

Sowing the seeds of health

Mannatech trains Ugandan chemists to analyze plants, herbs used for centuries by African healers to promote well being

Coppell, TX – Geresome Mugisha somehow sensed that the frail, 2-year-old boy carried to his village for treatment was destined to die. Weak and crippled, the little patient could only whimper in his mother’s arms.

But then, to his amazement, 14-year-old Mugisha witnessed a miracle. Day after day for a month, Mugisha’s father fed the patient a mixture of herbs gathered from plants that grew near the remote Western Uganda village. One day, the toddler stood and walked, freed from the debilitating illness that had warped his slender limbs.

“It was an astonishing sight,” said Mugisha, now a senior technologist with Uganda’s main research laboratory. “My father returned the boy to life.”



Mugisha is one of three chemists tapped by the Uganda Ministry of Health to unlock the secrets within the East African nation’s rich biodiversity. Long before the advent of modern medicine, Africans turned to local healers for health care. Today, nearly 80 percent of Uganda’s 27 million people still rely on these local healers, according to a study by the World Bank Group, which provides financial and technical assistance to developing countries.

Mannatech, Incorporated, a global wellness solutions provider and leader in proprietary glyconutritional supplements, is training the three Ugandan chemists in the rigorous process of collecting plants, extracting their compounds and identifying the functional ingredients.

“Uganda is home to an estimated 30 percent of the world’s biodiversity,” said Dr. Robert Sinnott, Mannatech’s chief science officer. “A number of their plants probably have substantial functional value. Although European pharmaceutical firms have offered to negotiate harvesting rights with Uganda, none have offered the nation much in return.”

Mannatech believes Uganda's glyconutrient research will uncover sources of high-quality plant sugars that could enhance the Company's proprietary glyconutritional products. In turn, Uganda would have the opportunity to advance its national effort to promote health and create an industry around one of its most abundant natural resources.

Mannatech's products are dietary supplements, which are classified as food. These products do not prevent or treat disease. If new glyconutritionals can be found, such products could be used to boost the immune systems both of Mannatech's customers and others worldwide, thereby promoting health and well being.

"The world is desperately looking for nutritional discoveries that can improve our quality of life. We're excited to have the opportunity to assist in exploring Uganda's rich biodiversity and to share these potentially new glyconutritional plant sources with the world," said Sam Caster, Mannatech CEO and chairman of the board.

Mannatech, which began operations in 1994, leads the industry in finding the most efficacious sources of plant-based nutritional ingredients. The Company announced a groundbreaking discovery in 1996 after formulating a nutritional supplement comprised of eight plant sugars, also referred to as glyconutrients. The glyconutritional supplement, Ambrotose complex, was specifically designed to support the body's immune system.

Medical researchers had discovered that eight specific glyconutrient sugars were needed at the cellular level for proper immune function. Six of the sugars, however, are deficient in modern diet, so Mannatech set out to find alternative sources for the glyconutrients.

From Costa Rica to the Australian outback to the coastal waters of Tasmania, Mannatech scientists and researchers scoured the world, searching for new and potent glyconutrient sources. That effort came to fruition in Ambrotose, which has been awarded 18 international patents. The latest approval came in August 2005, when the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office granted Ambrotose a 'composition of matter' patent – a category of patent receiving the most rigorous government scrutiny.

Mannatech's glyconutritional philosophy toward health and wellness complements Africa's time-honored traditions. Stories of survival are passed from village to village. Alfred Nyero, one of the three Ugandan chemists training at Mannatech, is personally familiar with traditional healers.

When he was six, Nyero was stricken with a debilitating illness. The symptoms were all too familiar: coughing, itchy eyes, fever and a rash. It was the measles, a disease that has tormented Africa for decades. His family summoned an herbalist, who boiled the crushed roots of a local

grass with a handful of miniature Mukene fish from a nearby river. After three days of ingesting this bitter mixture, Nyero was restored to health.

“Traditional healers play a significant health care role in our country,” Nyero said.

Uganda President Yoweri Museveni has diligently pushed the nation toward recognizing and elevating the role of traditional healing. The Ugandan parliament is working to pass the Traditional Medicine Bill, which would integrate the crafts plied by local healers into the national health-care system by creating training programs for healers and establishing working relationships with medical doctors.

“God has blessed this union between Uganda and Mannatech,” said Uganda Ambassador to the United States, Edith Ssempala. “President Yoweri Museveni and the Ugandan government are excited to work with Mannatech to improve the health and wellness of our people and to become a distribution point of unique plant molecules to the entire world. We look forward to deepening our relationship.”

About Mannatech, Incorporated

Mannatech, based in Coppell, Texas, is a wellness solutions provider that sells its products through a global network-marketing system throughout the United States and the international markets of Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Taiwan and Denmark. For additional information about Mannatech, please visit its corporate Web site: www.mannatech.com. Media may contact Alan A. Van Zelfden, media relations specialist, at 972-471-7334 or by e-mail at avanzelfden@mannatech.com.

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