

# HEALTHY VILLAGES INTERNSHIP WITH THE UGANDA VILLAGE PROJECT (UVP)



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# ABSTRACT

As part of the Behavioral and Community Health Sciences (BCHS) and the Global Health Certificate degree requirements at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH), all students must complete a field practicum prior to graduation.

I chose to participate in a two month internship as part of the Uganda Village Project's Health Villages program in the



Iganga District of eastern Uganda. The following presentation will elaborate on my practicum experience in Uganda.

# UGANDA VILLAGE PROJECT



- ✘ International non-profit; est. in 2003
- ✘ Works with the people of Uganda to promote public health and sustainable development in the rural communities of the eastern Iganga District.

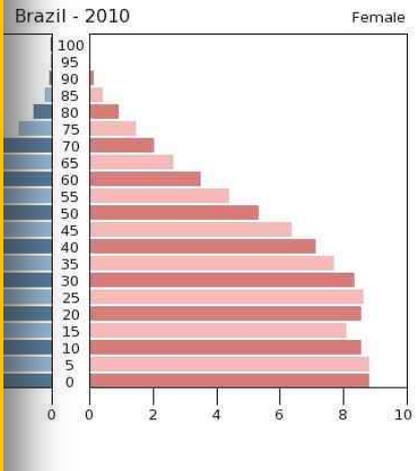
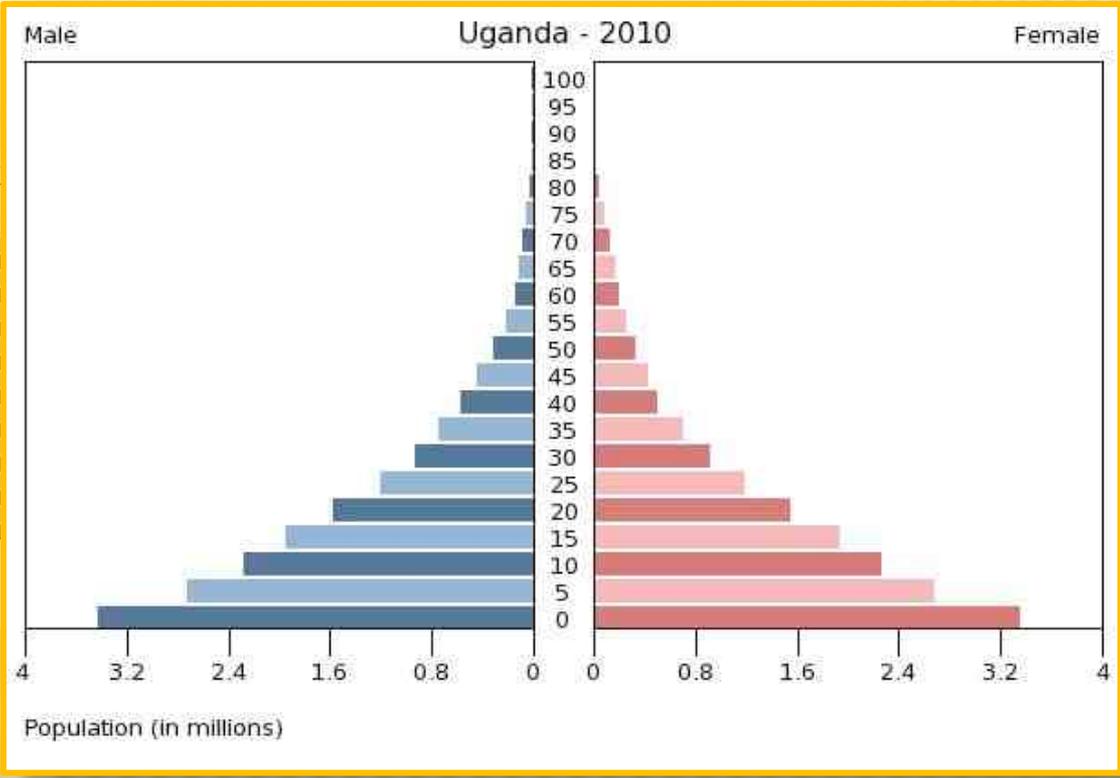
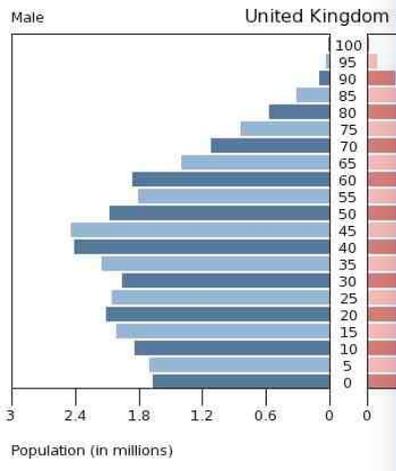
“We work directly with community based organizations (CBOs) and local government to utilize local knowledge and maximize community ownership.”

