



**2021  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**



**Busoga  
HEALTH FORUM**

*Always caring, Always here, because your life matters*

**“To bring together the forces of Busoga Health Professionals on an open and inclusive platform as a focal point to maintain visibility, solutions and action on the health problems of Busoga region and beyond”**

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**“A Healthy and Thriving Busoga”**

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## Board Chair's Message

2021, Busoga Health Forum sustained her mandate to bring together the forces of Busoga health professionals in an open and inclusive platform as a focal point to maintain visibility, solutions and action on the health problems in Busoga region and beyond and as the board, we are excited to see the growth in the institution's journey.

I want to applaud the leadership of the board of Directors for their passion in providing strategic direction to BHF.

As the Board of Directors, we are energized by the zeal of the staff and we believe BHF is on its course to immense growth.

I applaud the passion, intelligence and creativity employed by our staff to accomplish a lot amidst challenging times of COVID-19 pandemic.

With the new Strategic plan 2020-24, BHF is committed to accelerating universal access to quality health and building a sustainable business-oriented approach to health challenges in Busoga region through analyzing research findings on public health to develop health positions and policy alternatives while championing the sustainable improvement of personal and community health in the Busoga region.

On behalf of all the Board of Directors, I want to thank our partners and donors who have made it possible for us to achieve the goals we set out to achieve this year.

Prof. Peter Waiswa  
Chairperson Board  
Busoga Health Forum



## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

building of networks and partnerships for health, convening regular webinars focused on themes with case , Visibility of Busoga health issues elevated within health- and non - health - related forums at local and national levels among others.

The future of Busoga Health Forum is bright and exciting. We shall continue challenging ourselves and our partners to reach the extra mile in providing quality sustainable healthcare to Busoga, especially the mothers, Children, adolescents and health care institutions. We look forward to another great year of service delivery and a thriving Busoga. For God and my Country

Moses Kyangwa  
Chief Executive Officer:  
Busoga Health Forum

The past twelve months have been exciting at Busoga Health Forum!!

The 2021 period focused on institutionalization of BHF, building of partnerships, networking, membership and capacity building for BHF stakeholders.

Despite the challenges caused by covi19, we made significant achievements that we are proud to share with you:

As you will be reading through this report, you will discover our Commitment to the improvement and sustainable maintenance of personal and community health in the Busoga region.

Our greatest achievements include: Establishing a respected and credible interdisciplinary and much networked membership working for a common cause, we were able to set up an extensive volunteer network of leading health experts who inform our work into various work streams,



# Executive Summary

In 2021, we boarded on the penultimate year of our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and Business Plan. It was a remarkable year for Busoga Health Forum, we made important strides in implementing our current strategic Plan, while laying the groundwork for our common future as BHF partners. The many evaluations and consultations we undertook in 2021 will guide our future trajectory.

Women, children and adolescents will always be our priority at BHF. We made this resoundingly clear in 2021 by amplifying calls for action to address their needs. For example, we brought our convening power and collective voice to bear on ensuring that primary health care and universal health coverage (UHC) address the needs of women, children and adolescents. We were also resolute in our efforts to advance a regional approach with an active DHO forum, data use and regional programming.

2021 saw BHF committing to accelerating universal access to quality health and building a sustainable business-oriented approach to health challenges in Busoga region through analyzing research findings on public health to develop health positions and policy alternatives while championing the sustainable improvement of personal and community health in the Busoga region.

Our greatest achievements included:

- A respected and credible interdisciplinary and much networked membership working for a common cause.
- Convening and connecting our health movement at national, regional and global levels.
- Grounding global advocacy in the reality of local experience, and ensuring local ownership and support for our projects and programs.
- Establishment an extensive volunteer network of leading health experts who inform our work.

Namutamba Sarah  
Program Officer  
Busoga Health Forum

# About Busoga Health Forum



Busoga Health Forum (BHF) is an independent voice for health professionals linked to Busoga region in the Eastern region of Uganda with links to the national and international communities. BHF is a national, not-for-profit, voluntary membership-based organization headquartered in the heart of Busoga- Jinja city. Membership has grown since it was inaugurated to over 600 members. The membership includes a multidisciplinary mix of medical professionals, public health specialists, District Health officers, as well as other health related and non-clinical practitioners. BHF advocates for the improvement and maintenance of personal and community health through the development of community centered interventions and policy briefs based on evidence that is generated in the region and country on best practices. Therefore, we are a think tank, generating evidence to drive health policy action to improve the health and development of individuals in Busoga sub-region and beyond. BHF implements its mandate in collaboration with obwakyabazinga bwabusoga, the central and local governments, that is; the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the district local government administrative structures. BHF also works with development partners and community-based structures to reach out to the target populations in the communities. Specifically, BHF works with health workers, health facility administrators, policy makers, CBOs and CSOs to reach out to vulnerable women, adolescent girls and young women and children.

