

Catalyst



FRONT & CENTRE

A word from our Founding Director, Dr. Dennis Willms

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- ◇ Tackling education in a developing nation – why, how, who and where.
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Feature Volunteer

Dear Friends,

All of us have stories to tell. Listening to the stories of young people, I have come to learn that they have doubts and concerns, but they also have wonder and imagination for what could be a hoped-for future.

Whether in Canada or Africa, young people simply want to be listened to. The stories they tell are straightforward: they desire the kind of education that “makes a difference” and a learning experience that fulfills and furnishes their dreams. All of them want to be a part of a *learning commons* that walks them to that place and takes them on a journey of hope, not one that reminds them of the despair they remember and currently experience.

Education for Life is a dominant focus in our Salama for Life development programme; it is the theme for this edition of the Catalyst.

In the context of *Education for Life*, we are building a vocational school in Lyantonde (southwestern Uganda). The school is being created in response to the needs of youth made vulnerable by poverty or orphaned because of HIV/AIDS.

In this edition, we will introduce you to Florence - a young person who desperately wants to become more than what she could ever imagine. She is one of many youth who may well benefit from this kind of vocational training. We will begin by telling her story; how the idea for such a school began; show you what is being built; and underscore the distinguishing features of the Salama Vocational Education Centre - Lyantonde.

It is situated in the Pearl of Africa (Uganda) - a local initiative with global impact!

Please consider supporting one of these promising young Ugandans - young leaders, who are faithful to their God, committed to family and community, and who are compelled to make a difference in this our world.

Dr. Dennis G. Willms
Founding Director

Doing Development Differently

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SALAMA | Education for Life

Mission – Salama Vocational Education Centre, Lyantonde will enable members of the community to learn relevant skill-sets and contribute to the development of a local economy and to improve the conditions and attitudes of the larger community.



LOCAL INITIATIVE – GLOBAL IMPACT !

FLORENCE has taken on the traditional roles of a mother and father in looking after her 3 younger siblings. Together, they live in a small mud hut with her two elderly grandfathers. Florence’s parents were victims of AIDS leaving Florence to care and provide for her family.

Florence has been a beneficiary of Salama SHIELD programming since 2008 when she first received 2 female goats as income generating resources for her family. The goats have reproduced and continue to pay for scholastic materials, including books and uniforms. Salama SHIELD mentors also continue to provide support to this young woman on issues of health, finance and education. Florence is now awaiting the opportunity and financial resources to complete her primary school exams and has shown a keen interest in learning a vocational skill at the new Salama Vocational Education Centre.

Lyantonde town is the midpoint on the trucking route between Masaka and Mbarara in Uganda. For truckers, it is one of the stops that “shifts” them from the port city of Mombasa in Kenya, through Uganda and onwards to Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A growth point, trading centre, and truck stop, Lyantonde town grew in response to the needs of persons travelling through – mobile market traders, cattle loaders, truckers, water vendors, and commercial sex workers. While not particularly unique as towns are in sub-Saharan Africa, Lyantonde captured the imagination of a world transfixed by the problems occurring there. It had an unreasonably high incidence and prevalence of HIV transmission; even today, Lyantonde District has twice the national average with concomitant high rates of morbidity and mortality.

Salama SHIELD Foundation was borne out of the structural violence and reality of this pressing health concern. Since 1992, our mandate has been to respond to the moral imperative to make a difference in the lives of those persons infected and affected by HIV. For the past 20 years, Dennis and our team have partnered with and responded to local community leaders to support a holistic development process for

SALAMA | for Life

Our Development Model



Artistic rendering
– aerial view into Courtyard, SVEC-L

SALAMA | Education for Life

the communities of Lyantonde District. We're changing lives, together.

Educating vulnerable and orphaned youth emerged as a central theme of concern – how might we, together, respond to the vocational needs of vulnerable youth? As we reflected and acted on a different way of “doing development differently”, we listened to community leaders, and through participatory processes, searched out solutions that worked for the community in need of assistance and support. *Conceptual events* were organized to fulfill this development mandate – to listen and learn.

