



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

**PRESENTED TO**

**WITH A LITTLE HELP**



*Health Education before cervical and breast screening in Mayuge District*

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## Introduction

At the start of 2024, RHHJ launched its strategic plan for 2024–2028, focusing on cancer prevention, early detection, and improving the quality of life for patients and families affected by severe illnesses. A central goal of this plan is to expand our services into underserved areas of the Busoga Region and neighboring districts, where access to quality healthcare remains critically limited.

## Clinical Care

### Holistic palliative care and treatment

Providing holistic palliative care for individuals with cancer, advanced HIV/AIDS, and other life-limiting conditions remains the core of our mission.

In 2024, RHHJ has served a total of 1,301 patients, where 611 patients are newly enrolled this year. Going on home visit you are struck by the deep poverty and the often seriously advanced cancer cases we meet.



The patients are all visited on scheduled bi-weekly or monthly basis, and this year we have conducted 7984 home visits.

When patients are enrolled, a comprehensive management plan is developed. Each patient receives pain and symptom management, along with psychosocial support as needed. For those in need who cannot afford it, essential items such as food, mattresses, diapers, and other support are provided to ensure the best possible quality of life and dignity.



Sadly, many patients continue to arrive in advanced stages of disease. This urges us on a daily basis to prioritize prevention, early diagnosis, and timely treatment. Efforts to train partners at the district level, in health units, and within communities have led to significant progress in these areas.

## Treatment Support

Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja continues to support cancer patients in need of financial assistance for treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery, and investigations, as many patients are impoverished. Key treatment centers include Uganda Cancer Institute, Mulago National Referral Hospital, Baylor Children's Oncology, Afri Egypt Hospital, Kyabirwa Surgical Centre, and others. This collaboration ensures patients can access necessary investigations and treatments, alleviating suffering for those with treatable conditions or providing relief for advanced cases. In 2024, 244 patients received support, including 171 new patients and 73 ongoing patients from 2023. Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja covers investigation and treatment costs, as well as travel and meal expenses for some patients. At Uganda Cancer Institute, a navigator, funded by Rays of Hope, helps guide patients through the treatment process. A clinician visits the RHHJ patients at Uganda Cancer Institute every two weeks for follow-up, counseling and encouragement.



## **Awali is a new man 😊**



Awali, a 56-year-old man, came to us in May 2021. His symptoms began in April 2019 with severe itching in both lower limbs, which later developed into lesions, primarily on his left leg. These lesions eventually ruptured, causing a profuse, foul-smelling discharge, a deformity in his left foot, and intense pain. Despite visiting multiple health facilities, his symptoms remained untreated. At this point, Awali was highly irritable

and struggling with feelings of inferiority, as he could no longer support his family.

Efforts to refer him for further investigation were initially unsuccessful, until he attended a support day at Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja (RHHJ), where patients shared their treatment experiences. This inspired Awali and he was ready to be referred to the Infectious Disease Institute at

Mulago, where he was diagnosed with endemic Kaposi Sarcoma and subsequently referred to the Uganda Cancer Institute.



Awali began cancer treatment in October 2021 with the support of RHHJ, which covered his transport, living expenses, investigation costs, and other medications. The treatment transformed his outlook, relieving his symptoms and inspiring him to encourage fellow patients to seek early treatment.

Although his leg remains deformed, Awali now enjoys life with his family,

free from the severe symptoms that once plagued him. A proud father of six, including two sets of twins, he extends heartfelt gratitude to the Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja team.



## Prevention Activities

### HPV vaccination

Despite HPV vaccines against cervical cancer have been available for free at health centers in Uganda since 2017, the uptake has been very low.

A KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices) study on HPV was conducted with the University of Aarhus in Q4 2023. Though unpublished, it revealed that only 12% of 585 women interviewed knew about HPV. Among their 388 daughters (aged 10-18), 16.2% had received the first HPV dose, 20.4% the second, but only 13.1% could verify with a vaccination card. This highlights the urgent need for health worker and community training and improved vaccine accessibility.

