Ten years ago, Mifumi was just another unknown village with high infant and maternal death rates that were easily rubbed off as witchcraft and curses. I have seen this Health Center grow from nothing to being able to save a life everyday. Today the workload has more than doubled but I pride in our achievements; on the numbers of people that rely on us. Thousands of people flock to this Health Center every month for various health needs. Last month alone we had over 1,000 patients. Total attendance for the year was nearly 12,000 patients and 29 babies were delivered. Over 16,000 people were given Health Education both on outreach sessions and within the health unit. Child days were also held where over 1,500 children were given vitamin supplements and de-wormed. The impact on the community has been significant including:

On the of May 14th, 2008 MIFUMI Health Centre held its first annual review at Mbale Resort. This review examined the Performance of MIFUMI in the past years relating to its mission visa-vie the current de-centralisation plan and plan for the future of the health centre. The review’s target was to achieve the Mission and the objectives of the Health Centre for the next four years.

The new Mission is; ‘To provide appropriate Health Care services focusing on enhancing lives and protecting the rights of Vulnerable people.’

A number of key issues arose during this review; The health centre sustainability, capacity building, Systems, structures and staffing.

Dr. Ochar in his presentation highlighted that the most cases registered at the Health Centre are; anaemia, malaria and pneumonia. He also said that the community should be sensitised on hygiene and nutrition.
My new life at MIFUMI Health Centre

My name is Bernard Dwor.
MIFUMI Health Centre was opened in 2001.
I was one of the first patients this health centre had.
The doctor diagnosed me to be HIV positive.
When I got better The MIFUMI Project gave me hope to continue living.
The organization sent me to Nairobi to do a course on positive self Management.
I am a tutor in positive self management for people living with chronic diseases.
Immediately I finished my course, MIFUMI recruited me as a volunteer trainer at the health center; coming in twice a week.
The organization also gave me a weekly food allowance since I was on Anti-viral drugs.
In 2007, MIFUMI employed me as a full staff for the Health Centre.
I also help in translation for medical students who come to train at the Health Centre.

Home-made remedies

There are body nourishing, rejuvenating and healing chemicals naturally present in fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices and can therefore be used as remedies for common ailments.

Sore throat:
- Boil water with 2 tsp (teaspoon) of lemon juice and 2 tsp of honey and drink.
- Add 1 tsp of salt to a glass of boiled water, and gargle. Do not swallow.
- Mix 1 tsp fresh ginger juice, honey and a pinch of turmeric (Binzari plant). Swallow this mixture at least three times a day.

Colds (senyiga):
- Gently blow your nose often. Don’t sniff in the mucous.
- Take lots of liquids like tea, juice, soups, etc, daily. This will replace lost body fluids lost during the cold.
- Soak your feet in warm water, it will help relieve any headaches and nasal congestion.
- Avoid milk and milk products if you have excess mucous for one month.

Acidity:
- Eat raw onions with your meals.
- Avoid too much tea, coffee, fried and fermented food because they are acid stimulants.
- Drink a glass of lemon juice before each meal, it will help relieve acidity.
- Take a glass of water, add a pinch of baking soda and drink it at one go. It gives immediate relief.

If symptoms persist, seek medical advice.
Othieno Damiano– The guard

I do not know the exact date MIFUMI Health centre was established; Probably a year before I joined.

I started working with MIFUMI in 2003 as an Askari (Guard).

I have seen thousands of people especially women come to this health centre. The nearest medical centers are Nagongera, Busolwe and Tororo.; which are very far from MIFUMI Village.

At the health centre the very sick are transferred to referral hospitals with the help of the organization that sends a car to help with transportation.

The doctor comes on Tuesday and Thursdays.

I love my job.

My grand parents were hunters and from them I learnt how to listen even to the faintest sounds and smell different things; even people. I am also built for this job.

My Job is not limited to being a guard, many people who come here are ailing women and children and not thieves.

I go out of my way to help whenever necessary; even giving them a bicycle ride on my way to work or home.

Seven years ago, we had to ride with patients 35 kilometers to Tororo town for treatment, many times the sick never made it; especially the pregnant women.

This is my community and I am glad the health centre is here.

The in-charge tells me there are plans to put up wards to admit the critically ill patients.

Challenges of being a Village Health Centre

MIFUMI Health Centre, like any rural Health Center is faced with two basic challenges

The majority of the people who come here are really poor.

Many of them can not even afford the basic fees for pain killers.

They find our subsidized fees of $1.25 for adults and $0.50 for children too expensive.

The community feels the centre should offer free services.

They do not understand the difference between Health Center and a hospital.

The health center has been pressed to the corner; struggling between the call to provide health services and its ability to raise a small fee for sustainability.

They look up to MIFUMI Health Center to save lives even in situations where the Center may not be able to help.

Most of the villagers can not afford the fees charged at other hospitals. So they plead with us.
MIFUMI Health Center was established with the help of The Big Lottery (UK) in 1999. This grant has now ended.

MIFUMI would like to thank Dr. Obonyo; District Medical Officer Tororo District, Professor Julia Royall and all Well-wishers who support the health needs of Vulnerable people in Mifumi Village.

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MDG3 Campaign:
In a function organized by MDG3 Uganda (3rd Millennium Development Goal) on the 16th April 2008 at the Serena Hotel, Atuki Turner, the Executive Director of The MIFUMI Project was one of the women recognized for their extensive development work with women and children.

MDG3 promotes gender equality; with a global “Call to Action” to “Do something extra for the women”

Handing over the torches, His Excellency Stig Barlyng the Danish Ambassador to Uganda said,

‘…Non-discrimination, basic human rights for all and thus gender equality are objectives in their own right …gender equality is also one of the most important driving forces for economic growth and eradication of poverty.’

In her speech Atuki clearly stated that “…the face of poverty is the face of a woman. If poverty is removed then violence against women will reduce. Violence strips the woman of her dignity and erodes her self confidence as a human being worthy of love and respect.”

She committed herself to;
• Lobby for a law on Domestic Violence and Bride Price Violations.
• Create a yardstick for measuring Government intervention on violence against women.
• Ensure that violence against women is accepted as a serious human rights issue.

Sanjay Tanna, M.P Tororo Congratulates Atuki Turner

Atuki Turner and the MDG3 torch

The staff of MIFUMI in JINJA after the Annual Review

Mifumi Primary School Pupils

H.E Ambassador Stig Barlyng congratulates Atuki