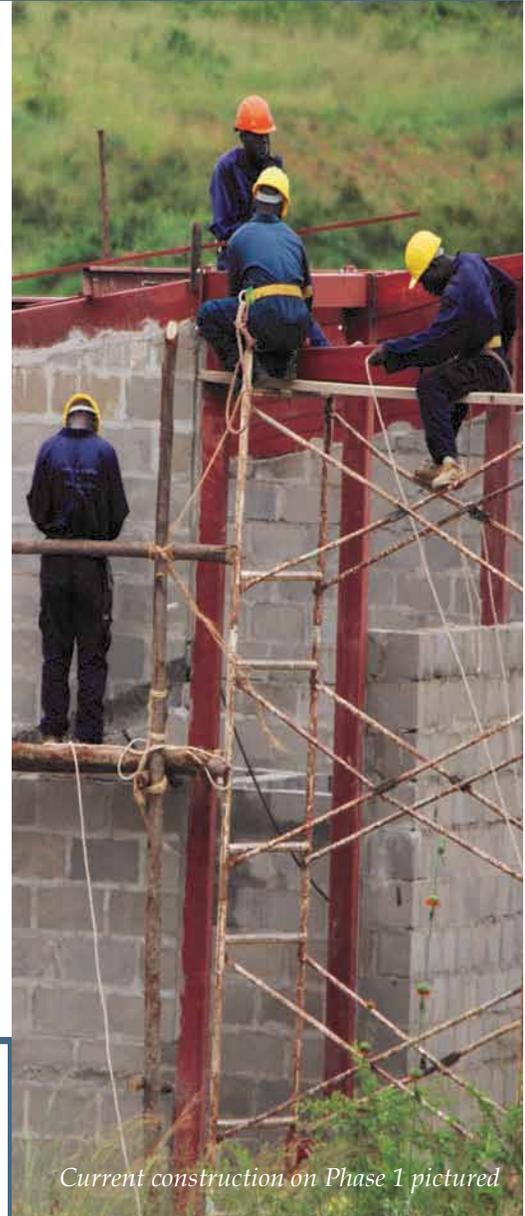
And so, the idea of a vocational school was borne. It emerged out of dialogue with community leaders and stakeholders – all of whom were struggling to find a way to make a difference. But if we, as Salama SHIELD Foundation, were to work with them to create such a school, what would it look like?

Salama SHIELD could have chosen to build a school that was predictably the same as the current system of vocational education. Researching the status quo, however, we soon understood that the majority of graduates from government-funded programmes still could not find jobs.

On reflection, we determined that we should entertain a different educational purpose – one that taught students differently, supported experiential learning, and where vulnerable youth would be exposed to considering other important understandings and be supported to grow as leaders in their community. The intent is to build a school and implement an educational process that is a learning centre of excellence internationally. It begins from the source of the Nile, and an awkward and troubled place (Lyantonde) where hope is now finding its way.

You can be a partner in their dream. And so, we are asking you for your help in securing a future for them. Thank you!

Dennis Willms



Current construction on Phase 1 pictured

Mubuntu Dialogues...

Is a unique and ground-breaking initiative, and will be a required course in vocational studies. It seeks to inspire youth to become leaders in their communities through discussions on good governance, household management of income, inter-faith tolerance and communication, and equity and gender relations. Our intent is to enable students with the confidence and skills to build a better and more just world.

In 2008, Archbishop Desmond Tutu said it this way...

“You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.”



*Artistic rendering
– Front Entrance SVEC-L*

Feature Volunteer

Join us in celebrating one particular individual who has been front and centre in the creation of the **Salama Vocational Education Centre**.

Kelly Gluck combines her passions of sustainable design, learning and leadership as an educator and practitioner. She began her career after graduating from Humber College (Canada) with an Honours Diploma in Interior Design (1993). She later decided to enrich a successful design practice with teaching, and pursued a Bachelors of Education (2003) and a Masters of Interior Architecture. Kelly has been instrumental in working with Salama SHIELD Foundation in the design and construction of Salama Vocational Education Centre, Lyantonde (SVEC-L), since its inception. In 2013, Kelly will be devoting her energies to post graduate research with SVEC-L.

We are grateful to Kelly for her tireless effort and devotion to this project. The conceptual design for the school is a sincere reflection of her creative work, as is the notion of the *learning commons* which has shaped the educational philosophy for the school. Experiential learning—linked to a symbolic and conceptual space that is truly imaginative—has advanced our appreciation of what is possible. Our teams in Canada and Uganda thank you!



Visit our website and sign up to receive our communications by e-mail to continue learning more about *Salama for Life* programmes and our community initiatives in Uganda.

We would love to hear from you!

www.salamashield.org



Blog at salamashield.tumblr.com

Salama SHIELD is creating a scholarship fund for AIDS orphans and economically vulnerable youth who will attend the school starting in February 2013.

Your generous contributions to this scholarship fund will change the lives of youth who will be given a chance for vocational training.



**To contribute,
please visit our website
or contact our office.**



Highlights

- **JUNE 13–17th**

Kenneth Barigye, our SSF Ugandan Country Director, received an award through the Advocacy Academy for outstanding achievements in their Advocacy and Lobbying Diploma course, at the Tallberg Forum, Sweden—an international gathering to talk about and reflect upon the challenges and opportunities that stem from global interdependence in support of emerging African leaders. Congratulations Kenneth!

- **JULY 11-13th**

FREE EYE CLINIC for disadvantaged peoples of Lyantonde District, courtesy of Dr. Les Neufeld, St. Catharines, Ontario.

- **SUNDAY AUGUST 12th**
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

- **SEPTEMBER 2012**

CATALYST Fall Issue

— Change a life — get involved!

- **FEBRUARY 2013**

Opening of
SALAMA VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION CENTRE

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