



Vision of a Healthy Village

Program Results — Mayuge, Uganda

A study evaluating the impact of Lifewater International's Vision of a
Healthy Village Program

November 2020

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“

The old has passed away;
behold, the new has come!”

– 2 Corinthians 5:17b

Letter from the CEO

Dear friend,

In 2017, Lifewater teams began a multi-year program in the Mayuge region of Uganda. We used “Vision of a Healthy Village,” our grassroots, data-driven, people-first approach to WASH. The results are so encouraging.

VHV seeks to put an end to the WASH (water access, sanitation, and hygiene) crisis by using best practices in community development and the collective wisdom of our program leaders in the field. This is a holistic, Christ-centered approach to bringing water to the thirsty. We focused on constructing high-quality water sources and reaching communities so remote and rural that they might not otherwise be served.

We are now at the end of the first program in Mayuge, and we have completed a baseline and endline survey to measure changes for statistical significance; these are measurements of life before and life after Lifewater programs. The results are incredible!

According to UNICEF, approximately 480,000 children under the age of five die each year because of diarrheal disease. That’s 1 in every 9 children who die each year. For almost all of those diarrhea cases (88 percent) contaminated water, poor sanitation and insufficient hygiene are to blame. **That’s over 1,300 children younger than five years old who die each day from something as preventable as drinking unclean water.**

Today we want to tell you, there is great hope.

In our baseline survey, 33 percent of households in Mayuge had at least one child under five with diarrhea

in the week prior. At the endline survey, that number reduced to 14 percent, **a 57 percent decrease in the prevalence of childhood diarrheal disease.**

Other key indicators include:

- Community members used to walk for 120 minutes to gather water one time during the day in the dry season. They now walk only 16 minutes roundtrip.
- Whereas households used to pay an average of \$7.37 every four weeks for healthcare, they now pay \$2.46 every four weeks. That’s a 67 percent decrease in medical expenses, allowing money to be saved or used elsewhere.
- Because of Lifewater programs, schools experienced an 18 percent decrease in drop outs.

Praise God! Many young lives are set on a new and hopeful trajectory.

Between July 2017 and January 2020, the Vision of a Healthy Village approach was implemented in two rural parishes, serving 11,983 with safe water, sanitation, and hygiene. God works in incredible ways, and we know that these numbers are just the beginning. What will follow is generations of change for families on the margins in Uganda.

Thank you for making this work possible!

Grace and Peace,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David LeVan".

David LeVan

Chief Executive Officer
Lifewater International

Mayuge, Uganda

Uganda is home to one of the youngest populations in the world; almost half of Uganda is under the age of 15 years old. This means that fighting the water crisis in the area becomes a race to save the lives of children.

During the baseline survey in 2017, staff discovered the following information:

- The average family spent \$7.37 on healthcare in four weeks, a significant cost for families living on just a few dollars a day.
- 33 percent of households with children younger than five years old had at least one child with diarrheal disease within the last week, a dangerous illness that can be fatal for young children.
- Only 25 percent of people washed their hands with soap or ash and water at the most critical times of the day.
- Three percent of households used a bathroom properly constructed with walls, a roof, a slab, a pit cover, and a door, all items critical in creating a healthy and dignified latrine.

When Lifewater began programs in the Mayuge district, most people had access to an “improved source” of water. This means that most people were getting water from a source protected from harmful pathogens (like a water well or a protected spring). However, the average travel time was 120 minutes for one trip in the dry season, meaning people were spending hours a day walking to these sources.

And, rates of diarrhea (the second leading cause of death for children under five years old) were still very high. This indicated not only a great need for more water sources in the area, but the need for a long-term investment in health education.

Between July 2017 and January 2020, Lifewater served 11,983 people with safe water, sanitation, and hygiene.



11,983
People Served



Key Results

Preventing the death of children is perhaps the world's most urgent and united mission. Diarrheal diseases, caused primarily by unsafe water, and poor sanitation, and insufficient hygiene are responsible for more deaths of children under five years old than malaria, AIDS, and measles combined.

Safe water, sanitation, and hygiene practices can virtually eliminate diarrheal disease and save countless lives of the world's youngest in the process.

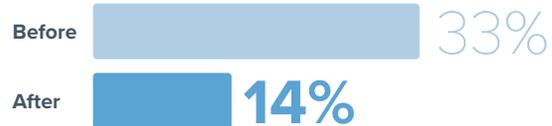
Under-5 Diarrhea

As estimated 480,000 children worldwide under the age of five die each year due to diarrheal disease. This is largely preventable with simple sanitation and hygiene practices and safe water access.

