

Uganda 2007 – Seminars in Kasese, Iriri and Mbale

By Keith Lindsey

Anamed has been active in Uganda for several years. It is a matter of great joy that, scattered throughout the county, there are many people and many initiatives that practice Natural Medicine.

Thus, with a minimum of money, and a maximum of creative hard work, skill and determination,

- medicinal gardens have been established,
- *Artemisia annua* and other medicinal plants are being cultivated,
- people are being healed of many common, life threatening diseases, and
- lives are being saved.

It was a very great pleasure, therefore, to visit Uganda once again, and to meet many who have been so very active in

Natural Medicine, and to work with others who were attending a seminar for the first time.

I was very happy to be accompanied by Agnes Ziegelmayr from Germany, an enthusiastic anamed supporter and lover of Africa who looks forward to using her medical experience in running seminars herself in the future.

Kasese seminar, 16 – 23 March 2007, 41 participants.

This was organised by Monik Adriaens of SATNET (Sustainable Agriculture Farmers Network), and we were joined by the very experienced trainers Christopher Nyakuni from Arua and Rehema Namyalo from Masaka.

With others, Monik has established the Tooro Botanical garden, which is an invaluable resource for the conservation and production of medicinal and indigenous plants. Through SATNET, she trains farmers in organic methods, and half of the participants in this seminar were farmers from in and around Kasese who wish to extend their activities to include medicinal plants. The other half were from other projects in the south-west of Uganda. Thus we believe we have laid the foundation of an active network of Natural Medicine practitioners particularly around Kasese and also in Fort Portal, Masaka and Mbarara.

Among other things, Monik also wrote the book “Family Medicinal Plant Gardens in the Rwenzori Region”, spearheaded a campaign against the proposal to use DDT to control the malaria mosquito and conducted research into the prophylactic use of artemisia tea for malaria.



Preparation of “organic meat” using male banana flowers, onions, oil and flour.



Seminar participants in Kasese make soap

As in all seminars, we

- covered the treatment of malaria, diarrhoea, skin problems and wounds, how to strengthen the immune system of HIV/AIDS patients and how to treat their infections.
- made Natural Medicines; teas, ointments, oils and tinctures and black stones,
- studied important plants such as artemisia, neem, moringa, garlic, chilli, lemon grass and papaya.

Some interesting features of this seminar included:

- Nutrition and health. It becomes ever more clear, in Africa as in Europe, that the food we eat has a strong influence on our health. Thus we drank fruit juices, herbal teas, water and strictly no sodas. The meals were all vegetarian, with some excellent dishes. George Bwambale showed us all how to make “organic meat” using the male banana flowers. It was delicious!
- Mouthwash with vegetable oil. In Europe too the technique of rinsing the mouth for 10 minutes with a tablespoonful of vegetable oil, and then spitting the oil out (into the toilet), helps to remove toxins and bacteria from the body.
- The construction of a “tip-tap”. In many regions, water is very scarce, but there as everywhere washing the hands after using the toilet is crucial for good health. The tip-tap, constructed quickly and easily by Rehema, shows how such hygiene can be practised with an absolute minimum of water.



The tip tap is made from an old plastic container, and is operated by the foot.



The landscape in north-east Uganda is beautiful, but the poverty is severe. One important resource are the indigenous, medicinal trees, such as these *Balanites aegyptiaca*.

Visit to Karamoja

The Christian International Peace Service Team (CHIPS, see www.chipspeace.org) are a team of ten or so people drawn from the Iteso and Karamojong tribes. Natural Medicine has become an integral part of their work as they perform a range of practical projects that make it easier for the two tribes to trust each other enough to live and work together.

We held a day seminar in which we learnt from their extensive knowledge of and experience with Natural Medicine.

Mbale seminar, 28 March to 4th April 2007, 39 participants.

All 39 participants, drawn from 22 different projects, were invited by anamed. Many were from the Mbale district, others from the north-east of Uganda, and a third from other areas.

The aim was to energise the practice of Natural Medicine in the Mbale District, and to give training to those projects that had already had some contact with anamed and begun to practice Natural Medicine.

The seminar was held at the Salem Project (see www.saleminternational.org/english/en_worldwide/en_uganda.htm), which runs a clinic, a children’s home, a conference centre and guest house, and a tree nursery. The project also has a large garden of medicinal plants.

Tamima Omondi from Kenya, Innocent Balagizi from D R Congo and Eric Kihuluka from Uganda gave excellent assistance in the leadership.

Based on their own personal experience, Innocent and Eric both said clearly to the group, “*After this seminar you do not ask anamed for more money. You make your own money from Natural Medicine.*”

Many participants contributed substantially to the programme;

- Samuel and Elizabeth Waiswa, from Iganga, demonstrated the sowing of grain amaranth, and presented their products. They have seen dramatic improvements in patients of HIV/AIDS who have incorporated grain amaranth into their diet.
- Daniel Kamala, from Dar es Salaam, shared several preparations developed in his university department of traditional medicine.
- Dr Valery Shean spoke of the natural veterinary treatments she has developed, based on traditional treatments used by the Karamojong.

The energy and enthusiasm of the participants were infectious. If Uganda as a country can use the experience and vitality that exists at the grassroots, it will become a great country. That may or may not happen, but I have enormous confidence that the energy, expertise and commitment of the participants of each of these seminars will both lead to an improvement in the lives of tens of thousands of Ugandan people and enable them to climb out of poverty.

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Innocent Balagizi holds the group spellbound as he describes the use of plants in the medicinal garden.

For details of a weekend seminar to be held in England in January 2008, please see <http://www.anamed.net/English%20Home%20Page/anamed%20international/anamed%20seminars/Seminar%20in%20England/seminar%20in%20england.html>

Please write to me for details of how you can support the work of anamed in Uganda and other countries in Africa.

Keith Lindsey
 anamed international
 Berglenstr. 10
 71364 Winnenden
 Germany
 Email: anamed@t-online.de