

## A LETTER FROM THE FIELD, BURUNDI

November 12, 2010

Greetings SunEPI team,

Here at a village health clinic in Burundi, Central Africa, we have been able to appreciate first-hand the tremendous and far-reaching benefits of SunEPI's programs. Before our solar-electrified clinic opened, the communities we now capably serve were suffering from some of the worst health outcomes on the planet. A public health catastrophe exacerbated by the near-total collapse of Burundi's healthcare infrastructure, after more than a decade of ethnically-driven civil war. But thanks to the ingenuity and foresight of the SunEPI team, our organization is now delivering high-quality healthcare in this area.



*SunEPI's Walt Ratterman multi-tasks as he delivers medical supplies to Dziwe Ntaba of Village Health Works, Burundi, on behalf of Knightsbridge International.*

Our work has been made possible by SunEPI's philosophy: that the areas most in need should be the focus of our humanitarian efforts. The solar-electrification of our village clinic has allowed for direct clinical benefits such as: allowing for diagnostic capacity like laboratory equipment and ultrasound, providing cold storage for essential vaccines and medications, offering around-the-clock obstetric and emergency care, establishing an IT network for tele-medicine and vital communication, etc, etc...

Solar-electrification has also provided the population we serve with various secondary benefits, including what we call the "magnet affect." Communities throughout the countryside hear about the technological facilities at our clinic, and this serves as the best way of recruiting patients from far and wide to access our health services. Perhaps the best demonstration of this positive health-seeking behavior is in the tremendous surge in enrollment in our pre-natal care program.

Furthermore, SunEPI's operating principle of training local technicians to monitor and maintain the photo-voltaic systems they install adds yet another typically unmeasured level of meaningful impact. The same Burundian and Rwandan technicians that were initially trained by SunEPI's Lead Project Engineers now take great pride in training other fellow countrymen to the same standard.

The true marvel of SunEPI's philosophy and programs lies in the cascading benefits such as these. Ranging from the value and productivity of individual lives saved, to the community-wide affects of health promoting beliefs and behavior, to the societal benefits of vocational training and pride of ownership, to the global benefits of implementing and modeling renewable energy sources.

SunEPI's programs are able to achieve a level of sustainability that is unsurpassed in any humanitarian effort that I have ever studied or encountered. On behalf of all of us at Village Health Works, our most heartfelt gratitude goes out to the entire SunEPI team, and all those that support and appreciate their efforts.

Sincerely,

Dziwe Ntaba, MD/MPH