

EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA HIV/AIDS RESPONSE PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT April 2006

Nema C.M. Aluku

“When spiders unite, they can tie down an elephant.”
An Ethiopian proverb

Positive Living in resource poor settings



Edna is living with the virus that causes AIDS. Her parents died three years ago and she together with her siblings is now under the care of her aunt and uncle. She is 11 years old and in class 7. Life has not been easy for this young and courageous girl. She has to go to the clinic on a monthly basis to receive medication. She is currently on antibiotics, one day she will start ART. Fortunately, her younger brother is not HIV+.

The day I went to her home, I found her very elderly grandmother seated under a shade, her aunt whom I was informed is mentally challenged was also present. Her uncle appeared later as we were leaving the homestead. He is currently on anti TB medication. The family is living below poverty line and has no source of income apart from the traditional beer brewing trade that puts Edna and her siblings at risk.

Edna and other HIV positive children in the Cheptigit Location Eldoret district in the rift valley province of Kenya, have hope. The Community Based Health Care

program (CBHC) at Plateau Mission Hospital undertake regular visits to such households to ensure that community safety nets are in place for children like Edna. Neighbors are encouraged to accompany Edna for her monthly clinics since her caregivers are not in a position to do so due to other reasons. Such a household is faced with a number of challenges, namely food insecurity and poor nutrition. The day I visited the home, everyone, including Edna was eating plain boiled dry maize. This is what the family eats on a daily basis and whenever possible accompanied by some vegetables bought at a near by kiosk.

The family has a small piece of land about 1-½ acres, which is used to grow maize, a staple food and some beans. The family does not own any livestock, no chickens! They do not grow any vegetables.

The OVC program has supported Edna’s elder sister Gladys, to remain in formal education. By the end of 2006, she will sit for her Kenya national school leaving exams and hopefully get into vocational training or join university. Our hope is that others shall come on board to help Edna’s family by ensuring that her sister is trained and equipped to carter for the needs of her siblings.



How do we ensure community resiliency in the face of HIV/AIDS?

How can you help such a household?

Your views are deeply appreciated.

Community Champions in the fight against HIV/AIDS

The month of April was mainly focused on field visits to the Rift valley province in Kenya to partner sites under the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) implementing the orphans and vulnerable children’s (OVC) program under Plateau Mission Hospital CBHC program.

