

Report of seminar in Masaka, Uganda, held 27 March to 3 April 2009

Summary: People in many regions of Uganda have taken Natural Medicine seriously for many years, but have practiced only within their own project or area. This seminar in Masaka was organised by the very active and very competent local leader of the newly formed group anamed Masaka, Rehema Namyalo. The seminar was successful in training and giving impetus the members of anamed Masaka, and a group of five very competent people have been elected to be a steering committee for the formation of anamed Uganda. I sincerely hope that this will lead to the formation of an effective network throughout the country.

Leaders: Rehema Namyalo (Organic gardener and leader of anamed Masaka), Eric Kihuluka (Healer and trainer), Dr Prabhakar Vadalikar (Yoga trainer and expert in complimentary medicines) and Keith Lindsey (from anamed international).

Participants: 33 people, two thirds of whom were members of anamed Masaka, and about one third from all corners of Uganda, many with considerable experience of Natural Medicine. The participants included teachers, pastors, agriculturalists, healers, nurses, local government officers and others active in their communities.

Venue: Masaka Social Centre.

Background to the seminar: Over the past 12 years anamed international has held many seminars in different parts of Uganda, but a coordinated "anamed Uganda" has never emerged. The group "NAMEDO" (Natural Medicine Development Organisation of Uganda) actively conducted training events for a period of about two years. The untimely death last year of Monik Adriaens, who was a tower of strength in the field of organic self-sufficient farming and Natural Medicine in the south-west of Uganda contributed to this loss of steam.

This relatively small country has a population of about 32 million people, about 56 different tribes and almost as many different languages. In contrast anamed co-workers in north-east Congo, most people in Uganda are focussed more on their own project or region. It is the minority who have the ability and the desire to link up with people in other projects or other parts of the country.

In 2008 Rehema Namyalo took the initiative to bring a group of people together to form anamed Masaka, which they registered with the authorities. Now many members are developing their own gardens of medicinal plants, and a close link has been forged with Masaka hospital, where artemisia tea and other Natural Medicines are finding increasing use.

Rehema is not alone in Uganda in being active both within her own community, and in training others. As a result of anamed seminars held over the past 12 years, in many different parts of the country there are people who are very active in practising natural Medicine and all that that entails; establishing medicinal gardens, making Natural Medicines, treating patients, linking with the local health centres, making connections with local healers and training others.



Rehema Namyalo teaches the seminar participants the basics of organic gardening in connection with preparing gardens of nutritional and medicinal plants.



Anna Mwesigwe pours a mixture of hot artemisia leaf oil and beeswax into ointment containers.

Aims of the 2009 seminar in Masaka:

1. To further support the development of the local group anamed Masaka.
2. To take steps towards establishing anamed Uganda as a network of those active in Natural Medicine throughout the country, with a view to
 - a) providing opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experience between Natural Medicine practitioners.
 - b) increasing the amount of training conducted by local people, in order to enable more communities to become more self-reliant in meeting their health care needs.
 - c) strengthening links with local hospitals and the Ministry of Health in order that herbal remedies with proven effectiveness become an approved part of the national health care provision.
 - d) strengthening cooperation between healers and formal health care workers who practice Natural Medicine.



The Executive committee elected in the seminar. From left to right, Eric Kihuluka (Coordinator), Juliet Kasiita (Treasurer), Rehema Namyala (chair), Anna Mwessigwe (Secretary) and Henry Ssewanyana (Advisor)

I am very satisfied that both these aims have been realised. In fact an Executive Committee of five experienced and competent people was elected to establish and promote the work of anamed Uganda.

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Course content

Most of the major topics featured in the anamed Seminar handbook were covered. These include:



Rehema Namyalo (centre) feels very satisfied after supervising the seminar group – they converted a patch of field into a garden in two hours!

Grace Amono, Rehema and Anna Mwesigwe are standing by the hedge of lemon grass and moringa that they have just planted.