# IGANGA DISTRICT



- rural district in Eastern Uganda
- inhabitants are primarily subsistence farmers
- Population: 632,898 (2007)
  - Among the poorest of Uganda's districts





**Population grows by 3.3% every year**

(in comparison, US grows at 1%; the UK at 0.4%)

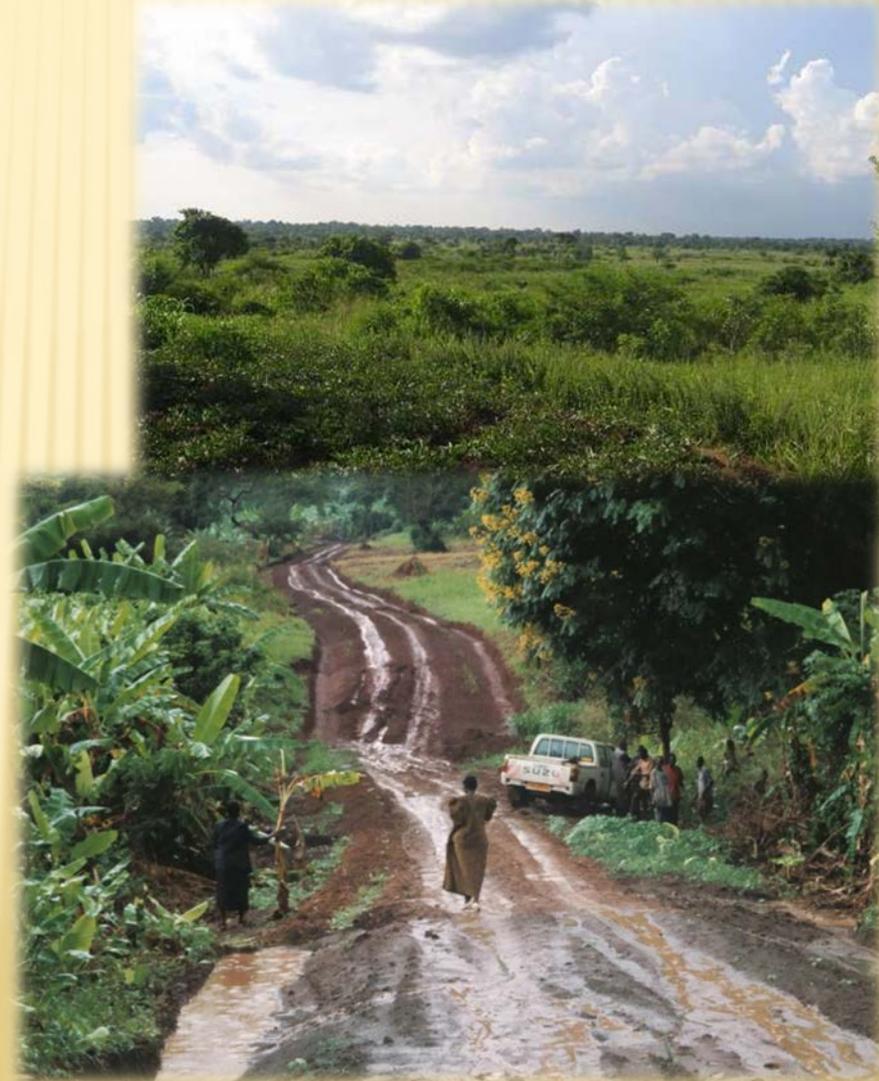
**Large families place burden on adequate health resource allocation**

# LACK OF ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Over 80% of Uganda is rural;  
almost all of the Iganga District  
is rural.

The District has 81 functional  
health units; many of these  
require completion &/or  
renovation; *few trained  
personnel available throughout  
District*

Many Igangans do not have  
adequate access to clinical  
health services.



