



Message from Komo's Country Director



Greetings Komo friends and family.

It is such an honor to join the amazing team at Komo Learning Centres. Coming on board during the COVID-19 crisis was quite a challenging experience. While we, like everyone across the globe, have struggled with the realities of COVID, we have learnt, grown, and, I believe, come out even stronger.

We move into 2021 optimistic and flexible, with energy around the new community engagement component of the DIY clubs, a strengthened cadre of community health workers, and a new program that addresses our longtime goal of providing mental health services.

It is a joy to be here at a time of such great possibility. I look forward to leading Komo's charge to facilitate radical change in Uganda's education and health systems.

Warm Regards,
Lucy Namayanja

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Namayanja'.

2020 Highlights

Y o u t h

Do It Yourself School Clubs

- 20 schools participating
- 1,303 students engaged
- 207 teachers engaged

Do It Yourself Community Groups

- 10 student-led projects launched
- 87 students engaged
- 45 families supported with food aid

Radio Programs

- 18 radio broadcasts aired
- 9 radio-specific classes developed

Sponsorship

- 51 students supported
- \$37,000 provided in tuition and support

Community Health Workers (CHWs)

- 50 CHWs trained, supplied, and mentored
- 6,356 households registered
- 430 pregnant women supported

Outreaches

- 976 children assessed for malnutrition (41 treated)
- 1,018 cervical cancer screens (43 treated)

Government Health Centres

- 123 days of support at 4 health centers
- 15 coordination meetings held
- 11 government health workers trained

Health Center

- Launched new maternity centre (61 babies delivered)
- 12,729 client visits
- Nama Wellness promoted to Health Center Level III

H e a l t h

Do It Yourself (DIY) Clubs



Engaging Students During COVID-19

We went into 2020 with a great amount of energy, drive, and vision. We doubled our school partners to 20, hired new youth mentors and staff, and enrolled 1,303 students and 207 teachers. Then, COVID-19 took the entire world by storm. Confinement measures in Uganda were some of the strictest: shutting down all borders, prohibiting all private and public transport, and closing all schools. We considered closing shop and waiting out the crisis, but that is not in our DNA. We exist to serve young people and to create spaces in which they are active participants in their own learning. So, with help from mentors, students, staff, and teachers, we took DIY into the community. Creating DIY Community Groups, hosting DIY radio programs, and conducting a DIY food security initiative made clear to us the importance of incorporating community activities into DIY. Please [click here](#) to check out how the DIY program responded to the COVID-19 crisis.



DIY traveled across Uganda on the airwaves. The project team developed sessions specifically for radio, conducting almost 20 broadcasts.



DIY Community Groups

Because of school closures, DIY mentors took their work into the community. They trained 87 students in our curriculum and supported them in carrying out service projects in their home villages. Students started ten projects on topics such as clean water and sustainable farming. A majority of the participants were from DIY schools and 86% were young women. We plan to expand the Community Groups initiative, as we are receiving positive feedback from students, parents, and local leaders.



Food security was a huge challenge during the COVID-19 lockdown. Mentors worked with DIY students to identify and organize support for those suffering the most under confinement. In total, 45 families were provided with food packages and income-generating activity training in Mukono, Wakiso, Buikwe, and Kayunga districts. Given the COVID-19 crisis, many of the DIY Community Groups have also chosen to focus their youth-led projects on farming and food security.



