Releasing children from poverty Compassion in Jesus' name

tearfund New Zealand

Mums & Bubs

The first critical year

December Update

Mums and their babies at the Entebbe project in Uganda.
Photo: Helen Manson

We have a very exciting announcement to make — as well as continuing to support mums and their babies in Indonesia, we've been able to expand to support the work in Uganda too!

This has been made possible by the outpouring of support from people like you across Aotearoa. As a result, more mothers can be supported in helping their babies thrive in their first critical year of life. We can't wait to show you some of the Ugandan survival projects in action.

Not only are these programmes crucial for improving maternal health and infant survival rates, they also encourage connection and empower mothers with the skills to increase their incomes. The programmes also give families the opportunity to learn about God.

In your final update for the year, you'll meet some of the mums and bubs, hear from a project director and meet Juliet- a young mother from Uganda who graduated from the Mums and Bubs infant survival programme. Her baby is now five years old. Find out what Juliet and her daughter Christine are up to now!

Sit down and relax, grab a cuppa, and let your heart burst with joy as you learn about the impact you're having on these mothers and their gorgeous little babies.

With love,
The Mums and Bubs Team

Mums and their babies at the Kingungu Centre.
Photo: Compassion

Meet the mums at the Kingungu Centre

The mothers and their babies (pictured above) are part of the infant survival programme at the Kingungu Centre. Another twenty-five participants receive home-based care for their children between the ages of one to three years old. Edith, the project director, wrote to us and said her staff have seen improvements in these five areas.

Social Development

As a result of fathers' fellowships, counselling sessions, marriage seminars, home visits, domestic violence and child abuse talks, two couples have restored their marriages.

Father Involvement

Amazingly, 20 out of 35 fathers are actively involved in the programmes at the centre. This has not only improved their relationships with their children but has also reduced domestic violence.

Economic Development

Mothers have been empowered economically with livelihood skills in hair dressing, urban farming, watermelon agriculture, bar and liquid soap making, tailoring, book making, and gardening. As a result of this training, 15 mothers have been empowered to start small businesses.

Spiritual Development

As a result of fellowships in church services and ongoing discipleship programme, 7 fathers and 52 mothers are fully committed to the Lord. Praise God!

Physical Aspect

The centre received triplets who needed extra nutritional support because they were severely malnourished. They were immediately referred to the hospital and through the support of the programme, they greatly improved. The infant survival programme has also been able to help another five malnourished babies.

Fathers with their babies!

Playing with their children is crucial for fathers as it fosters a stronger bond. To support this, 25 fathers along with their children participated in a programme day at the Kingungu Centre. The staff's primary goal was to motivate fathers to actively engage in their children's lives and encourage their participation in the programme. It is remarkable to witness how the Mums and Bubs programme positively influences not only mothers but also fathers. Involving fathers contributes significantly to creating a robust family dynamic for these babies as they grow up.

Fathers playing with their children at a project in Uganda.
Photo: Compassion

Your support creates a circle of protection

Your support provides each mum in the project with:

Essential supplies to care for themselves and their babies.

Pre-natal and postnatal holistic care and wellbeing checks.

Much-needed social connection and mental health support.

Home Visits

Home visits are a big part of what we provide for Mums and Bubs in Uganda. These visits are opportunities to check in and see how the family is doing emotionally and mentally, and to make sure their child is on track developmentally.

Betty, pictured on the right, gave birth to twins prematurely. Sharon was 1.6kgs (3.5lbs) and Reagan was just 1.2kgs (2.6lbs). This home visit will support Betty and her husband Richard learning how to take extra care of these tiny babies. She now understands that premature babies have a hard time staying warm and suckling, she was also reminded about the importance of good hygiene. With frequent visits and support, the babies have improved greatly. Reagan is now 4.5kgs (9.9lbs) and Sharon is now 5kgs (11lbs) Praise God!

Betty with her twins during a home visit in Uganda.

Medical & nutritional care

It's time for this bub's check-up at the Kasaana Child Development Centre in Uganda! Each month, to ascertain the babies' growth rates and work out if intervention is needed, project staff monitor the height, weight, head circumference, and mid-upper arm circumference of every single baby. At this centre, twelve babies were identified with malnutrition issues; four were severe and eight were moderate. All cases were addressed, and the condition of four babies had improved just a month later.

