

Mpower!...A Health Education Programme in Mundri

Contributed by Loes Jaspers [loesjaspers at gmail.com](mailto:loesjaspers@gmail.com). Photos from Mpower!

How did it all start?

Mpower! is a collaborative project of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations-The Netherlands (IFMSA-The Netherlands) and the Mundri Relief and Development Association (MRDA).

Mpower! is a 'training of trainers' project organized by Dutch medical students in close association with South Sudanese peers. From June-December 2007 the students and peers worked really hard to create a health education programme that deals with matters like health, sexuality, hygiene, sanitation, HIV/AIDS, safety, human rights and nutrition.

The results are stunning. A group of 40 local trainers are trained to give workshops in three different topics. For each of these topics a manual was developed. The 3 topics are:

1. Nutrition
2. Sexual and Reproductive Health
3. Hygiene and Sanitation

You can view the manuals online at

<http://www.roelkw.com/mpower/manuals/>

How did it continue?

During the workshops we noticed there was a need for a focus on children (see photo of Julius, one of the trainees). Mothers asked many questions about child health care. "How can I take care of my child?", "How can I see when my child is sick?", "How can I love my child?". In response to this need a second project was developed in 2008 with a special focus on children. Below you can find the outline of the renewed project.

Mundri Under 5 Clinic

This clinic will become the heart of the project - see below.

Health Education

Workshops are given in the three topics of Mpower! listed above. The difference to last year is the special focus on children. A group of 9 trainers are being specially trained to give these workshops.

Subjects for the workshops are:

1. Nutrition → focus on children, pregnant women and a balanced diet
2. Sexual health and human rights → focus on family planning, STD's, HIV/AIDS and human rights
3. Hygiene and Sanitation → focus on general hygiene and personal hygiene of mother and child.

Home visits

The trainers will be visiting homes in order to reach people who live far outside the community.

During these visits the trainers will discuss the importance of hygiene, sanitation and a good nutrition, and deal with family health issues. They will fill in checklists on sexual and reproductive health, and child health care. This will give the Mpower! crew the chance to get insights into the knowledge of the community. This is not only important for the people of Mundri, but also for our founders in The Netherlands and future funders.

Vaccination and Prevention Programme

This is final part of the project and is indispensable to secure the health of young children. We are investigating with different NGOs and funders the possibilities to implement routine vaccinations for all children in Mundri. Already two people involved in the project are capable of giving vaccinations. The biggest difficulties will be power failures and a reliable supply of vaccines.

Happily Ever After?

We started implementing Mpower! in June 2007 so it is still a young project. For the moment everything is going very well and there is enough money to continue it for some time. But for this project to be successful in the future, more money will be needed. We are now busy writing to potential funders in the hope that there will be sufficient money for Mpower! to continue as a successful project for many years to come!



Trainees were: Julius Bidal Morobu, Atim Hassen German, Rebecca Ezibon Tona, Benjamin Bishop Wisely, Stephen Sabah Wisely, Venson July Kenneth, Charity Edward, Cecilia Amjuma Bona, Sebit Manza Faki, Helida Saluwa Abel, Isaac Opi Repent, Michael Abdallah Paul, Elizabeth Silvano Faki, Jackson Monday Mbari, Viviana Kiden Apollo, Stephen Simas Simon.

Mundri Under 5 Clinic

We are presently starting the very first Under 5 clinic in Mundri. The general Health Care Centre has donated a building to Mpower! for this purpose. The building is in a very bad condition, but we have already started the renovation (see photo). This clinic will become the heart of the Mpower! project. The trainers will use it as their headquarters and the building will be used to:

- give education and health advice OR give nutrition and health education/advice
- weigh and measure children using their own growth charts
- monitor the health and wellness of children
- vaccinate children.

The location of the centre is perfect, because it is close to the Maternal Health Clinic. Every day many pregnant women are waiting outside this clinic for a visit to the doctor. This is an ideal opportunity for the trainers of Mpower! to educate the women about child health care and to tell them about the Under 5 clinic.

The trainers will counsel parents who come to the Under 5 clinic with their children. They will be able to refer children immediately if they are dehydrated or severely malnourished. The trainers are not doctors and so will refer children who need medical treatment.

