



AAA NEWS BRIEF – APRIL 2009

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION: LESSONS FROM AFRICAN CSOs

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Learn About African Action on AIDS (AAA)

AAA is a tax exempt non-profit organization registered in the USA and operating under section 501(c) 3 of the IRS code. It is also registered in Cameroon (auth. No 00174/A/MINAT/DAP/SDLP/SAC). It has special consultative status with the United Nations ECOSOC and the UN Department of Information.

AAA Mission Statement

We believe that no one is alone. We succeed when the youth we serve become agents of their own change and use their knowledge to change their communities.

We reach the youth of sub-saharan Africa whose lives are affected by AIDS.

We affirm that tomorrow's responsible parents are the knowledgeable youth of today.

We educate youth with the knowledge they need to stay alive, and teach them to share that knowledge with their peers

We build extended family support networks in local villages and communities to deliver security, food, education and healthcare to children orphaned by AIDS.

We create healthcare awareness by funding women and children's health.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION: WHAT WE LEARN FROM ORGANIZATIONS OF THE AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY

ARTICLE Three: UKIMWI Orphans Assistance (UOA)

More than twenty five years after the world first became aware of AIDS, it is clear that AIDS is still a threat in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its debilitating cycle definitely impedes on many aspects of the continent's development. Unfortunately, the death toll has been so heavy and overwhelming that official policies and strategies have tended to place more emphasis on treatment rather than prevention.

On the other hand, community responses throughout Africa have mirrored their social base and have generally adapted their initiatives to local needs and available resources. In so doing they have focused mostly on prevention and mitigation. **Prevention**, at community level has focused on reducing new infections and containing the epidemic through information, education and campaigns like the AAA JUST KNOW CAMPAIGN - for behavior change; condoms use training and distribution, targeting vulnerable groups. **Mitigation** has mainly focused on poverty reduction, and initiatives reinforcing community capacity to better resist and respond to the epidemic.

The purpose of the series of short articles that will be published in AAA News Briefs in the next twelve months is to highlight local responses of organizations of the African civil society. Many organizations that initiated these responses were not able to pursue their activities for lack of resources. We would like this collective wisdom to inspire other communities even beyond the continent, while honoring the initiators, many of whom are /were partners of AAA.

UKIMWI Orphans Assistance (UOA) was co-founded in 1989, by Dr John Rutayuga who is its Executive Director. Ukimwi is a Swahili word for AIDS. This organization operates in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. AAA's involvement is limited to BUKOBA, Tanzania, where 14 communities, 24 groups are caring for more than 500 orphans. UOA is committed to assisting orphans and vulnerable children to grow and develop, in their cultural environment, into mature, self sufficient, productive members of their communities. This commitment is what brought AAA and UOA together since 1994, because the mission statement of AAA affirms that "...We succeed when the youth we serve become agents of their own change and use their knowledge to change their communities". For twenty years, UOA has successfully employed a culturally based paradigm building on the strength of the African cultural tradition in which the care of orphans is accepted as the responsibility of members of kin or the extended family. It provides the necessities of life and basic services to enable AIDS orphans and vulnerable children to grow and develop into mature, responsible and self-dependent members of their communities and nations. UOA, also builds, through socio-economic development, the capacity of the kinship groups/extended family members and communities in order to serve the needs of the children under their care. Critical in this strategy is the use of the *kibanja* – a traditional family farm. The *kibanja* is an economically valuable asset and a symbol of social prestige. Developing the *kibanja* of the orphans and the foster families socially and economically empowers these families and their capacity to provide care for children. UOA-assisted villages create about 70% of the resources needed to raise AIDS-orphans, an important source of food security.

Compiled by AAA secretariat and based on knowledge and files accumulated since 1994 as well as info from UOA web site: www.ukimwiorphans.com

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Pictures of UKIMWI orphans



www.africanactiononids.org