In 2017, Lifewater staff trained community health promoters in Mayuge, Uganda to walk alongside their neighbors and help them adopt healthy habits. These habits include hand washing, using a drying rack to keep dishes off the ground, and constructing a toilet to keep feces separate from children.

These simple practices, along with increased access to safe water, resulted in a 57 percent reduction in household prevalence of childhood diarrhea in the area. Before Lifewater programs, 33 percent of the population with children had a child with diarrhea; after, only 14 percent reported the same.

Childhood Diarrhea*



* Households with children with diarrhea within seven days prior to survey. Comparison before and after VHV.

“Children used to fall sick and others died due to constant diarrhea in the community, but nowadays they are not falling sick and death is not common in the community...the program has helped to reduce the death of children under five years.”

– Community leader, Mayuge



“Common diseases have now become history because each home is healthy... children are not falling sick, they are healthy and growing well.”

– Community member, Mayuge



Key Results Continued

Walks for Water

When Lifewater began work in the Mayuge district, most people could access a well for water. The water wasn't always safe, and it was almost always too far away. The average travel time was two hours per journey.

Mothers with very young children, the elderly, and the disabled struggled to make these journeys. They often reverted to unsafe but closer sources like ponds and rivers. Rates of diarrhea, which can be deadly for children, were very high. **This indicated a great need for more water sources in the area as well as education on how to reduce illness.**

At the beginning of Lifewater programs in Mayuge, people were walking an average of 120 minutes (2 hours) to gather water in a single outing. Following Lifewater programs, they walked an average of 16 minutes. That's 87 percent less time spent walking and waiting for water.

The region also saw great improvements in water committee performance. Of the villages who had committees overseeing the maintenance of their water sources before Lifewater programs, 14 percent rated their performance as "poor." After Lifewater training, just two percent said the same, indicating increased care for their water sources.

“ Before Lifewater, we had a water struggle. We walked long distances in search of water... But after Lifewater we now have adequate safe water sources in the community. We don't waste any time walking far away to look for water. The time which was wasted looking for water is now spent doing other productive activities like agriculture.

– Community member, Mayuge

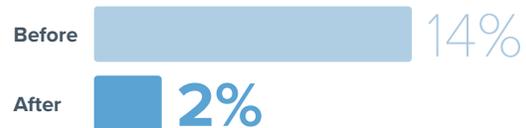


Minutes Spent Walking for Water*



* Time it takes to travel to and from water source in the dry season plus wait time. Comparison before and after VHV.

Water Committee Performance Rating as "Poor"*



* At baseline, 14 percent rated their water committee performance as "poor." At endline, only 2 percent of respondents said the same.

“ We used to have no water committees and there was no one responsible for taking care of the water points. The only well we had broke down almost every week and the only option was swamp water. We now have active water committees which are well trained to take care of the water wells.”

– Community member, Mayuge



Church Mobilization

Lifewater works alongside local churches, mobilizing believers to help their neighbors learn healthy habits. When people know they are loved by God and are equipped for success, it transforms an entire community in a deep, lasting way.

In Mayuge, the primary religions are Christianity and Islam.

During Lifewater programs in Mayuge, partner organization New Generations started informal bible studies called “Discovery Bible Studies” so that community members could come to know Jesus. New Generations also trained 178 church leaders in evangelism and discipleship methods to continue outreach in the area.

Near the end of the program, Lifewater staff worked with religious institutions to establish WASH (water access, sanitation, and hygiene) on church grounds. Churches also learned of God’s call to love and serve the vulnerable as Jesus would. This includes helping their neighbors become Lifewater-certified Healthy Homes.

At program completion, 90 percent of religious institutions reported supporting and encouraging their members to become Healthy Homes.

174

New Home Bible Studies



178

Church Leaders Trained

Trained in evangelism and discipleship methods



“ The program brought the love for Christ to all community members, because Lifewater does not segregate religions, and they involve all religions in all activities they do in the community.”

– Community leader, Mayuge



“ Lifewater encouraged people to support the vulnerable and love their neighbors as Jesus was doing in His time. They also encouraged people to make bible study groups which helped people get used to bible reading and knowing Jesus Christ. All these brought a lot of togetherness in the community.”