The mission of BHF is "To bring together the forces of Busoga health professionals in an open and inclusive platform as a focal point to maintain visibility, solutions and action on the health problems in Busoga region and beyond." BHF's strength is to mobilize and convene regional stakeholders and partners (health workers, health facility administrators, the private sector, policy makers and CBOs) to improve the health of the population in the Busoga region.

# Background-Busoga

The region is comprised of 11 districts of Bugiri, Bugweri, Buyende, Iganga, Jinja, Kaliro, Kamuli, Luuka, Mayuge, Namayingo and Namutumba. It is surrounded by large waterbodies (L. Kyoga in the north and L. Victoria in the south) and numerous swamps, with multiple mobile population (fisher folk, FSWs) as well as hard-to-reach communities and under-resourced health facilities in Island districts of Namayingo and Mayuge. The Northern TransAfrican highway (Mombasa to Kigali) traverses 6/11 districts implying multiple Key Populations and multiple hot spots/ stop-overs for long distance drivers. Busoga is also a national hotbed of sugarcane plantations and factories with very many unskilled migrant workers with high turnover rates. The region has widespread GBV with 46.3% of women reporting physical violence by age of 15 years – negatively affects uptake and retention of HIV services by women and children (UDHS 2016)

Busoga region has some unique socio-demographic characteristics. The region has a population of 4,484,600 people with 55% under 18 years. The region has a mix of new and old districts with the new districts having insufficient HR, infrastructure and overall capacity to implement optimally. There are high levels of poverty with 42.1% of population poverty bracket of \$1.9/day (third highest in Uganda) also associated with many pockets of severe food insecurity.

School drop-out rates are high with only 41% complete primary; 7.2% complete O' level and only 2.8% complete A' level (national averages: 53.1%; 37.8% & 3.4% respectively). The region also posts high teenage pregnancy rates (25%) against the national average of 24%, very high fertility rates at 6.9 (National 5.8). About 70% of 531 healthcare facilities are HCIIIs (Nationally 54%); hence the need for a large outreaches program. The people have unique socio-cultural, religious and gender norms that may be negatively impacting health promotion and care seeking.



**Figure 1:** shows the geographical location of the Busoga region in the east central part of Uganda.



# BHF ACTION AGENDA

Critical to the success of the BHF is a selection of work priorities that generate some early impact, spark processes of information generation and learning, and build sustained contributions.

BHF Works through work streams. The strategy is to use a work stream approach which involves progressive completion of various tasks that are done by different technical working groups, working towards the BHF goals

- Accelerating access to quality health access in Busoga region**
- 2. Solving local health challenges in Busoga region**
  - 3. Building a sustainable health business model**

## HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

- Reaching underserved and marginalised
- Mass health literacy
- Domesticating rights, equality and gender balance
- Health promoting facilities, and community institutions
- Health leadership promotion

## FAMILY HEALTH PROTECTION

- Environmental Health and neglected tropical diseases
- Communicable disease prevention
- RMNCAH, Nutrition and older people
- Self/Home-care

## SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENTS

- Mental, dental and eye health
- Non-Communicable disease (cardiovascular, cancers, injuries)
- Genetic disorders (SCD, albinism)
- Emergency services (medical, surgical, EmONC)

## STEWARDSHIP STRENGTHENING

- Membership engagement & dynamism
- Resource Mobilisation
- Advocacy and Partnerships
- Knowledge management M&E and communication
- Outreach and camps



# BHF Strategic Objectives:

**BHF has three interconnected Objectives to act as the building blocks for the fulfillment of our mission:**

## **Accelerating universal access to quality health:**

Through the development and application of information, tools, knowledge, technical excellence, and building sustainable capacity. In the interest of health equity, BHF work concentrates on high burden, underserved and poorly developed services first and foremost. Working with existing public and private institutions and networks to allow for rapid action while building enduring capacity in the region.

### **Our main achievements include:**

A respected and credible interdisciplinary and much networked membership working for a common cause. These mainly include medical officers, Nurses, lab technicians, Biomedical engineers, District Health officers, medical superintendents, Mistry of Health staff, WHO, UNICEF among others totaling to 700 Members

BHF organized 48 webinars in key areas identified by Health professionals in ministry of health. These attracted attendance of 2640 health workers attached to health facilities in Busoga and beyond

## **Solving local health challenges in Busoga region:**

Bringing together stakeholders backed by data and analysis to tackle health problems prevalent in the region and health system gaps. Such region wide solutions go beyond the purview of any single discipline and build wider networks and collaboration at national and global level.

