

# The Shanti Uganda Society

The Shanti Uganda Society  
13 - 301 Klahanie Dr.  
Port Moody BC  
V3H 0C2  
604.716.0611  
info@shantiuganda.org  
www.shantiuganda.org

## *Who We Are*

The Shanti Uganda Society improves infant and maternal health, provides safe women-centered care and supports the well-being of birthing mothers and women living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda.

We imagine a world where birthing mothers and women living with HIV/AIDS are supported, empowered and able to develop to their full potential.

The Shanti Uganda Birth House is a solar powered maternity center on one acre of land in the Luwero District of Uganda. Opened in 2010, the Birth House provides mother-centered care throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period and is staffed by our team of Ugandan Midwives, Traditional Birth Attendant and Lab Technician. From the Birth House, Shanti Uganda runs prenatal education classes, a Community Garden Program, a Teen Girls Program and a Women's Income Generating Group – a collective of HIV positive women who produce bags and jewellery which are sold throughout North America.

Shanti Uganda is a registered Canadian Charity and a registered Ugandan NGO. We are supported by a voluntary Board of Directors, two Vancouver Based Employees, a Canadian Project Coordinator in Uganda, fourteen Ugandan employees and volunteers throughout North America and in Uganda.

## *Guiding Values*

**Community Participation:** All projects are locally initiated and supported with a deep sense of solidarity and ownership. Work on the ground is supported through the time, passion and employment of the local communities we work with.

**Unity:** We support and embrace everyone within the global family and believe in the power of unity to change the world. Moving towards a vision of 'we' allows us to act and serve from a place of love and compassion.

**Sustainability:** Our projects reflect our deep respect for the earth and all those who live here. Each project is able to sustain itself over time and provide long-lasting benefits for generations to come.

**Traditional Values and Knowledge:** We believe in the sacred power of traditional healing, wisdom, culture and community. All projects are rooted in cultural sensitivity and reflect the knowledge of the given community.



## Our Story

The Shanti Uganda Society began with a vision to unite traditional birthing practices with modern best practices and provide conscious birth training for communities impacted by trauma in Uganda. Our first programs in 2008 included workshops for Ugandan youth and continuing education workshops for midwives. Between 2008 - 2009, Shanti Uganda ran multiple birth education workshops for midwives, provided over 100 Safe Birth Kits, graduated 28 HIV positive women from our savings and craft training program and established a reusable menstrual pad distribution program. In 2009 and with the financial support of Off The Mat Into The World, we constructed the Shanti Uganda Birth House & Learning Centre in Nsaasi village and are now working towards our goal of reducing maternal and infant mortality throughout Uganda.

**Maternal Health** – Tackling the high rate of maternal mortality and growing HIV rates, the Shanti Uganda Birth House is a full service birth centre staffed by registered Ugandan Midwives and a Traditional Birth Attendant. From The Birth House, we run the following services:

- On Site Laboratory for Pregnant Mothers testing and treating HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Full antenatal care services using an incentive based program for antenatal attendance including Prenatal Counselling, educational workshops and weekly prenatal yoga classes
- Labour services in a private, home like setting with access to our emergency vehicle should complications arise. A certified Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV centre, we are able to care for HIV positive birthing mothers
- Full postnatal care program using an incentive based program including onsite village infant immunization services and family planning counseling and methods
- Monthly continuing education workshops for Midwives and Traditional Birth Attendants
- Reproductive Health Outreach to reach those unable to access services

**Teen Girls Health and Wellness Program** – In an effort to reduce maternal mortality associated with Teen Pregnancy, our Teen Girls workshops empower and enable at risk girls with the information, tools and role models they need to thrive. Each workshop includes story telling, reproductive health education, information about their legal rights and the selection of a positive role model. Each girl leaves with a reusable menstrual pad kit and learns how to make her own.



**Sustainable Communities Program** – The solar powered Birth House uses an innovative rainwater harvesting system built using a sustainable locking brick system. Safe drinking water is provided for all mothers and their families using an innovative Bio-Sand Water Filtration system. Additional Programs Include:

- Onsite Community Garden providing fresh vegetables to all antenatal, labouring and postnatal clients
- Monthly Community Garden workshops for clients and community members covering nutrition, organic gardening techniques, sustainable agriculture and food preparation
- A Garden club for all members of Shanti Uganda's Women's Income Generating Group increasing their access to land and food security