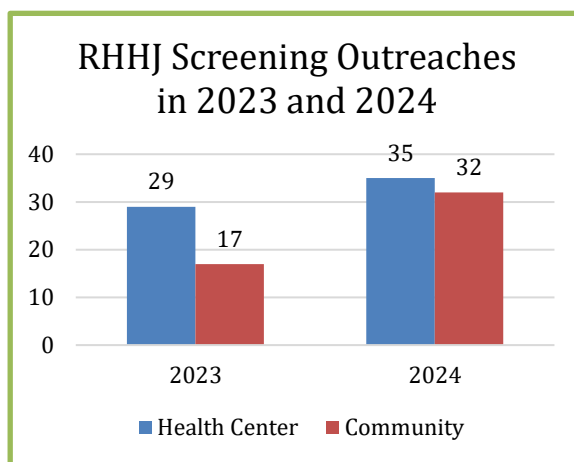


A successful HPV vaccination pilot program began in Buikwe District in 2023 and expanded to Buyende District in early 2024. There, 32 government stakeholders and 33 health workers were trained on cervical cancer prevention and HPV vaccination. RHHJ continues to support health worker transport for school vaccination outreaches, reaching 39 schools and vaccinating 9,478 girls. Notably, 13 government health centers now offer the vaccine and actively encourage mothers to vaccinate their daughters (boys are not yet vaccinated in Uganda). Demand was so high that health centers requested and received extra doses from the Ministry of Health. We were happy to be informed in late 2024, the Ministry of Health announced a shift to a single-dose schedule per WHO guidance, which will make it easier to cover more girls.

### Screening for cervical and breast cancer

The 2024 RHHJ screening target was 2,500 women. By the end of the year 3253 women were screened for cervical cancer and 2023 for breast cancer. , exceeding the target by 30%. Of these, 1 in 15 women (6.5%) were found to have precancerous lesions or suspected cancer. 2 % of women examined for had suspicious findings suspicious for cancer. Precancerous cervical cases were treated on-site, with referrals for further diagnosis or treatment as needed and follow-up.

- The goal to establish 4 new screening centers and continuing 6 existing ones was surpassed, with 13 operational screening sites now in place.
- A screening training course was conducted for 17 participants, complemented by quarterly refresher training for 35 screeners across the 13 sites.
- The RHHJ team conducted 67 outreach screenings, marking a 46% increase from the 46 outreaches conducted in 2023.
- Advocacy and education efforts have significantly boosted screening requests from community groups such as businesses, churches, schools, women's groups, and training facilities. **This marks a vital shift, as demand for screenings is now being driven by the local communities themselves.**



The WHO guidelines for screening for cervical cancer is for the age group 30-49 years. RHHJ has chosen to expand our testing to include young women also, as they in this society are a high risk group, having started sex and childbirth very early. For the women over 50 we include them for inspection and any suspicious signs of cancer are referred for further testing. Our data shows 17% of menopausal women have either cancer or suspicious lesions. We need further follow up and research on this data to highlight the need for screening menopausal women as well.

### ....A DAY OF SCREENING IN THE COMMUNITY

Before the day of the screening the community is identified according to need and interest, and volunteers will help to **mobilize the community** to know when and where to come for screening of cervical and breast cancer.

For the day of screening RHHJ has packed all our equipment- screens, examination tools, autoclave (if we have more ladies to test than utensils available), forms, gloves, information material etc. and the screening team sets off early in the morning. Really, we can - and have - set up screening anywhere ...of course at health centers, but also schools, churches, or at private homes.





The screening day starts with health education about cervical and breast cancer and HPV vaccination. Detailed information about the screening procedure and what to expect is also given to the ladies



Meanwhile other RHHJ staff set up the clinic where screening will take place



Now enrollment for screening can begin



....and screening can start. We involve government screening staff whenever possible. Throughout the day we have continuing consultations between screeners on interpreting the findings and plan of management.



At the end of the day – we are packing up our equipment and gathering the data sheets – grateful for being able to prevent more women from getting cervical or breast cancer.

## Training of Health Workers and Community Engagement

Nineteen external Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions were conducted, equipping 1,400 health workers and community members with knowledge on various cancers. Additionally, 10 internal CMEs were provided for RHHJ staff to strengthen internal capacity.

A two-day health worker training course was conducted in Kayunga, Bugweri, Buvuma, and Namayingo Islands, training 93 health workers from 50 health facilities. As a result of these sessions, there has been a significant increase in patient referrals for palliative care services.

A five-day practical training on cervical cancer screening was conducted at St. Charles Lwanga Buikwe Hospital, involving 17 health workers from three different health facilities. Following the training, the health workers have received continuous support at their respective health units and actively participate in screening outreaches organized by RHHJ. This ongoing mentorship helps them build the practical skills and confidence required for VIA (Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid) examinations and thermocoagulation treatment.



Quarterly refresher trainings were held for 65 community volunteers to ensure proper patient identification and follow-up in the community. To support and motivate the volunteers, they received a monthly lunch incentive, essential equipment, and a Christmas package. The top three performers were further recognized with a mattress and blanket each, enhancing motivation and commitment.

Community sensitization meetings with local leaders were conducted through dialogues in Iyingo, Butiki, and Bugulumbya, with 100 participants attending. Additionally, stakeholders' meetings in the districts of Kayunga, Bugweri, and Buvuma engaged 92 participants.

Efforts to raise cancer and palliative care awareness included 26 radio talk shows, radio advertisements, community megaphone announcements, brochures, annual reports, and flyers distributed during stakeholder meetings and screening camps throughout the year.