### **Our main achievements include:**

Signing of MOUs with the 12 Districts to strengthen Leadership and Management of existing structures – the District Health Management Teams, Health Facility Management Teams, Hospital Boards/Health Unit Management Committees to be more effective

Investment in strategic partnership, networks and collaborations: BHF partnerships span across disease-specific, service specific, risk factor, and demographic groups. BHF has the following established partnerships: BHF-MarkSPH, Jinja Stockholm -Child health, RMNCAHN-CSO, PMNCH, Busoga CSO coalition, MOH Malaria control Program- Center for Food and Adequate Living Rights- CEFROHT, BHF –GHC- Fellowship Program, BHF business investment opportunities for youth in Busoga region, Busoga Health Forum-Busoga Media:

## **Build a sustainable business-oriented approach to health challenges in Busoga region:**

Busoga challenges can also be an opportunity. Some challenges include a very high infectious and parasitic disease burden – owing to its location as a tropical island – everything thrives here. The opportunity here would be to develop advance a) Advanced Health Research and Training institutions with Research and Development potential and link to industry and commercialization.

### **Our main achievements include:**

BHF has put in place a team developing a concept for a Busoga medical school

BHF-Michigan University collaboration (Focusing on advanced research, business and development is under way.

BHF Grants management Unit (GMU) is being established. This is being accompanied by a financial plan for growth and a fundraising strategy that to ensure the maintenance and development of existing funding relationships and revenue streams

BHF five-year business plan is underway



# BHF Technical working groups:

**BHF has set up ad hoc groups of experts on particular topics who work together on specific BHF goals**

No.	Technical working Group	Responsible Person
1.	Strategic Technical Working Group: Charged with providing institutional strategic direction including review of strategic documents	Dr.Paul Waibale / Dr. Muwanga Fred
2.	Sickle Cell Advocates: This group is responsible for planning and proving a Busoga plan elimination of sickle cell and related diseases in Busoga	Dr. Tagoola Aber, Mr. Kakaire Ayub Kirunda
3.	Community Health Service: Charged with drawing community security interventions for Busoga	Dr. Isabirye Fredrick/ Francis Kyakulaga
4.	Communication And Advocates: Target key GoU and health sector leaders with quality data and information to foster a data use culture for evidence-based decision-making.	Dr. Abdallah Ziraba/ Dr. Joseph Akuze
5.	MCHN/ECDExperts: Charged with mobilizing resources for RMNCH and ECD in Busoga	Dr. Kajura Richard/ Dr.David Lubogo
6.	NCD Experts: Charged with drawing a plan for NCD strategy for Busoga	Dr. Peter Lwabi/ Dr. Nakwagala Fredrick
7.	Clinical Service Committee: Screening, treatment plans for those who are sick. Has ENT probono initiative in place	Dr. Nakwagala Fredrick/ Dr. Fred Bisso/ Dr. Moses Magada
8.	Adolescent Health/Reproductive Health and HIV Committee:Charged with drawing a strategy for Adolescent Health among others.	Dr. Peter Mukasa/ Masanja veronica

# BHF Main Projects:

## Project 01:

### Urban thrive Project (UTP)

Urban Thrive Project (UTP) is a project by Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) together with Busoga Health Forum (BHF) focusing on increasing coverage and uptake of Voluntary Family Planning (VFP) in emergent towns and cities – the case of Iganga and Jinja.

The target of UTP is Universal access to Sexual and Reproductive Care, Family Planning and Education. The focus on 'voluntary' means that UTP will be able to empower the community especially women and girls to carry out family planning voluntarily and by choice. The background for the project includes; increasing coverage of Voluntary Family Planning (VFP) which remains a majority priority in Uganda, Contraceptives use among married women is at 39%, 32% of the sexually active women in Uganda have an unmet need for Family Planning, teenage pregnancies are at 25% and Repeat Adolescent births at 56%. In anticipation of urban development, there is a need to address the issue of population growth Uganda is experiencing. Unintended pregnancies in Busoga as a region are at 40% not forgetting the fertility rate of the women who are likely to produce six children on average in their lifetime. Less than 50,000 people in Busoga Region are using Family Planning. The most prominent methods used are; male condoms, oral pills, injectable and implants. There is need to ensure continuous availability of these methods as we increase knowledge on other methods.