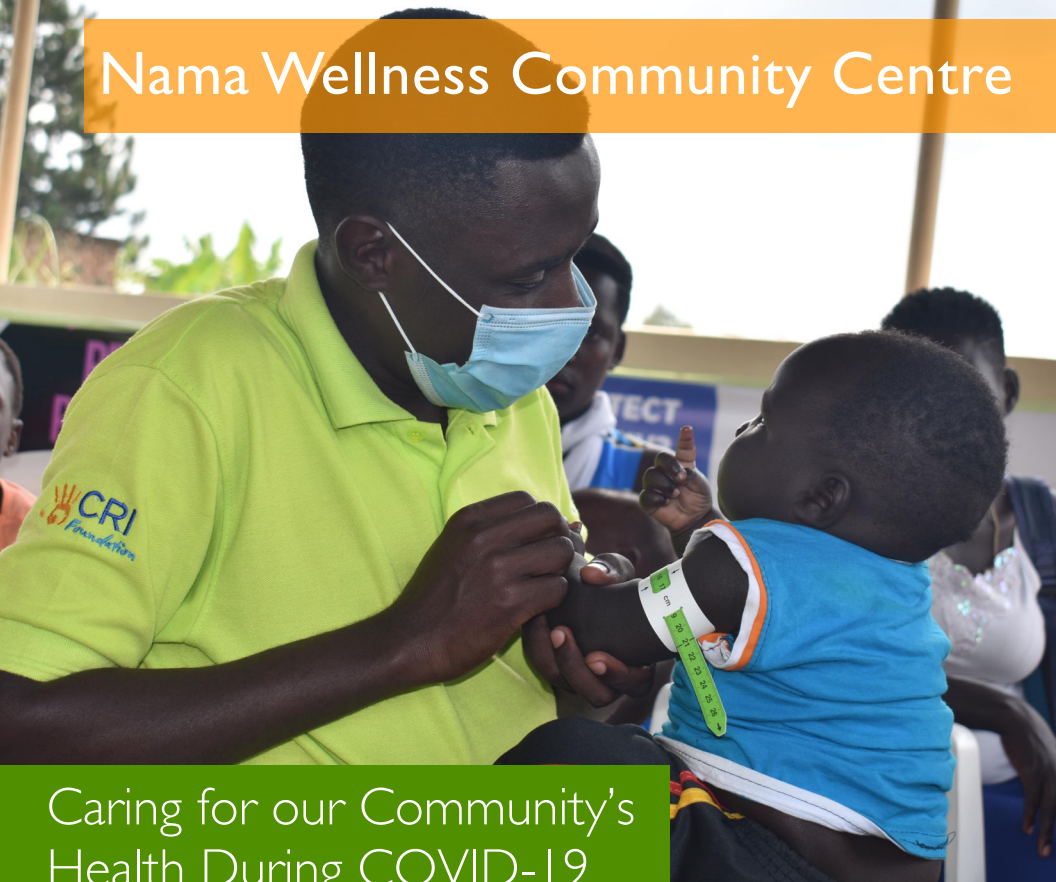
Addressing Violence Against Children

The Creative Teens is a DIY Community Group that was established by six young women, concerned about violence against children in their community. This project aims to create awareness, strengthen existing child protection policies, and offer referral pathways to young people experiencing violence. The *Creative Teens* exemplify the spirit of DIY, and show how young people can take the lead in affecting change in their own communities. We also listen deeply to priorities that surface. We have engaged our partner Raising Voices to provide training, and are launching our own mental health services to support referrals for children experiencing violence.

One of the DIY Project Officers detailed the efforts of this group, saying:

