

A Message from our African Director Isaac Mbaziira 18/12/2010

HIV/AIDS is a major public health concern and cause of death in Africa and the entire world. Although Africa is inhabited by just over 14.7% of the world's population, it is estimated to have more than 88% of people living with HIV and 92% of all AIDS deaths, as research states by the end of 2007. However, the epidemic seem to be growing high and higher for example in Uganda than expected, despite of being the first state in the East-Central African region to declare HIV cases in 1982, followed by Kenya in 1984 and Tanzania in 1985.

In an attempt to describe the severity of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, "Society's fittest, not its frailest, are the ones who die—adults spirited away, leaving the old and the children behind. You cannot define risk groups: everyone who is sexually active is at risk. Babies too, [are] unwittingly infected by mothers. Barely a single family remains untouched. Most do not know how or when they caught the virus, many never know they have it, many who do know don't tell anyone as they lie dying".

Health industry; When family members get sick with HIV or other sicknesses, family members often end up selling most of their belongings in order to provide health care for the individual(s). Medical facilities in many African countries are lacking. Many health care workers are also not available, in part due to lack of training by governments and lack of participation of civil society organizations mainly NGOs, of which it may help in the awareness of the transmission of the disease, and especially where there is a need for medical professionals.

The world is therefore great for TLC's ideas and knowledge I believe, in bringing forward the issue of making the youths healthy and smart, both physically and in the brain. As a result however, they will be able to fight for not being encroached in the cycle of poverty; of being isolated, vulnerable, powerlessness, physical weakness, and material poverty, as described by Robert Chambers, in his book of Rural Development.

Girl child remain in a trap as they are pushed by poverty in the society, being taken by whoever approaches them intern for money (very little even) to be able to live in moderate environment and as a result, they get transmitted with the virus. Rape and defilement still also remain high, hence affecting babies, teenagers, and the youths, as well as women (mothers).

Best wishes in this festive season and a prosperous new year 2011.

Isaac Mbaziira

African/Country Director, TLC Uganda