



RAPID FUNDING ENVELOPE FOR HIV/AIDS: TANZANIA



A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM—BREAKING THE SILENCE AROUND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HIV/AIDS



The six women sit around in a circle, the whirl of sewing machines the only sound. They are part of a community action group established by KIVULINI as a way to support victims of gender-based violence. “We were invited to speak out on HIV/AIDS,” one explains. “We decided to establish this cooperative, to give victims a place to go to where they can support themselves.” The group—all of whom are on their own as a result of domestic issues—started the shop with a small grant from KIVULINI, an organisation well-known for working on gender equity issues.

Meaning “in the shade” in Kiswahili (referring to a safe place for people to gather), KIVULINI is based in Mwanza, the second largest city in Tanzania. The organisation’s vision is a community free of domestic violence and where women’s rights are universally respected. They work to create an environment of safety, equality, and respect in communities they serve.

Founded in 1999, KIVULINI initially focused exclusively on the rights and well being of women and children. However, as the organisation grew in coverage and services offered, a link between domestic violence and HIV/AIDS became clear. KIVULINI operates several legal aid and counseling centers. Nearly all of these centers received clients who were HIV positive, yet the staff had no knowledge of how to properly help them. The position women often hold in communities and their families also makes issues of stigma particularly severe as well. “Right now, it is too easy to say it is the wife who infected the man,” relates Mr. Yassin Ally, the acting Director of the organisation, “but where does one get these facts?” Just when the organisation decided to integrate HIV/AIDS activities in their work, they saw the RFE Call for Concept Letters in the local newspaper.

KIVULINI’s RFE Project targeted two districts in the Mwanza Region—Nyamagana and Ilemela—with a total population nearing 500,000. The main purpose of the project was to raise community awareness of the links between domestic violence, gender inequalities, and HIV/AIDS. KIVULINI also used the grant as an opportunity to train and sensitize its entire staff of 68 employees and volunteers and an additional 20 community leaders, journalists, and religious leaders on HIV/AIDS.

KIVULINI has used its RFE grant to cast a wide net, exposing the second largest region (by population) to educational content in multiple media on the issues of HIV/AIDS and gender inequality. In addition, the organisation has successfully institutionalised HIV/AIDS technical knowledge into its staff, allowing seamless integration of HIV/AIDS into all its future programmes. With secure funding from a variety of sources, KIVULINI has ensured the impact of its work will be sustained.



Michael Paydos, MSH, 2007

This women’s group produces macrobiotic yogurt that they sell at a reduced rate or give away to persons living with AIDS. This group was established by KIVULINI with funds from the RFE and is now able to sustain itself with little support.

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Outreach efforts reached additional prominent members of the community, including 50 community-based volunteers, 200 religious and community leaders, nearly 40 home-based care providers, 10 community action groups, and 16 theater groups that participated in workshops. The in-depth training and the additional workshops were all designed to reach the largest possible audience with the messages KIVULINI developed.

Hadija from Uhuru Street in Mwanza relates her experience as a member of one of the community groups: “Before, I did not feel comfortable talking to women or even men on these issues. But, once I knew the facts and could speak with authority it became much easier to talk to the husband and wife about AIDS in a positive manner.”

With projects and steady funding from several international aid institutions, KIVULINI is well poised to sustain the gains in capacity they achieved through their RFE grant.

The RFE project’s activities have moved forward efficiently, with KIVULINI regularly leveraging its other programmes and infrastructure to get the most out of its funding. “People are talking about this—on the street, in policy circles—the silence is broken,” explains Mr. Ally. “KIVULINI was already well known as working in gender equality, and is now increasingly seen as a leader in gender and HIV/AIDS. A lot of this is thanks to the RFE.”

KIVULINI’s engagement with the media has also paid off. Local radio stations are broadcasting content based on KIVULINI’s guidance, and several newspaper articles have been published with the organisation’s prompting. Yakira Nwana, a journalist with the Sani Africa Newspaper, has written three articles about KIVULINI’s activities. “The way KIVULINI has engaged the media has made me happy,” she explains. “Not just telling us what stories are out there, but providing us with some training and understanding of the issues at hand.”

Jeremiah, a “Street Leader” appointed by the local government who benefited from the in-depth training KIVULINI provided, describes a recent experience: “A woman approached me for help, her husband had been abusing her. I offered to intervene but she declined—she said she just wanted a little money to buy food for her children. In the past I might have just accepted that. But knowing what I know now, I went to the husband and talked to him. Since, the woman has thanked me and I know to check in on her in the future.”

The RFE-funded project is already showing signs of scaling up without additional resources. The group of women who founded a sewing cooperative are working toward being financially self-sufficient. When that time comes, they will open themselves up to new members.



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Ten women, with support from KIVULINI’s RFE Project, established a cooperative to produce clothing that they sell in order to support their families. In addition to giving the cooperative start-up funds, KIVULINI was able to find free working space for the women—using a spare room from a women-owned business established with support from KIVULINI in 2005.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

- More than 10,000 posters, 2,000 t-shirts, and 5,000 informational booklets concerning gender inequalities and HIV/AIDS produced and distributed;
- 48 community outreach festivals organised;
- KIVULINI staff plus 20 community leaders, religious leaders, and journalists trained and sensitized on HIV/AIDS. This has strengthened KIVULINI’s capacity to provide effective HIV/AIDS-related services to the community while also increasing the receptiveness of the communities to receiving such assistance;
- Small financial grants provided to 10 women’s groups and 50 women who are victims of abuse and living with HIV/AIDS.

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