– Political leader, Mayuge



House by House Data

By surveying households before programs begin and monitoring their progress, we track important data about community transformation.

Hygiene

Washing hands with soap/ash and clean water, using a drying rack, storing water safely, and keeping the home free of garbage are all components of Lifewater's Healthy Home criteria.

Homes Washing with Soap or Ash*



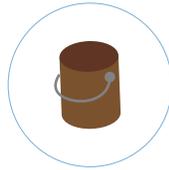
* Respondents who washed hands in the past 24 hours at the two most critical times. Comparison before and after VHV.

Homes Using a Drying Rack*



* Comparison before and after VHV.

Homes Using a Rubbish Pit/Pail*



* Comparison before and after VHV.

Homes Using Latrines that are Improved with Dignity*



* "Improved with Dignity" means the latrine has a slab, walls, roof, a pit cover, and a door. Comparison before and after VHV.

“What we are seeing ahead is a better life, free from diseases...this is because people are becoming healthier and are not spending much money in the hospitals, so the community is going to develop.”



– Community member, Mayuge

“Our children can now go to school every day and on time because of quick access to water; they no longer go far away and wait for water.”



– A parent, Mayuge

Community Characteristics

Safe water has a ripple effect in villages. It allows children to go to school and parents to go to work, increasing both income and education.

As a result, we often find that families are wealthier for having safe water sources. Plus, families begin to save money on medical fees. In Mayuge, the VHV program created a 67 percent decrease in money spent on medical and treatment.

Before Lifewater programs, families spent \$7.37 every four weeks. Afterwards, they spent \$2.46. Families can see the difference it's making in their lives.

When the program was completed, 35 percent of households reported that their wealth had increased in the last year. This is a 192 percent increase over the baseline, in which 12 percent of households said their wealth had increased.

Not only is this a significant difference in money spent on healthcare, but opportunities for families to invest in their futures.

Medical Cost per Month*



* Dollar amount (USD) spent on healthcare per month. Comparison before and after VHV.

Perception of Wealth*



* Percentage of households who said their wealth had increased in the last year. Comparison before and after VHV.

“ Our children are going to school and we are able to pay school fees out of the money we used to spend in the hospitals. Our children are healthy and growing well so we expect better life in the coming years.”



– Community member, Mayuge

“ Lifewater drilled enough water points in the community so that people now travel short distances to fetch water and are investing the formerly wasted time into productive activities like farming and businesses.”



– Church leader, Mayuge

VHV in School

Private bathrooms and safe water means more children can stay in school. Better education means less poverty and hope for the future.

In Mayuge, Lifewater completed programs in four primary schools. That's eight water points and 33 new bathrooms. Children in these schools spend more time learning, playing, and living healthy lives.

School Enrollment

For reasons including a lack of bathrooms and safe water at schools, students in Mayuge tended to drop out as they progressed through primary school.

However, when the 2017 school year is compared to the 2018 school year (following Lifewater's intervention in schools), those schools saw 18 percent fewer overall dropouts.

At the start of the 2017 school year, 2,683 students were enrolled in the four schools that were part of the Mayuge program. At the beginning of the 2018 school year, 2,923 students were enrolled.

Before Lifewater programs, absences and dropouts were especially common for girls. Girls often bear the responsibility of collecting water, caring for family members as they fall ill, or simply staying home to manage their menstruation.

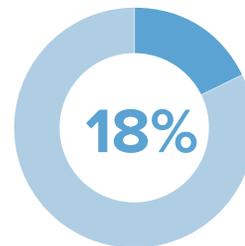
After Lifewater programs, girls in grades 5-7 experienced an 18 percent increase in enrollment in 2018 compared to 2017. Safe water on school grounds, safe water in surrounding villages, and bathrooms on school grounds meant girls spent more time in classrooms.

Students Enrolled in School



* Comparison before and after VHV

18% Fewer Female Student Absences*



*Girls grades 5-7 comparison of 2017 and 2018 school years

“Lifewater has created a sense of responsibility and built a spirit of leadership in girls through the WASH club. The girls used to be very shy and would leave all the activities for boys, but now girls are leading in teaching others in school.”



– A teacher, Mayuge

“Before Lifewater, we used to fall sick at school, and we did not know why...but when Lifewater came we grew healthy and [have] no sickness.”



– A student, Mayuge



**We are Christians committed to
ending the global water crisis
one village at a time.**

Learn more about Vision of a Healthy Village
at lifewater.org/our-process, and join in
lasting change today.