



THE RAPID FUNDING ENVELOPE FOR HIV/AIDS: TANZANIA



Supporting Positive Living through Income Generation and Nutritional Assistance

The walk up the muddy hill is a tiring one, though the scenery astounds. Mount Kilimanjaro beckons in the distance, soaring over the beauty of Arusha, Tanzania. This region attracts thousands of tourists every year, drawn by the challenge of hiking Africa's biggest mountain.

For Tanzanians living in this predominantly rural area, however, the challenges of daily life are vastly different. The trials of poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS supercede all others. Arriving at one of the small houses, it is difficult not to feel sad. It is small, dilapidated and contains only the most basic of possessions. There is no electricity or running water; even large families scattered throughout the hillside reside together in small, one-room shacks. However, as the family emerges in greeting, the atmosphere lightens. They begin to describe their life and a young girl named Suzy, who looks to be about seven, takes us by the hand to show us her family's most prized possession: a goat.

Suzy Ambrose is 12 years old. Her mother died of AIDS when she was just two, leaving her an orphan and also infected with HIV. Suzy's grandmother and her uncle, Augustino, care for her. Suzy is young, sweet and does well in school, though she is sick from time to time. Their life appears to be one of daily struggle, but they are among the lucky ones. With support from Heifer International, they have new skills, economic opportunities, and most importantly — hope for the future. Today, they have a goat.

In December 2003, Augustino became one of a growing number of families in this rural community to participate in a livestock training course. His recognition for successful completion: a goat. Through a grant provided by the Rapid Funding

Envelope (RFE), established by the Tanzanian Commission for HIV/AIDS and eight international donors¹ with management support from Management Sciences for Health's Management and Leadership Program and Deloitte & Touche, Heifer International has adapted its internationally recognized best practice livestock program to train HIV afflicted families to care for goats, who in turn provide milk and income from selling offspring — all aimed at improving families' nutritional status.

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world. Half of the population lives on less than \$1 a day, and life expectancy is less than 47 years. Because of HIV/AIDS, families are struggling more than ever. Finding ways to address both basic health



Orphaned and HIV-positive Suzy helps her uncle care for their goat, which will provide milk for her family.

¹ Canadian International Development Agency, Embassy of Finland, Irish Aid, Royal Danish Embassy, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation, USAID

For more information about the RFE, please contact:

Grant Manager, Deloitte & Touche ♦ 10th Floor, PPF Tower PO Box 1559 ♦ Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Email: RFE@deloitte.co.tz

issues associated with the disease as well as the multiple socio-economic challenges facing people living with AIDS are matters of urgency. They need practical skills and new opportunities to generate income and to improve the health status of their families.

Today, the Heifer International *Dairy Goat Programme for People Living with AIDS* is offering such possibilities while fostering true multi-sectoral approaches through partnerships between the public health system and agricultural interventions. Meanwhile, families are getting immediate relief and learning to look ahead as they plan for the future. First identified through district HIV counselors, project recipients include HIV-positive individuals, family members of those individuals, widows and orphans and other vulnerable children. Once identified, the project offers training in livestock management, a two-week course that teaches families how to properly house, feed and care for their goats, as well as how to milk them and eventually breed them. The courses also teach bio-intensive gardening and how to use the goat compost to fertilize those gardens. Upon successful completion of the course, the families receive their own goats and ongoing advice to encourage creation of goat rearing clusters to share responsibilities involved in rearing goats and also create support networks. Over 500 persons living with AIDS (PLWAs) or family members have been trained in livestock management and more than 200 goats have been distributed to these families. Another recipient is Salome Kombe. Warned that she



HIV-positive Salome is proud of her new skills in goat rearing and has renewed hope for a brighter future.

was ill, we expected to find the 50-year-old woman in bed and ready to die. HIV-positive and living in a

one-room shack, Salome is unemployed and struggles to help care for three grandchildren; ensuring they have enough food is a daily effort. Her neighbors and family offer some support, but are equally poor. As Salome battled constant illness, her situation strained not only her family, but also her neighbors and friends. Though she is among an older demographic of HIV-infected Tanzanians, Salome is by no means retiring. She walked to greet us, looking happy and strong.

Project Outcomes

- Created hope and dignity among families living with AIDS
- Reduced stigma by integrating PLWAs into community livestock programs
- Implemented first-ever project providing goats to people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS
- Improved long-term nutritional and economic prospects of poor families
- Forged new partnerships between public health system and non-governmental organization to assist people living with AIDS

Since participating in the livestock training course, Salome has a new lease on life. She is hopeful, proud of her new skills, and feels stronger and healthier as she wakes up each morning with a sense of purpose. Unlike before, Salome thinks of her future; she has already set aside compost to plant a garden and plans to pass her goat rearing skills on to her children and grandchildren. Meanwhile, though Suzy is too young to participate in the training (her uncle completed the course), she helps care for her goat and contributes to a brighter future. As her uncle said: *"We expect to get milk to improve the nutritional status of our whole family."* These thoughts are echoed over and over again. Alindwe Eliawaria, another HIV-positive woman participating in the program, put it best: *"[We] are now living in hope and much better than before."*

Story and photos by Carmen Urdaneta

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