



FEATURE ARTICLE



AMBASSADOR TOBIAS WITH THE HEAD OF THE ADDIS ABABA HEALTH BUREAU, DR. EYOB KAMIL (CENTER), AND STAFF OF THE ADDIS KETEMA PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

PERSONAL PROFILE

Our "Profile" series features stories from individuals involved in FHI's field work. Matthew Lezire, 19, writes from Namwera, Malawi.

I was born in rural Malawi, the fourth of seven children. Our family was one of the poorest among the poor families in our village. My gloomy days started at the age of nine when my mother died. She was the breadwinner of our family and provided us with basic necessities such as food and soap. It was very fortunate that the new State President declared free primary education in 1993, the year my mother died, so I was able to continue school.

The good news is that I was selected to attend secondary school. However, it is quite unaffordable even to many middle class families. By the middle of my third year, bad news hit my ears one morning. The headmaster called me to his office to expel me because I was failing to pay my school fees.

Reaching home, I recalled a local organization that provides care and support for very sick people as well as orphans and children in need, the Namwera AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC). I spoke with a NACC staff member and shared my story. She told me I met their criteria for an "orphan," and agreed to pay my school fees. NACC also offered me technical courses in elementary typing and computer programs. With NACC's support, I passed my fourth-year secondary exams with flying colors. Recently, I sat for the university entry exams at University of Malawi's College of Medicine. I hope to be a doctor some day and help other orphans and vulnerable children in any possible way.

MATTHEW LEZIRE ATTENDS A TYPING CLASS, PART OF THE NACC PROGRAM FOR ORPHANS SUPPORTED BY FHI



U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Visits Ethiopia

Ambassador Randall Tobias, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, traveled to Ethiopia from April 22 to 24, 2004. During his stay, he visited HIV/AIDS initiatives in Addis Ababa to observe what is happening at the grass roots level.

At Addis Ketema Health Center, Ambassador Tobias witnessed the abundance of patients coming for consultations on infectious diseases and to receive voluntary counseling and testing services. In the waiting room, patients watched the video of the hit theme song from FHI's Compassion, Tolerance and Sensitivity (CATS) campaign, "Compassion is Modernity," which features Ethiopia's top pop stars and is screened continuously. The center's chief doctor, Dr. Yonas, reported that in the last two months since the service opened, up to 17.2 percent of mothers taking HIV tests were positive. Considering these figures, Tobias restated his intention to contribute more to the fight, paying particular attention to access to antiretroviral treatment.

Ambassador Tobias also visited the Organization for Social Services for AIDS, an association of local NGOs with a counseling and testing center. At the center, he demonstrated his leadership by being tested for HIV. Next, he visited beneficiaries of the Hiwot HIV/AIDS Prevention and Support Organization, a home and community-based care program supported by FHI's IMPACT Project. Finally, Tobias and Addis Ababa's Mayor Arkebe Ekubay jointly inaugurated a counseling and testing center in the Zewditu Hospital that is funded as part of President Bush's US\$15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Tobias later explained, "I challenged all of the community leaders who were at this event to do what I had done the day before: go get tested, and tell somebody that you got tested... That's how we will begin to get rid of the stigma." The mayor then took up the challenge by getting tested on national TV, the first time an Ethiopian government official has done so.

Kenya Girl Guides Just Say NO

"As a girl, if you feel
whatever you are told to do is wrong,
simply say no and mean NO.
Let that NO be seen on your face.
Let that NO be heard from your mouth
Let your hands say NO."

- excerpt from "My Decision," a poem by Kenya Girl Guide Susan Oloo, age 11.

Susan is one of 130,000 members of the Kenya Girl Guides Association (KGGGA). FHI has worked with KGGGA since 1999 to implement a peer education program for HIV/AIDS prevention, including training materials, talking points and a new badge requirement.

With funds from the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, FHI through the IMPACT Project is expanding the number of schools and girls reached with prevention messages. In addition, more attention will be given to younger girls—Brownies—through the inclusion of the "Sara" series into their life skills program. The "Sara" concept was developed by UNICEF for the Africa region, to model behavior of young women using a comic book format with training videos. The main character, Sara, becomes involved in various potentially dangerous or unhealthy situations, and portrays her efforts to remove herself from such situations and to abstain from sex. Comic books and videos will be distributed in up to 900 schools throughout Kenya. The Girl Guides will also distribute Nuru comic books which have been produced by the IMPACT Project for older girls. The teenage girl, Nuru, is put into potentially dangerous scenarios, and her actions to abstain and delay her first sexual encounter provide a basis for discussion for difficult to talk about, but very real, situations that young Kenyan girls face every day.

YOUNG GIRL GUIDES RECITE A POEM CALLED "MY DECISION" ABOUT JUST SAYING "NO"



DID YOU KNOW?

