



in her hands

Annual Report 2021 - 2022



CPAR

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief



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Message from the Chair of the Board

In 2021-22, the world was awash in challenges. We were finding our way through the global pandemic, learning new ways to connect, and finding opportunities in obstacles.

But for CPAR it was all of the above, plus more. It was a year of staying true to our core values at a time where Health had a global focus and a universal appreciation.

In this report we have highlighted the essential role of women and girls in improving health outcomes in the communities where we work. By empowering women to take charge of their health, we increase a community's resilience and opportunities. By ensuring healthy mothers can deliver healthy babies, we invest in the vitality of a community. And by ensuring school children have the basic elements of health – in both water and nutrition – we grow a generation ready to make lasting change through knowledge.

We could not do any of the above without the help of our funders and donors, and for that, we are eternally grateful. CPAR's goal to put health and hope in the hands of those who need it most requires all of us to raise our hands, and thank you for raising yours!



Dr. Steve Ferracuti

Dr. Steve Ferracuti
Chair, Board of Directors

Message from the Executive Director

Stephen Lewis – a longtime advocate for Africa – probably said it best: *“I think when you’ve travelled around a lot in Africa, you understand something that many people here don’t recognize: the extraordinary power that is Africa at the village level.”*

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief has worked at the village level for decades. We understand the power of motivated people to overcome adversity and embrace new challenges – particularly those with a potential for long-term impact.

We also agree to Mr. Lewis’ follow up quote: *“It is always the village women who drive these things.”*

When we decided the theme this year was ‘In her Hands’ it was precisely because we have benefitted from the women we have had the pleasure and honour to work with and for.

Our staff and partners in Malawi, Ethiopia and Tanzania have taught us about persistence in tough times, while our donors and funding partners have taught us about the power of many to join together to make progress on difficult problems. If 2021-22 was about finding our way in a global pandemic, we thank the pathfinders of the communities in which we work who have helped us move ahead in a time of uncertainty.



Kathrina Loeffler,
Executive Director



Our Mission

Building health system capacity and supporting healthy lives in low resourced areas

Our Vision

Stronger health systems in Africa



in her hands

For over 35 years, Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief have worked with the African people in Ethiopia, Malawi and Tanzania, and our hope has never faded.

We have witnessed transformations – large and small – that have brought safe, clean water to communities where the source of life was also a source of disease.

We have seen women take on leadership roles in their villages, marshalling the knowledge and the know how to bring economic stability and healthy livelihoods to their communities.

We have seen African medical professionals work creatively and responsibly to overcome obstacles to deliver life-saving care.


In 2021 CPAR sought a path forward as the pandemic and its effects began to be calculated. We looked for the source of strength, and we didn't have to look very far.

in her hands a family is nourished

The **Green Schools Network** in Malawi grew by another seven schools in 2021-22. The program's broad aims are deceptively simple:

- Improve access to sanitation and hygiene in communities where lack of water and education has resulted in increased instances of water-based illnesses.
- Improve nutrition through establishment of school gardens.
- Improve knowledge in environmental conservation through education and training.





Students learned about permaculture and how to grow without chemicals while conserving the soil

School Agriculture Clubs maintain the gardens and pass on the knowledge to students who follow.

Water is drawn from 30,000-litre rainwater harvesting tanks to supplement the dry season

11 schools are now proud owners of productive gardens. The vegetables support disadvantaged students and their communities, while sales of excess crops fund needed school supplies

Green Schools: Phase 2 by the Numbers:

“With the proceeds that we are getting from vegetable sales, we are able to buy boxes of chalk so that teaching and learning does not stop,” says the head teacher of one school

132 School leaders attended train-the-trainer sessions to promote sanitation and hygiene practices



4,396 students at 4 schools now have access to latrines

210,000 litres of rainwater are being stored in 7 rainwater harvesting tanks

“Some learners on self-boarding . . . have been getting some vegetables to prepare food so that they should not go for studies on an empty stomach. This helps to improve their performance.”

in her hands a child is nurtured

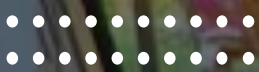
Motherhood bears an awesome responsibility. And in low-resourced areas of northern and remote Ethiopia, it's a responsibility often borne alone, and without the care of trained health professionals.

In 2021-2022 we were able to launch our RUAA pilot project (Remote Ultrasound Capacity Building for Antenatal Access) to test whether midwives and health care workers could expand their scope of practice to include the administration of ultrasounds – while working with ob/gyns in hospitals miles away.

Our goal is to improve child and maternal health through reduced obstetrical complications. Our objectives are ambitious:

- Increase utilization of prenatal services for 60% of the pregnant women in the health zone we are working in.
- Reduce obstetrical complications to 5%
- Improve the capacity of 90% of front-line health care workers
- Increase awareness of health centre capacity to serve women and girls of child-bearing age.





She was carrying twins and in her third trimester, but something was wrong.