#### Project Aim

The project aim is to contribute to the reduction of unmet need for and increased use of Voluntary Family Planning (VFP) in urban settings by adapting high impact practices in Family Planning and developing and testing a tailored package of interventions. The project also aims to contribute to improved performance of urban health system in the study sites with regard to VFP.

## Project 02:

### Jinja city-Stockholm partnership

This is partnership between Regional Council of Stockholm (RS) through Astrid Lindgren Children's Hospital (ALB) and Jinja District with Busoga health forum providing the collaboration and coordination role

**Aim:** To improve quality of care in areas affecting child health. The specific focus is on 1) neonates 2) children with developmental delays/impairment, and 3) children in need of emergency/critical care.

Achievements summarized in the table below:

Achievements	Remarks
Formation of the steering committees:	Ugandan group include: Prof. Peter Waiswa, Dr. Tagoola Abner, Hon. Dr. Timothy Batuwa, Hon. Nathan Igeme and Moses Kyangwa
Baseline survey	Done to establish appropriate interventions
Trainings	Modular trainings on going

## Project 03:

### BHF-E.N.T Probono initiative:

This was set it up after realizing that the health statistics in the Busoga are among the poorest for any region in Uganda, despite being a major place of origin for many health professionals in Uganda. Health professionals and other technical experts have been drawn into the Busoga Health Forum with the objective of deploying their expertise to reverse the current poor state of health in Busoga sub-region.

The Pro-Bono strategy is therefore, expected to be cost-effective and provides as opportunity to organize clinical health specialists or experts to dedicate a meaningful, though could be a small fraction of their time to contribute to improving access to health care service delivery and building of the capacity of the human health workforce to positively impact on the health outcomes of the Busoga sub-region underserved communities.

**Goal:** The goal is to rapidly and cheaply increase access to specialized healthcare services in the sub-region.

#### Objectives

1. To increase the number of specialists providing healthcare services in Busoga
2. To support BHF to create a rapid impact on the lives of the people of Busoga.
3. To set up an activity that quickly increases the visibility of BHF

## Project 04:

### BHF- UNAA COVID 19 response:

BHF in Partnership with Uganda North American Association made a response to the great need for protective equipment including face masks, face shields and other protective equipment's to the

## BHF-Quality improvement Framework:

Quality Improvement (QI) is a deliberate and continuous effort to achieve measurable improvement in the quality of services. Continuous quality improvement in service delivery is critical in generating and sustaining demand for FP services, as well as increasing uptake of other health services.

A number of service delivery factors have to be considered in any effort to improve the quality of FP/SRHR services. Some of the issues ones are:

### Progress so far:

- The Busoga quality improvement framework on Reproductive health /Family planning in place
- Regional steering group assembled and oriented
- Implementation strategy set up

### Project 06:

## BHF Webinars/ CPD/CMES Program

BHF is an accredited national Continuous capacity provider and as such charged with organizing regional forums, high-profile events, roundtables webinars and meetings that build consensus and action on local priority health issues. The weekly webinars attract National and international health experts to build capacity of the regional health workers. A total of 48 webinars were conducted reaching out to 2,448 health professionals in the country.

### *A Glance of BHF Outstanding Webinars conducted 2021*

Presenter	Attendance	Topic
Dr. Fredrick Nakwagala	61	The Burden of Diabetes in Uganda and Busoga: Emerging Disease Mgt issues
Dr. Rebecca Lusoby	83	Diabetes and the eye. What you need to know
Dr. Peter Lwabi	98	Screening and Management of Common cardiovascular diseases in Uganda
Dr. Ethiniei Musana	83	Cervical Cancer Screening
Dr. Isaac Mubezi	87	The Burden of Breast Cancer
Dr. Speciosa Wandira	129	Community Health security
Dr. Fredrick Isabirye	87	Mental Health Management
Dr. Angela Namala	93	Pre-eclampsia and Eclampsia
Dr. Sam Onenge	100	Current PPH management at different levels of health care
Dr. Augustine Muhwezi	94	Roles of RHITES-EC in improving Health care in Uganda
Prof. Pauline Byakika	100	Home care for Covid 19 patients
Ms. Zipporah -USAID	87	Stress Management during the Covid 19 era
Ms. Aisha Nakaunde	98	Nursing care for Covid19 Patients
Dr. Fredrick Nakwagala	150	Long Covid 19 Management of Short-and -Long Term Complications Among Survivors in Uganda
Dr. Fredrick Nakwagala	200	Endocrine Disorders and their Management
Mr. Fredrick Makaie	90	Community Health Insurance: How it works, impacts, challenges and prospects
CMP. Kate Barasa	95	A conversation on Health Care
Dr. Flavia Matovu Dr. Hebert Kadama	97	PREP: A biomedical Intervention for HIV prevention in Uganda
Rtn. Caroline Nakidde Kavuma	50	Building strong foundations in Early Years
Mr. Wim Vanhelleputte CEO MTN (Ug) Ms. Dorcas Muhwezi GM	75	Understanding the MTN IPO
Dr. Doreen Ondo	66	Group Ante Natal Care for Adolescent Girls and Young Women
Dr. Joshua Wandinda	50	Respectful Maternity Care & Why it Matters
Mrs. Nassejje Rosie Ouma	53	Prevention of HIV, Teenage Pregnancy, Early Marriages and Associated Effects
Dr. Moses Arinaitwe	54	A Journey to Ending HIV pandemic: USAID Local Partner Health Services
Mr. Moses Ochieng	53	Sickle Cell Burden in Busoga Region
Dr. Daniel Tumwine	65	The ABC's of the Covid Omicron Variant
Dr. Mina Ssali	60	Managing Adolescents and Adults with HIV