Up to 60 percent of new HIV infections in women worldwide occur before the age of 20.

MTV and Partners Reach Youth Worldwide With "Staying Alive" Campaign



MTV: Music Television, the world's largest television network and leading multimedia brand for youth, has taken a leadership role to expand the reach of HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness messages for youth beyond any level previously attempted. "At MTV, we feel a strong responsibility to not only entertain our audiences, but to address the issues most affecting their lives," explains Georgia Franklin, Vice President of Public Affairs for MTV Networks International.

In 2002, MTV expanded its Staying Alive programming substantially beyond past years efforts, working with a team of partners including YouthNet—a USAID-funded project managed by FHI—the Kaiser Family Foundation, the World Bank, and others. The ground-breaking Staying Alive campaign featured concerts, a global forum between experts and youth, a program with former President Bill Clinton, a documentary with profiles of young people from three developing countries, and public service announcements. MTV offered the Staying Alive content "rights free," and FHI and other partners worked pro-actively to disseminate the programs as widely as possible. Stations in more than 160 countries with a reach of 800 million homes broadcast the programs.

Staying Alive informs young people about HIV, promotes safe lifestyle choices, provides information about local AIDS-support organizations, and mobilizes youth to overcome the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS. The Staying Alive partners worked closely to craft messages appropriate for developing countries. Lessons from 2002 helped shape the 2003 campaign, which reached 938 million households or 74 percent of the world's TV homes, and featured a television special on Nelson Mandela in conversation with young people about HIV/AIDS and other topics. YouthNet is now working with MTV to plan the 2004 campaign which will launch in the coming weeks.

New Resource

"Healthy Living" is a new series of low literacy guides and brochures. It includes a flip chart for health care workers to use while counseling their patients about opportunistic infections, antiretroviral treatment and side effects using simple expressions and pictures. The Government of Kenya produced the guides with support from FHI, and financial assistance from USAID and the Pfizer Foundation.

For more information, please e-mail gbachman@fhi.org

Namibia



YOUNG NAMIBIAN GIRLS PARTICIPATE IN AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM RUN BY CATHOLIC AIDS ACTION ORGANIZATION WITH FHI SUPPORT

The Republic of Namibia is known for its breathtaking sand dunes and diverse ecosystems. With a population of just 1.8 million and more than 20 percent of sexually active adults infected with HIV, Namibia ranks among the worst affected countries worldwide in terms of HIV prevalence. FHI supports national and local government agencies, AIDS service organizations, faith-based hospitals and faith-based organizations to implement programs for the general population as well as targeted programs for the workforce, youth, pregnant women, and orphans made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

News from the Field

Youth Find Hope at Walvis Bay Multipurpose Center

Teenagers who previously complained of “nothing to do” in Walvis Bay, a quiet town four hours from the capital city Windhoek, are now kept busy at the Walvis Bay Multipurpose Center. Services at the center include computer training courses, environmental clean-up projects, drama and cultural activities, and an HIV/AIDS health outreach training program for out-of-school youth facilitated by a Peace Corps volunteer assigned to the center. The health outreach workers currently provide HIV education and training to 19 companies on a “fee for services” basis, and also team up with Population Services International to provide AIDS education and outreach to youth at local bars and schools. Theobald Mukena, 22, a youth volunteer who teaches computer literacy at the center says, “Being at the center stops young people from doing something wrong—it opens people’s eyes to see that there is hope.” In addition to the youth programs, the center operates a New Start voluntary counseling and testing center, a soup kitchen and after-school program for orphans and vulnerable children, and a support group for people living with HIV/AIDS. The center is a joint program of the municipality of Walvis Bay, the U.S. Department of Defense, USAID, the Peace Corps and FHI.



COMPUTER CLASS GRADUATES AT WALVIS BAY MULTIPURPOSE CENTER

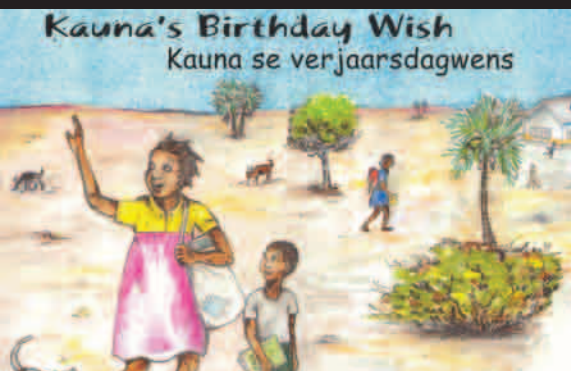
Preventing and Treating HIV/AIDS at Rural Faith-Based Hospitals

