



AAA e-NEWS BRIEF – MARCH 2012

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION – ZERO STIGMATIZATION

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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's work is based on 3 programmes:

“JUST KNOW” Campaign emphasizes:

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

“Health before Wealth” Concept promotes:

- Testing for HIV
- Clean hands (hand washing stations)
- Clean water (drinking stations)
- Dignified toilets
- Fighting against Malaria (treated mosquito bed nets)
- Vaccination
- Anti worms medicine

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

HEAD TEACHER REJECTED FOR BEING HIV POSITIVE

This story is a victory against stigmatization. A positive outcome of this kind lies in the capacity we have as human beings, to develop zero tolerance to all kind of discriminations/stigmatizations. This great story was brought to our attention by Mr FOGUE FOGUITO, Executive Director - Positive Generation, www.camerounaids.org. While we thank him for enriching us, we also would like, during this women's month to draw your kind attention to the lesson contained in the following box that paraphrases Martin Neimoller:

“When they came for communists, I said nothing because I was not a communist. When they came for trade unions, I said nothing because I was not a trade unionist. When they came for blacks, I said nothing because I was not black. When they came for Catholics, Muslims, Jews, Suffragettes, HIV- positives, I said nothing. WHEN THEY CAME FOR ME THERE WAS NO ONE TO SPEAK OUT”

“Remember Proscovia AYO?

She is that HIV-positive head teacher from Tororo district (UGANDA), whose deadlock story we published in New Vision's Mwalimu on March 2, 2011. In the story titled “**Head Teacher Rejected for being HIV Positive**”, we followed Ayo's life story from the time she set out to study and achieve her dream as a teacher, to when her dreams began to crumble down at the hands of her being HIV-positive. The story painted a picture of the teacher's struggles in life, an outstanding scenario being the one where she, because of HIV/AIDS, **was discriminated against and chased from office by stick-wielding villagers who took the law in their hands to end her means of subsistence**. Looking into the unfortunate occurrence, the story portrayed weakness by education ministry in handling the woman's dilemma. At the time of the story's publication, it had been 8 years since this act of lawlessness had taken place. For 8 years, Ayo sought intervention writing letters to all and sundry at education ministry, to district's chief administrative officer, to education service commission, to LC5 chairperson of Tororo, name them. But no help had come her way. **The situation had been worsened by her name subsequently getting dropped from payroll**, a thing that stressed her and got her bedridden for 8 months with no hopes of ever getting up again. Along the way, **her four children had been discontinued from school due to her inability to pay fees for them**...With this state of event all highlighted in an article, Ayo's story became something of a national concern. The New Vision was subsequently inundated by letters from readers, some demanding the sacking of the district officials as frustrating the woman; others expressing sheer shock at how a teacher could be fired by locals and how the education ministry was taking forever to reinstate her...At the local FM radio station Rock Mambo, a talk show was dedicated to Ayo's dilemma, as portrayed by New Vision. Listeners called in, some even proposing mass violence against the said officials on the air. **With pressure mounting from every direction...Ayo was reinstated on November 7, 2011 as head teacher** not in the school whose locals plagued her over her HIV status, but at Pajangango Primary School in Magola Sub County, West Budama, Tororo district. “I cannot believe that after a whole 8 years, justice has finally prevailed”. Thanks to New Vision for giving urgency to my problem and making it local concern, **says the 51 year-old head teacher**. It feels so good to be back in class doing what I love. But most of all, I love serving my nation. Somehow, it reassures me that I am still valuable to the nation much as I am HIV-positive”

Ruth Bamela Engo,
President



Executive Director, FOGUITO teaching School children how to prevent HIV AIDS

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