- a) The diseases malaria, diarrhoea, wounds, skin problems and HIV/AIDS
- b) The medicinal plants *Artemisia annua*, *Moringa oleifera*, *Aloe vera*, *Allium Sativum* (garlic), *Carica papaya* (pawpaw), *Cymbopogon citratus* (lemon grass), *Capsicum frutescens* (chilli), *Zingiber officinale* (ginger) and others.
- c) The preparation of Natural Medicines, including teas, oils, ointments, tinctures and black stones (for use with snake bites).
- d) The preparation of a medicinal garden.
- e) Simple technologies, including fuel efficient stoves, solar drier, solar oven, charcoal fridge, tip-tap (for hand washing with a minimum of water). Also the preparation of shoe polish.

Of particular note in this seminar were:

1. The inputs from Dr Ishmael of Masaka Hospital, who is the head of the Health Sub-Region. Dr Ishmael is very

committed to the appropriate use of herbal remedies in health care. Already he has extensive experience of the use of artemisia tea with malaria patients – the tea being grown, harvested and dried by Rehema. He explained the problem of malaria in great detail, and presented the research he is conducting in the hospital with artemisia tea and a range of patients.

2. Each day began with $\frac{3}{4}$ hour of yoga, led by Dr Prabhakar. This proved to be of significant benefit to several participants who had been suffering back ache and other pains.
3. The establishment of a medicinal garden in the grounds of the Social Centre with artemisia, aloe and lemon grass. The maintenance of this garden will be supervised by members of anamed Masaka.
4. The extensive and fascinating sharing of experience of Natural Medicines by participants from around Uganda who had been active for several years.
5. The healing in the course of the seminar of a fungal infection on the head of the young son of a seminar participant.
6. An input from Rev. Waiswa Samuel on the topic of the cultivation and use of grain amaranth. Rev Waiswa has successfully treated many malnourished children and AIDS patients with this very nutritious plant.

Examples of experiences shared during the seminar

Anna Mwesigwe, Emmaus Centre, Luwero

1. An army officer who was alcoholic came for spiritual counselling. He drank artemisia tea for one day. The next morning he was no longer shaking. After one week he was completely fine. After he had been drinking one litre of tea each day for one month, the doctor checked his liver and found that he had made a complete recovery.
2. A woman senior nursing officer from Karamoja had blood cancer (leukaemia). She was on chemotherapy, and was walking with a stick. After drinking artemisia tea for two days she no longer needed the stick. After some time her condition stabilised and her blood was completely clear of cancer.
3. In November 2008, 54 German young people came to Luwero, planning to stay in Africa for 9 months. 49 of them drank artemisia tea – and none of them have had malaria. The others who relied on their prophylaxis from Germany all had malaria! (The dosage of tea taken was $\frac{1}{2}$ a litre of full strength tea once a week.)

Samuel Mundua, Kuluva Hospital

1. A child had convulsions every week. The father blamed the mother and it caused strife in the family. Samuel gave the child artemisia with honey for ten days and then again the following month for 10 days. In the first month there were only two convulsions, and since then there have been no convulsions. The cause was cerebral malaria. The child is 6.
2. A second child had been given anti-epileptics. The father was at his wits end. Samuel gave the child 5g artemisia powder in 500 ml honey – taken each day in the course of the day. The child was healed. (anamed in north-east Congo also report success in treating epilepsy with artemisia tea).

Nalwadda Maddy from Makondo Health Centre

1. Uses lemon grass tea to purify the blood and to help women with menstrual problems.



Grain amaranth is being heated ready for a demonstration of “amaranth popping”. The fuel saving stove is made from an anthill.

2. Finds that *Aloe vera* is an effective remedy for malaria.
3. Uses aloe syrup as an effective treatment for cough.

Sister Rita Hand from Makondo Health Centre

1. "We all drink lemon grass tea every day and nobody has suffered malaria for a long time. We also regularly eat moringa."
2. "I regularly send moringa leaf powder to a sister in Ireland who used to suffer continually from infections. Now she seldom has a problem."

Recommendations as to how anamed international based in Germany can support the further development of Natural Medicine in Uganda

1. By keeping in close touch with the members of the new Executive Committee of anamed Uganda.
2. By similarly keeping in close touch with and supporting key people scattered around the country who are very active in training others.
3. By maintaining a supply of anamed books and posters at the Marianum Press in Kisubi (near Kampala).
4. By running a further training seminar and conference for the most active people in Uganda in 2011.
5. By looking for opportunities to develop the skills of active people further, e.g. by inviting and sponsoring them to visit anamed groups and seminars in neighbouring countries.

Keith Lindsey

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