With funding from the President’s Prevention of Mother-to-Child Initiative, HIV counseling and testing and services to prevent mothers from transmitting HIV to their newborns is now available at five rural faith-based district hospitals, serving a population of more than 400,000 people. Additional funding from the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief will support the full roll out of antiretroviral treatment according to national guidelines at all five district hospitals by September 2004. In support of this program, FHI provides assistance to three faith-based organizations affiliated with the Catholic and Lutheran mission district hospitals to educate the community about the services and develop a referral system between the health facilities and home-based care. These organizations have worked closely with the community to gain support for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

New Book Spreads Message of “Education for All”

Kauna’s Birthday Wish is a new children’s storybook that promotes education for thousands of underprivileged orphans and vulnerable children by providing information on how to receive a waiver to pay School Development Funds. Many children in Namibia stop attending school because they cannot afford these fees. *Kauna’s Birthday Wish* tells how Kauna, a poor orphan, is able to attend school by applying for an exemption of the fees—as allowed under the revised government law and policy, but is largely unknown and complicated to achieve. The book is available in schools and community libraries throughout Namibia in three languages. It was written by Catholic AIDS Action with support from FHI and USAID.

KAUNA’S BIRTHDAY WISH IS A NEW STORYBOOK THAT PROMOTES EDUCATION FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN



Vulnerable Children Speak out in India

Gates Award to Fund Prevention Programs in India

Avahan, the India AIDS initiative of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, selected FHI to expand prevention programs in one of India's states with the highest HIV prevalence. With a US\$10.5 million grant, FHI will develop programs that reach populations at highest risk with risk reduction messages, reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, and build the capacity of local organizations to respond to the spread of the virus. In the state of Maharashtra, population 98 million, an estimated one percent of pregnant women and more than five percent of those at high risk have HIV. FHI will collaborate closely with Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society, Mumbai District AIDS Control Society, local non-governmental organizations and other partners to provide those most at risk in the districts of Mumbai and Thane with prevention messages and expanded services. Avahan—"call to action" in Sanskrit—is a US\$200 million grant-making initiative.

ILO Supports HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs at Indonesian Workplaces

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and FHI facilitated the passing of a ministerial decree that requires all companies in Indonesia to establish workplace prevention programs. It also prohibits discrimination against HIV-positive workers and pre-employment HIV screening. The Minister of Manpower launched the decree on May 6 in a forum that brought together major print and television stations and 300 representatives from the business community, trade union confederations and labor. The decree drew heavily from the ILO's Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. Over the past year, FHI has established workplace prevention programs at 70 companies in Indonesia employing a total of 360,00 workers. In partnership with the ILO, FHI has also trained government officials, business association leaders and union representatives at national and provincial levels to promote supporting policies and broad scale workplace interventions through business associations and trade unions. The ILO has provided US\$40,000 in funding and allotted one full-time staff member to workplace prevention in Indonesia. In addition, FHI and the ILO are partnering in Ghana and Benin to develop practical tools for managers to create HIV/AIDS prevention and care workplace programs.

Puneet, a 14-year-old boy, was one of several orphans who shared their touching stories at a recent workshop in India. The workshop, organized by FHI and USAID, focused on HIV/AIDS and the impact on orphans and vulnerable children.

Puneet's brothers forced him to drop out of school after the death of their parents. Neglected and physically abused by family members, Puneet ran away from home and lived at a railway station for two years. He had no food, no shelter, and was under the constant threat of being physically and sexually abused by adults and older peers. To survive, he started stealing and experimenting with drugs. He visited many organizations for shelter, but finally found one where he felt comfortable—the Drop-In Centre, run by Project Concern International and supported by FHI and USAID. Puneet is now a peer educator with the center and is active in educating and spreading information about healthy living and HIV/AIDS among street children. He tells other children, "If you are doing something good, don't be afraid." He recently met with the President of India as part of a delegation of street children.

PEER EDUCATORS NIDHI AND PUNEET AT THE OVC WORKSHOP WITH WILLIAM MARTIN (USAID) AND KATHLEEN KAY (FHI)



ABOUT FHI

Family Health International was established in 1971 as a private, non-profit organization. Since forming its first AIDS task force in 1986, FHI has pioneered worldwide HIV/AIDS prevention and care efforts. FHI has managed USAID's largest HIV/AIDS projects, including the IMPACT Project, 1997-2007, and YouthNet, a global program that is improving reproductive health and preventing HIV/AIDS among people ages 10 to 24. The FHI Institute for HIV/AIDS was formed to bring focus to FHI's leadership in providing an effective response to the growing needs created by the epidemic. Its work is complemented by the research on HIV prevention and on reproductive health undertaken by FHI's Institute for Family Health, based in North Carolina. The Institute for HIV/AIDS has more than 800 staff in 40 countries. Funding partners include USAID, CDC, DFID, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, Elton John AIDS Foundation and the International Labour Organization.

INSTITUTE FOR HIV/AIDS

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If you would like more information about any of the programs mentioned, please e-mail: insight@fhi.org.
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