# IGANGA'S HEALTH INDICATORS



**6.7 children per woman**

**\*one of the highest fertility rates in the world\***

**Child-adult ratio very high:**

**49% of population is under 15 years of age**

**(in comparison, 18% in UK, 21% in US)**

**National HIV/AIDS prevalence is 6.7 percent**

**\* however, the prevalence in Iganga is estimated to be 8% higher than the national average.**

**Reported maternal mortality:**

**440 deaths per 100,000 live births (2005-09, UNICEF)**

# HEALTHY VILLAGES INTERN TEAM

Uganda Village Project's Healthy Villages interns work in teams made up of four international interns and two Ugandan interns.

These teams live and work for two months in numerous rural villages in the Iganga District of eastern Uganda; my team lived and worked in Nawansega B.



# SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES & GOALS

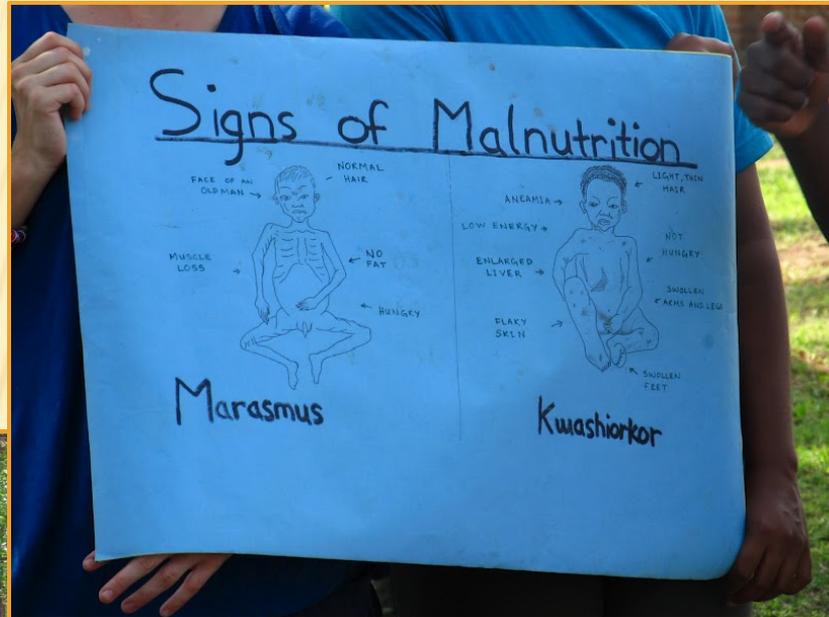
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During our time in Uganda, we completed a variety of health initiatives and programs:

- ✘ conducted a quantitative and qualitative needs assessment
- ✘ established water treatment and mosquito net supply chains
- ✘ provided weekly sensitizations to villagers on topics such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, family planning, safe water, sanitation, etc.
- ✘ established a Village Health Team
- ✘ organized multiple healthcare initiatives (HIV/AIDS testing; Safe Water education, etc.)
- ✘ assisted in laying the groundwork for public health and development interventions as needed by the community
- ✘ worked with the village's local Health Center
- ✘ gathered feedback through community meetings
- ✘ worked with sub county and district officials to improve medicine supply chains

# WEEKLY SENSITIZATION EXAMPLE

Sensitization (educational presentation) on nutrition



# HYGIENE & SANITATION-PUSH EXAMPLE

Helping to build a 'tippy-tap' – a hand washing device – to assist Nawansega



# HEALTH INITIATIVE EXAMPLE

HIV/AIDS testing day organized by the interns  
(accompanied by a HIV-awareness drama group)



# LESSONS LEARNED & EXPERIENCE GAINED



I absolutely loved my experience working with the Uganda Village Project and gained invaluable experience for my future career in global health:

- ✘ Familiarity with working in global health and development
  - + E.g. government-run health service structure and functioning, the role of government officials in health policy creation and health initiatives, the formation of community movements for health promotion, the role of NGOs in health provision, etc.
- ✘ Familiarity with working in Uganda
- ✘ Knowledge in implementing health services in a resource-poor setting
- ✘ Ability to live and work effectively in a rural, isolated setting (no electricity, no running water, no flushing toilet, no quick-&-easy Google search, etc.)
- ✘ Ability to live and work effectively within a small, international health team (different personalities and competencies, etc.)

# CONCLUSION

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The Uganda Village Project is an excellent NGO for a student of global health to participate in, both for completion of GSPH's practicum requirement and for one's own personal and career experience.



# REFERENCES

Iganga District Local. (2011). Profile:Location. Retrieved from [http://www.iganga.go.ug/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=115](http://www.iganga.go.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=115).

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