Baby at growth monitoring at the Kasaana project in Uganda.

Livelihood skills training

Mothers from the Kasaana survival programme recently attended agriculture training. As part of the programme to improve household incomes, mums are trained in better farming methods at the start of every new season. They learn how to increase their farm yields, how to use specific farming tools and equipment, and about pest management and better harvesting techniques. Please join the staff in praying for a boost in household food security and increased family income as the participants adopt these techniques.

Mothers during agricultural Training. Kasaana, Uganda.

These mothers from the Abedober survival programme are attending a tailoring class as part of the livelihood skills training offered at the project. At the end of the training the mums will demonstrate the new skills they have learnt, which will enable them to earn a living to support their families in the future.

Mums attending a tailoring class in Abedober, Uganda.

From the first hello, to five and thriving

When Juliet met her husband, she fell pregnant quickly and was sick frequently.

Juliet receiving medical support during her pregnancy through the project.

"We didn't have money, so sometimes when I was sick we couldn't afford the transport to the hospital, let alone the doctor's fee. When we did have money for the doctors, they told me I was dehydrated, and my blood pressure was very high. They told me I might lose the baby and I became worried," says Juliet. After a member of the church saw they were in need, the Compassion infant survival project approached Juliet about registering for the programme.

"I was four months pregnant at the time. I remember feeling like my heart could rejoice and my hope was restored. I knew that without their help I would likely miscarry the baby." **From that moment forward, the project staff guided her in learning how to enhance her self-care and care for her baby throughout the pregnancy.** *"They taught me about the importance of good hygiene, gave me a birthing kit, a mattress, and made sure I attended anti-natal checkups every month. The hospital took my measurements each time, gave me iron tablet, a tetanus injection, and drugs to prevent me from getting malaria. Without the survival programme I would have lived a hopeless life. I learnt to pray. Praying gives me hope for the challenges that come my way,"* says Juliet.

Sadly, challenges did come Juliet's way when her husband became involved with a negative peer group, leading to drug abuse. Sometimes he would return home and subject Juliet to physical harm. Despite the local church's efforts to counsel her husband, he resisted help. Eventually, Juliet made the difficult decision to leave and live with her mother. She successfully transitioned to another project located near where her mother lived, where she became a single mum to Christine. *"I was on very little income at the time. Without the programme I wouldn't have made it."* Christine is now five years old and is part of our partner Compassion's child sponsorship programme.

Juliet and Christine on Christine's fifth birthday.

“God is doing good things in my life. He has always provided for us; we’ve always had food to eat, and Christine is about to start school.”

“Since Christine was one, she has not fallen sick. She has been completely healthy, which is a miracle. Christine is learning a lot from the child sponsorship programme. Whenever she comes back from it, she tells me Bible stories like Jonah and the fish. She’s also been learning about good hygiene. She has a doll she plays with and if it gets dirty, you’ll find her cleaning it. The centre has also helped her develop her interest in writing.”