**Women's Income Generating Group** – Women living with HIV/AIDS face a specific set of challenges including lack of support, poverty, single-parenthood, frequent illness due to low immunity and stigmatization. The Shanti Uganda Women's Income Generating group employs 21 HIV positive mothers and grandmothers from Luwero District and gives them the skills training, business skills they need to succeed. The Women work in a special outdoor thatch covered building and receive a regular, reliable income. They are paid above fair trade prices and products are sold throughout North America with profits going directly to the women and the programs we run. In addition to moral and emotional support members receive:

- Monthly workshops on savings and financial training, literacy skills, business skills
- A bicycle to travel to work and back
- Health supplements and access to all services at the Shanti Uganda Birth House
- Membership in an onsite community garden club
- Ongoing goal setting support





## Impact

**14 mothers die every day in Uganda, many of them from preventable complications. 150 Ugandan babies are born dead, or die in the first 7 days after birth. The Shanti Uganda Society is working on the ground to improve this situation.** In the last two years:

Members of our Women's Income Generating Group have earned over \$24,000Cnd towards their personal and family goals

Over 94 babies were born at The Shanti Uganda Birth House

Our midwives have carried out 605 Antenatal Care and 75 Postnatal Care appointments

170 Teen Girls have received vital reproductive health education

268 Mothers have been tested for HIV and 19 have tested HIV positive – all of which have received counseling, support and the ability to birth their babies with a reduced risk of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV

Over 6000 volunteer hours were contributed in Uganda and throughout North America.

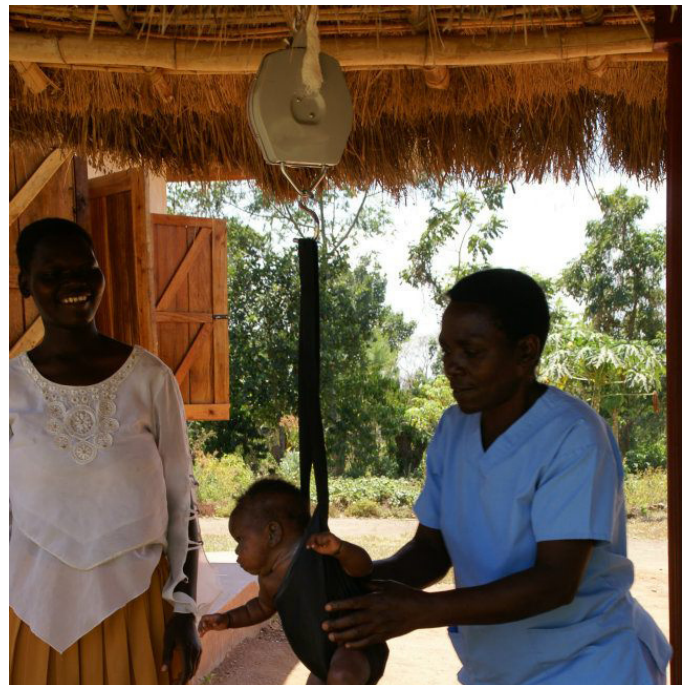
## Budget and Fundraising Model

Our revenue model is both sustainable and engaging. Raising over \$40,000 in 2011 from the sale of Ugandan jewellery and textiles, our goal for 2012 is to expand our social enterprise, further develop our business model and secure funds to maintain our quality of care services and programs.

Additional revenue is generated through our innovative fundraising model including an annual fundraising trip to Uganda, 'Celebrate Uganda' which engages participants to raise funds in their home communities.

With a current operating budget of \$160,000, Shanti Uganda has a big on-the-ground impact and administrative spending is routinely kept below 10%.

With financial support, the Shanti Uganda Birth House will become a model birth and education facility and will improve Maternal and Infant Health throughout Uganda. Painted on the Birth House walls is a message in the local language that translates, *'There is a secret in our culture. It's not that birth is painful, it's that women are strong'*.





# Local Impact

In addition to our commitment to improving infant and maternal health in rural Uganda. We believe that to empower sustainable futures, means to commit to providing nurturing, empowering and educational opportunities at home. We are committed to working with volunteers, recent graduates and returning CIDA interns to provide cross cultural, leadership and volunteer opportunities.

Our commitment to local impacts includes:

- Providing opportunities for recent International Development Studies, Public Health, Midwifery, Nursing and Environmental Studies graduates;
- Providing opportunities for recent returning CIDA International Youth Internship participants;
- Providing volunteer opportunities for anyone interested in public health, sustainable communities, fair trade, etc. in Vancouver and in Uganda;
- Providing Doula training in Uganda with support from Doulas in Canada and the United States;
- Encouraging and educating the values of fair trade, environmental sustainability and women's health;
- Providing education and dialogue through Universities, seminars and other organizations on International Development, Women's Rights, Public Health, and Sexual Reproductive Health; and
- Partnering with community members to encourage strong and supportive community building.

