



AAA e-NEWS BRIEF – JULY 2012

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION – MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH SMALL GRANTS

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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.

USAID AWARE II End of Project Meeting was held in Lome, Togo on 12-13 June 2012. The West African Ambassador's Fund (WAAF) is the small mechanism that supported grassroots organizations to replicate and expand services for HIV/AIDS, family planning and maternal and child health through best practices that had been regionally identified and adopted. The 12 organizations selected successfully implemented their grant programmes in 8 countries, including Cameroon, with the technical support from USAID

AWARE II. African Action on AIDS was one of the projects as reported in AAA e-News Brief, May 2012. The meeting was a dynamic learning opportunity where participants from different African countries with different backgrounds, shared experiences, building a common regional vision that will definitely facilitate future interactions and cooperation.

We like to share the following success story brought back from that great experience. This story, not only sheds light on dangers of stigmatization, but also draws attention on positive actions of local organizations.

“After the death of her husband in 2011, Faremansou went to stay with her in-laws in Dana village near the city of Yagoua in northern Cameroon. In March 2011, she fell seriously ill and was sent to the health centre where she tested HIV positive. On that day, she was abandoned by her in-laws without care. Her condition worsened to the point where she could no longer walk.

As time went on, things continued to worsen and I could no longer get up; sores emerged all over my body, she narrated with tears in her eyes. Her 2 daughters were also abandoned by their father's family and without income or support, the girls and their mother struggled to survive. In May of 2011, Bouba, a community volunteer working with Codas-Caritas visited Faremansou....listened to her story carefully, reported to codas-Caritas that decided to assign 2 dedicated health volunteers who dressed Faremansou wounds 2 times a day for 14 days and then once a day until completely healed. Faremansou and her daughters were provided food aid and a blood test conducted to find the level of damage (CD4 count) that HIV had caused to her immune system. She was also put on ARV medication.

She gained a better understanding of her illness through awareness sessions conducted by health volunteers. Her recovery was so complete that “I have been able to make a tomato and tobacco farm which allows me to continue feeding my family”. She added: I had lost hope, but today, I thank the Lord for sending representatives of Codas-Caritas to me”.

Ruth Bamela Engo,
President / Founder



Family picture of all participants



Cameroonian participants, right to left: **Boupda Alexis** (Director of CHP), **Dr Florence Tumasang** (DSF, MINSANTE), **Pr. TIH Pius Muffih** (Cameroon Baptist Health Department), **Ruth Bamela Engo** (AAA's President/ Founder)

To read the longer version of this story, visit: <http://stories.usaid.gov>

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