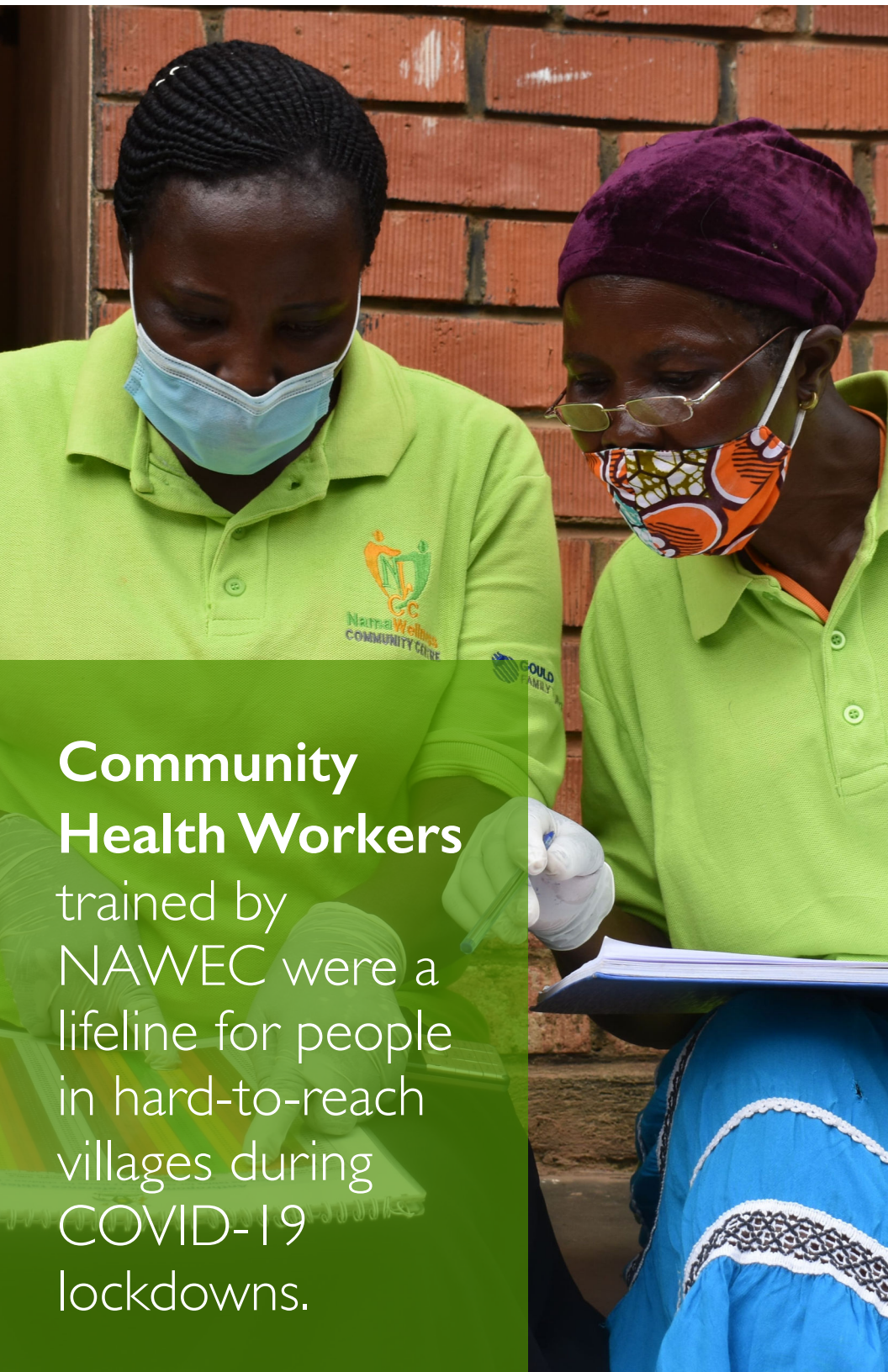
Members of this group identified homes in the Nama village where the said violence was taking place, hence ascertaining the basic facts. Having gathered such information, they would scratch where it itched in each case with tailor-made approaches to the case at hand. The group agreed to refer severe cases to the Uganda Police Child Protection Unit. Every Saturday, they visited the homes with the violence cases and addressed them with appropriate measures that would leave no stone unturned and this was how they made a name for themselves in the entire community!

Nama Wellness Community Centre



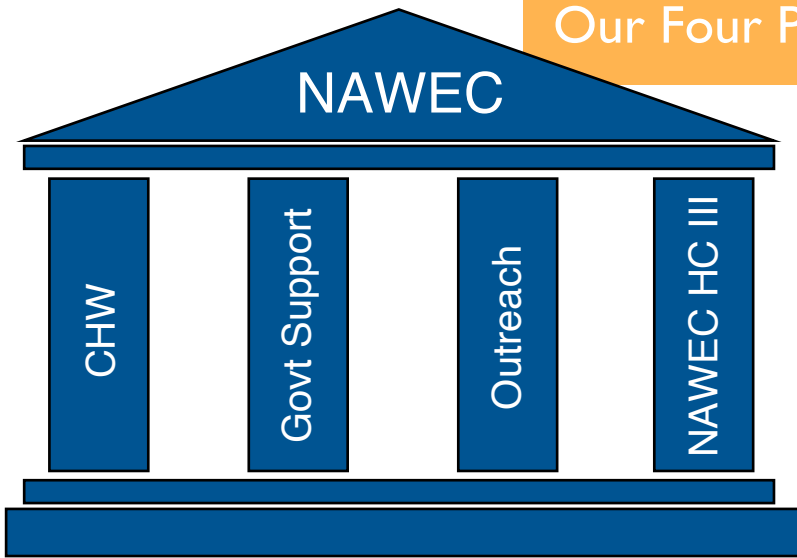
Caring for our Community's Health During COVID-19

