



# AAA NEWS BRIEF – AUGUST 2008

## Letters to the future – A vision of a future without AIDS

Your contributions keep us going!  
Please send a tax-exempt check payable to one of African Action on AIDS' addresses below

### 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.

### AAA's work is based on 3 programmes:

#### “JUST KNOW” Campaign emphasizes

- Knowledge of one's body
- Knowledge that leads to behaviour change
- Knowledge that helps to visualize a future without AIDS

#### “Health before Wealth” Concept promotes

- Safe potable water and sanitation (wells, latrines, hand washing stations in schools)
- Income generating activities (IGA) like treated mosquito bed nets and WaterGuard – a liquid that purifies water – to create a fund for women's health in rural areas.

“Women's economic autonomy” through our **Scholarships Programme**. This scholarship enables each teenage orphan girl to complete at least a secondary, general or technical education that will lead to her financial and economic autonomy, greatly reducing the risk of being infected with HIV through sexual abuse and violence.

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Letters to the future – *visualization involves not just gathering an image of the future, but also conceptualizing the path to that future*

Dear Syndy,

Presently I am in Form 3 going to Form 4 and I am 13 years old. I study English and French and I am studying Arabic too. The first time I heard about HIV/AIDS, I was very scared and I took it very seriously. I decided to protect myself and prevent the disease from getting into me. I listened to many television and radio programs about AIDS and decided that I would be alive and become a parent by 2020 without being infected. To do this, I have to follow certain rules and regulations and maintain decent attitudes so that I do not get infected with the virus. Here are some of the decent attitudes I have decided to maintain: I say NO to all indecent propositions like having sexual intercourse before marriage or to earn money.

Education is my priority, so I do not waste time on other things which are of little or no importance to me. I make the right choice of friends so that I won't be influenced negatively; I maintain my personal hygiene; I don't use un-sterilised material such as blades, needles, syringes; I pray and believe in God and follow his commandments.

This disease has no cure for the moment, but I strongly believe that the cure will be found one day hopefully before you are born. The disease has made many innocent children of this generation to become orphans infected or affected by it (150,000 of them are in Cameroon). This is not healthy for the country because if everybody especially the youths who are the leaders of tomorrow die from HIV/AIDS, there will be no development in our country. I have therefore taken the decision not to be infected with the disease and to be a member of the HIV/AIDS free community.

This does not mean that those already infected should be rejected and stigmatized. Instead, we should give them hope and moral support so that they can live longer while making sure that they maintain a balanced diet and a healthy mind.

Syndy, these are some of the ways I chose to face the challenges of my generation and I hope you will use these values to face the challenges of your own generation.

Your dear Mom,  
Rashida.

You can find more of these letters on our Website



**Pictures and painting of an AIDS-free Africa.**  
Author (left), AIDS free African kids (middle) & youth painting (right)