RHHJ staff participated in the Africa Test and Treat Initiative conference, where four papers were successfully presented, showcasing the organization's ongoing contributions to cancer care and palliative service delivery.

## Vehicle

RHHJ is very grateful for the 2022 donation for ½ vehicle through Topsoe Family Foundation together with additional support from WaLH, which allowed us to purchase a much needed vehicle to be used to reach our patients deep in the far corners of Busoga Region.



## Financial Report

Report for funding through With a little Help 2024. - (With a Little Help, Topsoe Family foundation and Det Saxildske Familie Fond).

BUDGET HEADINGS	FUNDING - DKK				EXPENSES - DKK				BALANCES - DKK			
	WaLH	TOP SOE	Det Saxildske	TOTAL	WaLH	TOPS OE	Det Saxildske	TOTAL EXP.	WaLH	TOPSOE	Det Saxildske	TOTAL BAL.
4110.1 · Palliative Care Clinicians	108,847			108,847	123,111			123,111	(14,264)	0	0	-14,264
4112 · Treatment support	69,350			69,350	68,620			68,620	730	0	0	730
4131 · Fuel	9,500	45,600		55,100	9,500	51,300		60,800	-	-5,700	0	-5,700
4132 · Vehicle Repairs and maintainance	114,694			114,694	124,974			124,974	(10,280)	0	0	-10,280
4155.1 · Team Building/Caring for carers	100,624	15,200		115,824	105,752	15,404		121,156	(5,128)	-204	0	-5,332
4187 · Database Development	38,000			38,000	2,037			2,037	35,963	0	0	35,963
4149 · Communication and Publicity	14,741	38,000		52,741	15,180	42,483		57,663	(439)	-4,483	0	-4,922
4352 · Memberships	3,553			3,553	4,351			4,351	(798)	0	0	-798
4216 · Vehicle	81,700			81,700	81,694			81,694	6	0	0	6
4302.6 · Admin. Compound supervisor	24,605			24,605	24,138			24,138	467	0	0	467
4302.3 · Office Asst	24,605			24,605	28,565			28,565	(3,960)	0	0	-3,960
4306. HR and Admin. Officer	50,244			50,244	57,336			57,336	(7,092)	0	0	-7,092
4302.7 · Admin. Security guards	61,674			61,674	72,413			72,413	(10,739)	0	0	-10,739



<b>4307. Admin. Accounts Assistant</b>	31,426			31,426	15,893			15,893	15,533	0	0	15,533
<b>4111.1 · Nursing/Clinical Officers</b>		125,628		125,628		124,138		124,138	-	1,490	0	1,490
<b>4113 · Cervical and Breast screen</b>		47,500		47,500		47,510		47,510	-	-10	0	-10
<b>4113.1 · Screening &amp; Medical records Officer</b>		34,569		34,569		35,852		35,852	-	-1,283	0	-1,283
<b>4114 · Distant District Outreach</b>		12,874		12,874		12,873		12,873	-	1	0	1
<b>4115 · Clinical Field Equipment</b>		30,400		30,400		31,930		31,930	-	-1,530	0	-1,530
<b>4126 · Bedding Matresses nets etc</b>		20,900		20,900		20,087		20,087	-	813	0	813
<b>4127.1 · Diapers</b>		24,700		24,700		22,510		22,510	-	2,190	0	2,190
<b>4142.1 · Vehicle Insurance</b>		41,800		41,800		33,281		33,281	-	8,519	0	8,519
<b>4144.1 · Drivers</b>		30,400		30,400		33,278		33,278	-	-2,878	0	-2,878
<b>4101 · Communications Officer</b>		34,200		34,200		32,699		32,699	-	1,501	0	1,501
<b>4189 · Monitoring and Evaluation (DO)</b>		50,244		50,244		50,626		50,626	-	-382	0	-382
<b>4211 · Computer</b>		13,300		13,300		11,375		11,375	-	1,925	0	1,925
<b>Screening Screens (5)</b>			1,708	1,708			1,691	1,691	-	0	17	17
<b>Autoclave, Specula</b>			3,990	3,990			3,990	3,990	-	0	0	0
<b>Thermo Coagulator (1)</b>			11,771	11,771			11,771	11,771	-	0	0	0
<b>Printer</b>			9,291	9,291			9,291	9,291	-	0	0	0
<b>Solar Energy(panels, Batteries, Installation</b>			18,240	18,240			18,240	18,240	-	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>733,563</b>	<b>565,315</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>1,343,878</b>	<b>733,564</b>	<b>565,346</b>	<b>44,983</b>	<b>1,343,893</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>-15</b>



The RHHJ team receives very many heartfelt thanks and blessings from our patients. Your generous support makes it possible for us to make a meaningful impact on the lives of our patients and their families.

Through this photo, we extend our deepest gratitude to you on behalf of our patients and the entire Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja team.

**THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS**