



MMS and village leaders walk the land in Kulmasa.

The story goes that 90 years ago, a Medical Mission Sister would be given \$25, placed on a ship and told to build a hospital in India - and she did! The early days and ensuing decades of mission included North American and European Sisters opening hospitals, starting nursing schools, and establishing health clinics in countries far from their own.

Establishing new missions in the 21st century looks vastly different from almost 100 years ago. New areas of presence and work are typically opened by MMS living in their own countries. Strategic plans are made, Sisters train and earn educational degrees in preparation, and funding is secured.

India, the U.S., Africa, and more countries are birthing, or planning for new missions. These opportunities to be a healing presence are providing education, skill development, safety, a feeling of welcoming and belonging, and hope for those who are most vulnerable.

In 2019 Medical Mission Sisters in Africa have started or will start in 2020, three new communities in Ghana and Uganda. These new sites are in response to the great needs of the regions as well as to the large number of women who are joining the Medical Mission Sisters in Africa.

The focus in Kulmasa, Ghana is healthcare, agriculture, girls' education, youth and women empowerment and water and hygiene. Sisters in Uganda are working with refugees in Adjumani and are developing a mission around permaculture and eco-spirituality in Tororo.

Learning a different language and culture, developing new relationships while shaping a mission literally from the ground up, while shepherding and teaching new Sisters is both daunting and exhilarating. At the core of our Sisters' motivation, however, is their desire to respond effectively and with love to the great need that is around them.

Please read on to learn more about our work in Kulmasa, Tororo and Adjumani!

So Much is Happening in Africa!

- **MMS are in five countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda**
- **16 Sisters just graduated, or are studying for degrees in: Public Health, Health Care Systems Management, Business Administration, Nursing, and more**
- **In 2019, 17 young African women joined MMS**
- **Sr. Speciosa Babikinamu became the first African MMS 51 years ago. A trained nurse and midwife, she founded the Traditional Birth Attendant Program in Kasanga which was adapted by the Ugandan government**



A woman in Adjumani, Uganda, draws water from a well.



Processing shea nuts into shea butter by hand is tedious and can be dangerous.

Building a Brighter Future in Kulmasa

In May 2019, Srs. Rita Amponsaa-Owusu, Colette Beru and Florence Naamwanuru from West Africa and Sr. Edith Dug-yi of the MMS Society leadership team traveled to Kulmasa in northern Ghana for a detailed needs assessment. They wanted to gather input from women, youth, the chief and elders, and others as they began development of a new mission as requested by the bishop of Damongo.

The chief, in particular, was thrilled when the Sisters described their vision for improvements in the community. He said a town he resided in previously had grown substantially after their chief welcomed in members

of the Church. Sr. Rita shared, “He was so happy and proud that, during his reign, a history with us would be written in Kulmasa.”

The Sisters have begun a three-year effort to build a program that will address the needs of the mostly Christian and Muslim farmers living peacefully in the community. They are partnering with an advisory board composed of professional experts. To prepare for her role as project manager, Sr. Rita is earning an MBA.

One of the first hurdles that emerged is housing for MMS because Kulmasa has no accommodations. Dr.



Sr. Catherine Osei on left, and Sr. Colette Beru meet with the chief and elders.

Gyedu, a retired economist, warmly offered his home in Wa (about 40 minutes away), but staying with him would defeat their desire to live among the people. MMS have made building housing one of their top priorities as the plan is to move in 2020.

In developing their strategic plan, the Sisters and Board identified healthcare as the most urgent priority. They plan to build and run a small hospital focusing on maternal and child health, preventive and participative health activities, outreach healthcare and education. Mindful of sustainability, the hospital will be 80% solar powered, and along with staff housing, will have drainpipes installed to harvest and preserve rain water.

With an urgent need to improve the community’s nutrition, MMS will establish their own farm to generate income, promote food production and create jobs. It will serve as an agro-training center run by trained personnel. Organic and sustainable farming methods will be explored and shared with the local farmers. Obtaining equipment and technology for women who are producing shea and peanut butter will increase their productivity and allow for the production of other items for market.

“The women are the backbone of the families,” Sister Rita reflects. “They want to be empowered, they desire to have more meaning in their lives and be more productive and earn something more to help their families.”

A Youth Empowerment Center will provide girls with counseling, a library, career guidance, sports and other life-giving interventions. Though they have a great deal of work ahead of them, the Sisters remain enthusiastic and grateful for the warmth they continue to receive from the people of Kulmasa.

Sister Rita shares: “The openness and welcoming spirit of the people, their spirit of tolerance for one another and their willingness to collaborate with others for the good of the whole, made us feel at home within the community and left us with the feeling that Kulmasa is the right place for us.”



Sister Roselyn Ninsiima spends some time in the community garden.

Teaching Sustainable Farming in Tororo

On January 22, 2019, Sisters Christine Kivungi, Prudence Nankunda and Roselyn Ninsiima opened a new community in Tororo, Uganda close to the border of Kenya. A year later seven Sisters are living and working there.

They are planning to get involved in empowering women and teenage mothers and prison ministry. In the meantime, they have already started a model farm for training of the local community in permaculture, food security and sustainability.

The Sisters planted 500 trees around the new farm as well as flowers, bananas, vegetables, maize, and fruit trees. Through the workshops and retreats the Sisters host, they are sharing the vital alternative farming techniques they use on their own farm with their neighbors, helping them to live on the land without depleting it.

Sister Roselyn shares: “We feel compelled as we venture into new mission in this area, to bring the ecological awareness to our surrounding community on how our human actions affect our environment so that we can restore the glory of our Mother Earth.”

Being Present to Refugees in Adjumani

Located in Uganda’s West Nile region, Adjumani’s diocese has the most refugees in Uganda, making it the third largest refugee-hosting country in the world. When the local bishop invited Sisters Christine Lekuru, Mary Anyait and Agnes Katiti to help address the many needs of the refugees, they courageously moved to the northern town not far from the borders of Sudan and Congo. They have begun visiting refugee settlements as well as the local health center, school and youth groups to assess needs. Because Adjumani is one of the hardest places to reach in the country and has an influx of refugees, food and basic needs are very expensive.

The Sisters are developing an eco-farm to sustain themselves and to support the most needy people in the wider community. An initial experiment of planting beans, which prospered in their garden, has inspired the community to follow suit. The Sisters’ goal is to introduce food storage and produce healthier organic food that can help the region fight against poverty and food insecurity.

“The people here are very happy, welcoming and hospitable to us. This gives us joy, courage, strength and makes us feel at home,” Sister Christine shares. She adds, “Inspired by the spirit of our Mother Anna Dengel, we responded to this worthy cause of these people who are vulnerable, marginalized, and made poor. Our healing presence here is very much needed. It is a very humbling experience to be able to go out of our comfort zones and to respond to the urgent mission to refugees and the hosting community in Adjumani.”

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Medical Mission Sisters meet with the Kulmasa chief and his elders in Ghana.



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In the Kulmasa community in Ghana, women take advantage of puddles in the road to wash their clothes.