

# Global Strategies

## Mother's Day Newsletter

May 2021

### Celebrating the Children's AIDS Program



*Dr. Eulalie Vindu, Nurse Elysee (Elizabeth) Samvura, Counselor Esther Katungu, Dr. Denise Soki Kamabu*

#### **The Children's AIDS Program is more than a medical clinic.**

Affectionately known as CAP, the initiative provides holistic care to children born with HIV in the North Kivu Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. From her window above Rue Lyn Lusi, Dr. Vindu, the clinic director, sees life in the clamorous provincial capital of Goma—UN peacekeepers, helicopters and a vibrant border city. Inside, families sit in a waiting room facing a mural of Noah's Ark. The children walk up the stairs, greet the familiar staff, fill their prescriptions for life-saving HIV treatment and, against all odds, grow into adults.

In March, women who have grown up in the program and now serve as mentors and peer educators gathered with the medical staff to celebrate and bring the cause of living with HIV out of the shadows. The event brought together key leaders in the region, including UNAIDS DRC, HEAL Africa and Doctors without Borders (MSF).

"Medicine does not by itself bring joy," says Global Strategies Program Manager Dr. Givano Kashemwa, "We create joy by supporting other people in need around us."

For Dr. Vindu the event was an opportunity to change the dialogue around HIV and demonstrate a way to thrive while on medication.

"Our community wanted to celebrate women's day at the end of the month. During this special moment, they each shared their experience of living with HIV in Congo," says Dr. Eulalie Vindu, "We addressed women's leadership and HIV disclosure to partners. We showed through our celebration that HIV is not the end of life."

The work is far from done. The CAP team, supported by Global Strategies, takes care of more than 700 children, yet knows that many more remain sick and undiagnosed in the community.



*Sr. Grace Atim using NoviGuide with patient*

## NoviGuide software improves nurse knowledge and confidence in newborn care

### **2.5 million newborns die in the first 28-days of life every year.**

The vast majority of these deaths are from causes with known treatments. Saving newborn lives requires instructing more healthcare workers in the care of sick and small newborns, but in-person training programs risk removing critical personnel from their posts in rural areas where they provide essential care delivering babies.

In a research published in JMIR Mhealth Uhealth, the University of California San Francisco Preterm Birth Initiative and Global Strategies described using the NoviGuide software to provide point-of-care guidance to nurse-midwives caring for newborns in a busy district hospital. The software, developed by Global Strategies, guides nurse-midwives in the recognition and treatment of the most common causes of neonatal mortality.

Under the direction of Dr. Mary Muhindo, the study followed 19 nurse-midwives at Tororo District Hospital in eastern Uganda as they used NoviGuide. Through direct observation, focus group discussions, interviews and analysis of the software usage pattern, the study provides key evidence that technology can enhance care delivery.

“In rural Uganda, where I work, midwives are the sole newborn care providers and yet they are understaffed, have high turnover and lack skills,” says Dr. Muhindo. “In our study, we observed midwives using NoviGuide seamlessly during their daily care of newborns. They reported that NoviGuide simplified their work, saved time and prevented mistakes. The midwives provided timely and appropriate care and their knowledge and confidence improved by using NoviGuide. I believe NoviGuide has the potential to improve facility-based care of newborns in settings like mine.”

Following these encouraging results, researchers are now evaluating how to expand the use of NoviGuide using local trainers.

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### **DR. MARY MUHINDO**







## Home from the hospital

**The first month of life is critical for child health, yet most mothers in low-resource settings leave the hospital shortly after natural deliveries or never reach a hospital.**

Global Strategies and our partners in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo have extended newborn care into communities with innovative home-based programs.

“When I first visited Star of the Sea Clinic in West Point Liberia, I was simply astounded by the population density,” says Global Strategies Program Manager Jean Armas, “This density is a key driver of negative health outcomes. But we saw some silver lining—most babies could be reached on foot from the hospital.”

When it is time to leave the hospital in Liberia, nurses walk—yes walk—their patients home. Through these discharge walks, nurses learn where the baby lives so that they can then conduct home-based care during the week. Nurses conducting home visits are able to examine the baby for danger signs, while also assessing the home environment and building relationships with community members. Since 2014, the Liberian team has conducted more than 3400 home visits in addition to their busy work providing prenatal care and delivering babies.



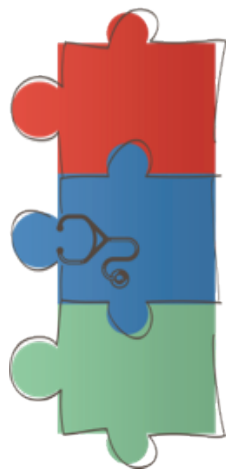
*Top Photo: Nurse Augustine Taweh on a home visit*

*Bottom Photo: Nurse Fatu Sheriff with patient*

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the locally-led neonatal center became so skilled at caring for preterm babies that a new need arose—follow up care for all of the surviving babies. Today, neonatal intensive care nurses conduct outreach into the community to follow these children long-term. “Children should receive high quality care from skilled providers wherever they are born,” says nurse Elisabeth Samvura who leads the program.

For newborns discharged from the hospital, it isn't goodbye, but see you soon.





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