

# Helping young girls to finish school

A graduate of Makerere University, Dr. Irene Kyamummi has worked for over ten years on the CHEP project, which provides health care to children aged 4-14 in the slums of Kenya's capital, Nairobi.

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After winning the Harambee 2020 Award for the Promotion and Equality of African Women, the Ugandan doctor, Irene Kyamummi

gave a lecture at the headquarters of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of the Catholic University of Valencia (UCV). She outlined her work in disadvantaged areas of Kenya and Uganda explaining that many girls drop out of school at the end of primary school. This affects their self-esteem and their way of being in society. She reiterated the need to help African girls from primary school onwards to enable them to continue their education.

Dr. Kyamummi has worked for over ten years on the CHEP project, which provides health care to children aged 4-14 in the slums of Kenya's capital Nairobi. Along with medical care for children, the program provides training and skills for professional development, especially for young girls and mothers from slums.

Since the project began in Kenya, more than 5,000 children and their

families have benefited from it. “We do simple things,” she explained, “we visit children in schools, where we de-worm them and do medical check-ups, taking those who have serious ailments to nearby hospitals. Many times, they do not even know they are sick.” She highlighted the connection between health and education pointing out that local school teachers have affirmed that the CHEP program reduces absenteeism due to poor health.

Dr Kyammumi has now embarked on developing a similar project in the suburbs of Kampala, “Starting is never easy,” she acknowledges, “but I believe it is possible to achieve the same thing as in Kenya. I was surprised to be nominated to receive this award since CHEP is a small project. This award recognizes all the work that has been done by the CHEP project and commends the impact it

has had on the lives of many children.”

## Harambee NGO

Dr. Kyamummi has been able to carry out this work, thanks to the NGO Harambee. This NGO has implemented and financed more than 100 projects in 22 countries in sub-Saharan Africa with the help of many volunteers and donors. These projects focus on literacy, health, education, the empowerment of women and leadership, public awareness etc.

Their ‘Designs that change lives’ project is especially noteworthy. The project brings together Valencian designers who obtain scholarships so that girls from Ivory Coast and Togo can study dressmaking. It is carried out in collaboration with the COSO Foundation for the Development of Communication and Society.

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