Arriving at the Hambiso Health Centre, she met with a midwife, recently trained by CPAR. Armed with a portable ultrasound and fresh from the training on how to use it, he began his work. As he spread the gel over her stomach, he turned on his internet connection. There would be a third person in this appointment – many kilometres away at Fitch Hospital. Dr Dereje Ayana was online as the CPAR-trained health worker methodically moved the ultrasound wand to capture the images that Dr. Ayana would interpret in real time.

The babies were in breech position.

In a country where only 28% of births are attended by health care personnel, and where most rural women deliver at home in remote villages, the delivery of twins was already going to be risky. But twins where both are in breech? The risk to mother and her babies was high. She made the decision to deliver her babies in a clinic.

RUAA trained 14 midwives and health workers in 2021-2022 and began seeing pregnant women in December 2021. By August 2022, 2,198 women utilized the service.



in her hands a daughter is empowered

In rural and remote areas of Ethiopia, it's not easy being a girl.

As they grow into womanhood, the onset of menstruation can often end their education. Child marriage – while illegal – is still a traditional practice, and is usually closely followed by child motherhood. Gender-based violence continues to be a risk – one made greater by the pandemic and more prevalent in the conflict in nearby Tigray, where rape is a weapon of war.

Yet, for all the obstacles in the way, the women and girls we work with in CPAR's program to extend sexual and reproductive health services to women are both persistent and undaunted.

It is to their indefatigable tenacity that we owe much of the progress in 2021-2022 to advance the goal of equal and specialized health care for women and girls.





At the young age of 16, Obsinet Defera showed more bravery than most of us will in a lifetime.

When she learned by accident that her friend – a fellow Grade 8 classmate – was going to marry, she sought her out. The girl had initially been unwilling to marry, but by the time she met with Obsinet, she was ready to obey her family, leave school, and accept her fate.

As one of a group chosen to participate in trainings to be a peer educator, Obsinet had attended CPAR's sessions on sexual and reproductive health and rights. She was ready to make change.

Obsinet started by going to her friend's father. He, in turn, went to Obsinet's father, warning him not to interfere in his child's marriage. Yet she persisted.

She returned to her friend's father – this time armed with her Peer Training manual. She pointed out the likelihood of his daughter living in poverty for the rest of her life. She highlighted the dangers of childbirth for the babies and the too-young mothers who will risk their own lives in bearing them. She made her case for all the reasons why his daughter should return to school and not marry . . . and it worked. He called off the marriage.

Today, Obsinet and her friend are Grade 9 students.



Peer Educators: By the Numbers:



248 teachers took part in the trainings for peer educators

52 schools have school-based clubs for the sharing of information on sexual and reproductive health

Training sessions bridged the knowledge gap on sex health and reproductive rights, with most groups seeing an 11% increase in their topic knowledge as a result

147 students were selected and trained as peer educators in their schools

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.”

in her hands a community heals

The schools in Karatu District of Tanzania decided to take their health into their own hands – quite literally.

In spring 2021, with the pandemic still raging, 15 schools banded together to ask CPAR to assist them with the supplies and education needed to reduce disease transmission through handwashing.

The schools had no handwashing stations and were not equipped to clean the classrooms at end of day. According to the most recent World Health Organization stats, 52% of those in Tanzania do not have access to handwashing stations using soap and clean water.

Over 115 handwashing stations were built – averaging 8 per school – and teachers were taught the fundamentals of good technique in order to pass on to their students.

The project benefitted over 9,300 students, teachers and school staff from 15 schools in the Karatu district.



The torch passes

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief was founded by physicians in 1984, and since then, CPAR has continued to benefit from the healing hands of Canadian health professionals – including Dr. Steve Ferracuti, CPAR’s long-time board member and chair, and a tireless advocate for strengthening health systems in Africa.

Dr Steve has served on CPAR’s board for just over 18 years. He has travelled to hospitals in Africa and bonded with the doctors and nurses he met along the way. He chaired the Program Advisory Committee of CPAR and he helped bring more Canadian health professionals to work alongside their African colleagues.

It’s a long way from Haliburton, Ontario, but Steve’s commitment to rural health at home and abroad has benefitted all those who have had the opportunity to be a part of his unique global continuum of care.

In 2023 Dr Steve will be passing the torch to the next group of committed volunteers. Our work has shone brighter with his hands on the light and CPAR, and the thousands of people whose lives we have touched over the last 18 years, are grateful for his commitment.



Thank You!

2021-2022 proved to be a challenging year as we navigated the uncertainty of the pandemic and the civil unrest in northern Ethiopia.

Yet each day, we sought to make progress on our ambitious agenda of change to have a lasting impact on the people we serve.

Thank you to Global Affairs Canada, the Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) and organizations such as Blossom Foundation, Gay Lea Foundation, ChariTree, Ryan's Well and many more Canadian foundations and individuals, for delivering health and hope into the hands of those who need it most.