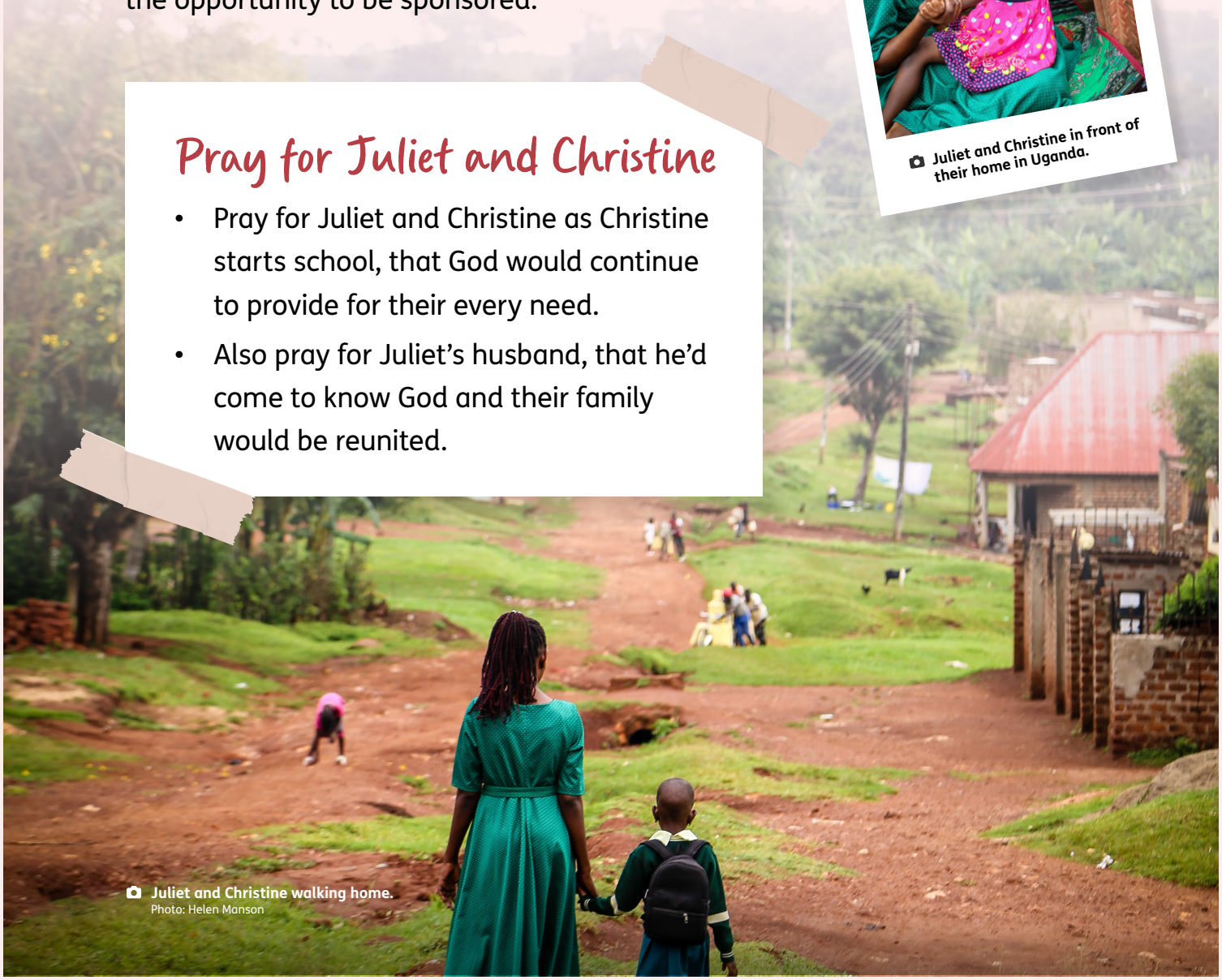
When they are old enough, babies like Christine in the infant survival programme move into the child development programme where they have the opportunity to be sponsored.

Christine in front of her home.

Juliet and Christine in front of their home in Uganda.

Pray for Juliet and Christine

- Pray for Juliet and Christine as Christine starts school, that God would continue to provide for their every need.
- Also pray for Juliet’s husband, that he’d come to know God and their family would be reunited.



Juliet and Christine walking home.
Photo: Helen Manson

A message from the director of the Kyebambe Project, Gladys

"It is with much joy that I express my appreciation for your love and support for the mothers and babies we serve. With the poverty levels in this community, the survival intervention with Compassion International was timely for the church.

Our mothers have been attending awareness training where they learn about health practices like food hygiene, nutrition, breastfeeding, family planning, child protection, malaria control and management. Counselling sessions have also been offered to the caregivers to help manage families and promote better parenting skills. We are also happy to report on our livelihood skills training, which includes tailoring, craft making, hairdressing, health training and Bible studies. Two mothers are now tailoring and are able to earn an income for their family. Another two mothers are working in hair salons to support their families. Many other mothers are increasing their incomes by making and selling cakes and chapatis.

We appreciate your generosity towards releasing the babies, infants and their caregivers from poverty, in Jesus' name. Thank you and God bless you."

How you can pray...

- Praise God for restored marriages, improved livelihoods and healthy mums and bubs. Pray for new pregnant mums who have joined, that they would find friendship and connection along with the critical care they need to thrive.
- Pray for the community in Kingungu. There are still high rates of HIV in the community, despite the church's tremendous work.
- Pray for the community in Kupang Tengah in Indonesia. Malnutrition is still a big issue as local traditions and myths are being embraced by parents, interfering with a child's growth and development.