We made the decision early in the COVID-19 pandemic to continue and even intensify our efforts to strengthen high quality community health services in Nama sub-county. In a few short months, and under very challenging circumstances, we managed to train and equip a cadre of 50 CHWs, begin building capacity at government health centres, ramp up our outreach and clinic services, and reach out directly to our community through various types of media. In response to COVID-19 we supplied our health workers and CHWs with personal protective equipment (PPE), distributed hand washing stations, supplied CHWs with infrared thermometers, set up screening and triaging station at our health centre, and disseminated over 1,000 pandemic prevention posters. While the COVID-19 pandemic was destabilizing and caused great suffering in our community, we have come out of it stronger and with an even greater bond with the communities we serve. You can [click here](#) to watch a video that details NAWEC's proactive response to the COVID-19 crisis.



Community Health Workers

trained by NAWEC were a lifeline for people in hard-to-reach villages during COVID-19 lockdowns.



1. Community Health Workers (CHWs) are NAWEC's essential link to the communities in Nama sub-county. Since the COVID lockdowns in May 2020, our cadre of 50 CHWs has registered 6,356 households, disseminated over 1,000 COVID-19 educational materials, and served 430 pregnant women. They have been trained in the National Curriculum, as well as first aid, malaria rapid testing, and nutritional assessment.

2. Strengthening government health centres is the key to the sustainability of NAWEC's community health approach. In 2020 we supported four facilities, provided 123 days of nursing support, trained 11 government clinicians, and conducted 15 meetings with health centre directors and government health officials. We are also working to strengthen links between CHWs and their local facilities.

3. Clinical outreaches provide support to our partner health facilities and CHWs. The NAWEC team travels to hard-to-reach villages, taking clinical care into the field. NAWEC staff served almost 3,000 clients, conducted 1,018 cervical cancer screens, and assessed the nutrition of 976 children. -19 reduced our ability to gather crowds, but NAWEC clinicians persevered, serving the most needy.

4. NAWEC's Health Centre was upgraded to level III during the pandemic period. COVID restrictions limited access to safe birthing facilities. Seeing this critical gap in women's right to health, we launched a new maternity ward with support from our donors and partners. In 2020 we delivered 61 healthy babies. The health centre also acts as a hands-on training centre for CHWs and government clinicians.

Mental Health



HaRT Yoga

Our partner [Healing and Resilience after Trauma \(HaRT\)](#) will bring a wellness component to our mental health work, integrating mindfulness practices, breathwork, guided visualizations, and yoga poses. After a cohort of NAWEC and Komo staff completes the full course, we will roll it out with women experiencing mental health difficulties in the community.

Mental Health

Over the years, our partners have consistently highlighted the lack of mental health support in their communities. Seeing firsthand the traumas provoked by COVID-19 and the incredible hardships being disproportionately born by women, we made the bold decision to create this mental health infrastructure ourselves. We are working with our partners to design a counseling program focused on promoting mental health for women and girls. In this peer counseling model, we will train CHWs and DIY mentors to lead group support sessions.



I first interfaced with the NAWEC nurses at Mukono hospital in July 2019 during the cervical cancer week camp. I was screened for cervical cancer and was told that I was positive for HPV virus that pre-exposes women to cancer of the cervix. I was very scared as I have seen people die of cancer and I still have young children to take care of. However, the nurse gave me assurance that all would be well. They treated me and told me that the virus had been burnt and that I would be fine. The nurse told me that they would do another test in a few months. When I went back to NAWEC, I was screened again and the virus was gone. I was so happy and relieved and will forever be grateful.

- NAWEC Client

Other Programs



Komo Youth Centre

Our youth centre has been running for over seven years! The two youth-led projects that have consistently made an impact in the community are the Peer Health Educators (PHEs), who delivered 16 local radio sessions on SRH topics, and the Drama Group, which conducted health-related skits in two primary schools - engaging 191 students and ten teachers. Many of the DIY mentors first started with Komo in our youth centre, several years back.



Sponsorship

In 2020 we supported 51 students in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. When COVID shut down schools, our students returned to their homes and, in many cases, difficult circumstances. We engaged sponsorship students through mentoring, career guidance, and counseling. We also did an assessment to determine who was in need of financial or food aid. We conducted home visits and provided most students and their families with a food package, a goat to start a small income generating activity, or both.

Thanks to Our Partners!



T&J Meyer Family Foundation

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