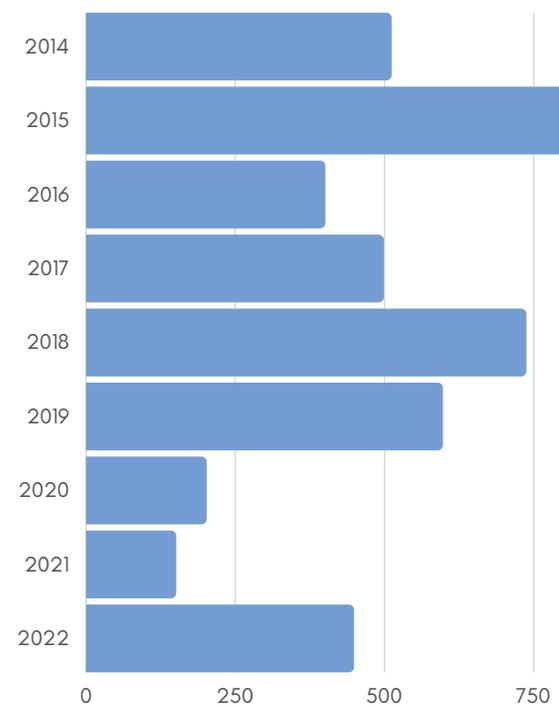
Just like everywhere, rates of childhood vaccinations fell dramatically during the pandemic.

Number of children vaccinated in June of:



Family planning is a department that really took a hit from the lockdown. So much of what we provide is taken to the rural villages by mobile outreach clinics. It is taking some time for the department to reconnect with all their patients, but things are improving.

Number of family planning patients in June of:



Thank You!

A huge thank the International Midwife Assistance board of directors. They do a wonderful job and are deeply appreciated. Thank you: **Jennifer Barr**, **Marty McCarthy**, **Liza Patrick** and **Dr. Claudia Wyrick**.

Elke Adler attends board meetings, but she isn't on the board. Elke is our accountant, but that doesn't really describe the infinite ways she makes IMA better. We treasure her.

I was very much looking forward to thanking **Carmela Weber** for making a trip to Soroti to audit the books. Alas, Ebola has delayed us. Whenever Carmela makes it to Soroti, we are already so grateful to her. She has helped IMA in so many ways. Carmela has been essential to IMA's excellence.

Dr. Lydie Dahlia Francillon of Ventura County Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program traveled to Soroti this spring to volunteer. The staff loved her and learned a lot from watching her bedside manner. More than one person told me they particularly admired her obvious love for the patients.

As always, without **Dale Halton**, we couldn't be sure that our work will continue. It's been a tough few years for most everyone, but Dale makes sure we are OK.



One More Thing By Dr. Claudia Wyrick

I was sitting in my backyard with my coffee during one of those autumn days a few weeks ago where there was still warmth in the flagstones and the afternoon full of birds. I had my notepad at my side as usual to write down the many things "to do," the next day, the next month, the next year. I'm a list maker.

I think our director, Jennifer Braun, is a list-maker as well. Like me she records the sometimes-overwhelming list of those projects that need to be done to allow our project, Teso Safe Motherhood, to deliver the exceptional care it does to women and their babies in the Soroti, Uganda region.

COVID-19 was a huge setback for the women in the region. Teso Safe Motherhood was unable to conduct outreach clinics impacting delivery of prenatal care and birth control. Schools closed. Adolescent pregnancies are up. The lockdown prevented women from traveling to the birth center, denying them the safety of skilled midwifery care.

Today, in 2022, IMA and our partners at Teso Safe Motherhood continue to plan for the future while still dealing with the ramifications of a pandemic. Inflation has also been a particularly hard punch to the well being of the women and their families in the Soroti region. TSM employees, a skilled and dedicated group, share the struggle.

The reassuring news is that we recognize the needs, and we have a list, albeit long, of the litany of projects to accomplish to continue providing excellent care to women in Uganda. Most importantly, we have a plan and a determination to do the work necessary. I am most excited about the plan for a hospital that will raise our ability to care for complicated pregnancies.

Jennifer Braun lives by Hudson Taylor's lines. It ends with "then it is done." But Jennifer knows as do those on our board and those who work for at birth center know; there is always one more thing.

And so it goes. "first it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is....."



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 6**. Every donation given to IMA on Colorado Gives Day is increased by a portion of a one-million-dollar incentive fund.

Busy on the 6th? You can schedule your Colorado Gives Day donation ahead of time. **To donate go to coloradogives.org and type in IMA.**