#### Project 07:

### BHF-GlobalHealth corps Fellowship

BHF runs an internship program which focuses on investing in leadership for young professionals will bring real and sustainable progress in the advancement of health equity.

In an attempt to form an extensive volunteer network of leading health experts who inform our work. Busoga Health Forum has a partnership with Global health corps to host two fellows at Busoga Health forum and the fellows will take 13 months of training. The two fellows will be handling communication and Monitoring and evaluation

#### Project 08:

### Media Campaign

BHF leverages on the diverse expertise and communication platforms of its memberships to raise awareness about Busoga health issues. Experts conducted 5 talk shows to respond to the current Busoga health challenges including teenage pregnancies, maternal mortality and covid 19.

The current engagement is through radio; jingles spots and talk shows at Busoga one FM, Apex FM and Smart FM. To date, this campaign has:

- Visibility of Busoga health issues elevated within health- and non-health-related forums at local levels.
- Sound epidemiological knowledge development, translation and dissemination for the region
- Evidence-based advocacy

## What stakeholders say about Busoga Health Forum?

In the current Difficult times, BHF leadership, with proven ability to Strengthen Leadership and Management of existing structures – the District Health Management Teams, Health Facility Management Teams, Hospital Boards/ Health Unit Management Committees to be more effective as a cornerstone of health system building."

— Dr. Allan Katamba, DHO Kaliro

A regional approach through an active DHO forum, data review and action, and regional planning is a cornerstone for reviving health interventions in our country". I am a senior nursing officer working at district hospital. The strategic shift that BHF has made towards a regional approach is promising.

— Sr. Phoebe Nangobi, Iganga Hospital

As a leader of young people who has grown up in Busoga region where health care was only a wish for the poor and a luxury for the rich, I find myself deeply connected to BHF Vision and its powerful advocacy work "People in Busoga live healthier, productive and more fulfilled lives.

— Benjamin Desmond Tatumwa,  
President  
+256 Youth Platform

Revitalize professional associations and networks in Busoga united in one vision of continuous professional development and mutual accountability for the health of our people, convening of annual Busoga health forum meetings to promote camaraderie". This is a clear strategy to improve health indicators in the region

-Dr. Olive sentumbwe-WHO

BHF partnerships will span across disease specific, service specific, risk factor, and demographic groups. The commitment and expertise of our membership are particularly important in this regard, playing a central role in shaping and delivering BHF activities and programs"

- Dr. Andrew Balyeku MOH





**JINJA-STOCKHOLM CHILD HEALTH PARTNERSHIP**  
*L-R Mr. Moses Kyangwa CEO BHF, Dr. Hon. Timothy Lusala Batuuwa,  
 Dr. Tagoola Abner, Prof. Helena Hildenwall*



**MUSPH-BHF PARTNERSHIP-URBAN THRIVE PROJECT**  
*A group photo of research assistants after training*



**BHF-HARVARD UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**  
*Sr. Mabuluka explaining the operation of Jinja Neonatal  
 ICU to scientists from Harvard University*



# PHOTO GALLERY



**BHF TEEN HEALTH PROJECT**  
A photo of members of different SRHR Organizations after an engagement meeting



**BHF-UPMB PARTNERSHIP**

**GLOBAL HEALTH CORPS PARTNERSHIPS**



**BHF-OPTIONS-QI PARTNERSHIP**



**UNAA-BHF COVID-19 RESPONSE LAUNCH**



**KYABAZINGA COVID-19 MEDIA CAMPAIGN LAUNCH**



**BHF-FRIENDS OF LUUKA PARTNERSHIP**

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# Our Partners







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