

positively



AFRICA

Spring - Summer 2009

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Title Page Photo: Walter Mwori and Harun Luhambo of Kisumu Dogo school, a positively AFRICA supported project. Kibera, Keyna. October 2008.



If you received this newsletter by post, and could receive it by email, please send your email address to info@positivelyafrica.org. Thank you.



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Printed on 100% recycled and acid-free paper



Message from President Peg

With the spring flowers bringing their beautiful colours to light, I like to think about new beginnings: about fresh starts and renewed intentions. This year my intention is for more balance. I intend to better balance exercise with work; fun with moments of serious concern; learning with writing; and family time with solitary moments.

I'm proud to write about the great new balance that I see rising in positively AFRICA. I am particularly struck by the commitment of our amazing Board of Directors. Each Director has taken on more responsibility and accepted new challenges. This has not only given me the time I need to take care of myself but it has also made positively AFRICA stronger and

more effective.

The year began with a strategic planning session, led wonderfully by Laura Thomson and Deb LeFrank. We stepped further along the path we've been following for the past two years, and traced a clear road ahead looking five and ten years into the future.

We continue to balance the desire to preserve our vision for personal relationships between here and Africa, with the necessity to ensure strict standards of transparency and financial accounting.

There is lots to report on. Umuhuza, in Rwanda, has just benefited from a positively AFRICA/IDEA intern

...continued on next page.

'President' continued from previous page.

for six months. Logan Broeckaert left the Association members with more awareness of the steps needed to move successfully into micro-credit and small business enterprises. In her article she shares her encounter with a remarkable young man.

One of our partners in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya, is running a successful project to support an HIV+ women's group with low-cost nutritious food, education and social supports. Board Member Sonia Bianchi reports on the inspiring work of KCYP.

Both Samuel Godfrey (our part-time staff person) and Board Member Su Russell share reflections on their visits to positively AFRICA supported projects in 2008. Peter Bardon, positively AFRICA's co-founder and Chair of the Fundraising Committee reports on the successful Art Action, while Board Member Paul Eastman shares news of a successful new partnership with the Library Association of B.C.

As you will see, we've been very busy! We know we are blessed with very generous donors, passionate and skilled volunteers, and the best partners any little NGO could have.

It is your support for positively AFRICA – how you have balanced your values and pocketbook – that has enabled us to help so many people.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your continued support and encouragement!

I wish you equilibrium this new spring and always.

With love,

Peg Frank



Reflections on Rwanda

By Su Russell

Su is a positively AFRICA Board member who spent most of last November in Rwanda visiting one of our partners, Imbabazi. The following article is a snapshot of her time in Rwanda.

We walked, following the winding, rocky roads to the association offices, to the homes of widows, the church, the crop fields and the market. After a few of these excursions I realised that I was uncomfortable, not so much because I was the lone *muzungo* in the village, but because I could not easily hold the gaze of most of the women we passed as we walked.

Some turned away, some looked at me without a hint of response; very occasionally, one would smile and extend a greeting. Many, many of the women are widows marked by rape, or the social or physical

effects of HIV. Shame permeates their psyche and their bodies and I was witness to it.

I challenged myself to hold their gaze, not to flinch or turn away in embarrassment at their apparent discomfort or disregard. I knew that to be present to the pain of these

women was a kindness I could offer, even when practical solutions to their poverty and illness seemed so much



Su with Xaverine, the Director of Imbabazi, and Xaverine's mother, Elizabeth. November, 2008.

more important.

Rwanda is a land of stark contrasts – trauma running so deep, yet set in an atmosphere of stunning beauty. We lived five hundred feet above, and overlooking, Lake Kivu. In the early morning the sky was filled with sunbirds so colourful they seemed surreal. They fed from bell shaped blossoms six inches long which

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Upcoming Events

The Moss Street Market Paint-In, Saturday, July 18, 2009
A super fun day on Moss St with positively AFRICA and hundreds of artists. Again this year we'll have a tent with a canvas for you to paint on and to help create a work of collaborative art.

(The paintings from last year's event are now hanging in a Lesotho school and a community meeting place in Rwanda.)

August: A Spectacular Outdoor Dinner at a fairyland of lights and garden beauty. Details forthcoming.

For all the details, please keep in touch or watch our website: www.positivelyafrica.org.

New Board Members

In February 2009, positively AFRICA welcomed two new Directors.

Marnie Bradfield



Marnie Bradfield

Marnie has decades of senior experience in a range of health-care work, as well as a deep and knowledgeable love of South Africa. Her strong social conscience and respect for different cultures are integral to how she works.

For many years Marnie -- and her husband Leigh -- lived and worked in South Africa. She is a retired nurse and considered to be a master healer in a number of energy strategies. Marnie has studied San art and the healing modalities associated with it.

Marnie and Leigh already actively support three projects in Southern Africa: a community centre for AIDS orphans near Sterkfontain, a nutritional support project near Harrismith, and a community orphan project near Fort Portal, Uganda.

Marnie is an associate of the International Medical Institute in Uganda and was on the Board for

sixteen years.

Marnie has visited two positively AFRICA supported projects, Eagles Rising and Agape. positively AFRICA is deeply grateful to have Marnie's involvement.

Joan Schwartzenger

Joan brings a compassionate presence and valuable skills in trauma counseling, fundraising, project management and organizational governance. She is a problem-solver and a joy to be around.

Joan currently works as a mental health and addictions counselor for Vancouver Island Health Authority, and runs a private practice as a therapist. Her past work includes two years as the Diversity Advisor for the Ministry of Children and Families. Joan's experience on Boards includes a term on the Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture.



Joan Schwartzenger

Art Auction 2008

By Peter Bardon

Peter is a Co-Founder of positively AFRICA and Chair of the Fundraising Committee.

The Art Auction last October was a great success: people enjoyed the evening and purchased beautiful artwork. We netted \$15 000 for the profoundly important work of positively AFRICA.

Preparations for the auction were long and arduous but we triumphed. Happily we had generous people in the audience who gave us substantial funds after the event.

The wonderful people who donated their works of art were truly generous. We also appreciate the numerous people who contributed many hours helping set up the food tables, providing the superb food, arranging the art, auctioneering, keeping track of purchases, helping with parking, etc. Thank you all! A special note of gratitude to Raymond at Prestige Framing Etcetera at 2002 Oak Bay Ave. for his extraordinary kindness to, and continued support of, positively AFRICA.

We look forward to another Art Auction in 2010.

"Results Based Management" and positively AFRICA

Recently, Board member Paul Eastman, attended a 3-day workshop in Vancouver on Results Based Management (RBM). The workshop was sponsored by CIDA and hosted by the B.C. Council for International Cooperation. In a nutshell, RBM is an approach to project design and management that focuses on achieving outcomes rather than looking at delivering inputs, activities or processes. RBM has become the standard practice in many development agencies and offers useful insights and guidance for positively AFRICA. Furthermore, in the future, should positively AFRICA wish to apply for CIDA funding, it is necessary that we become familiar with RBM.

To find out more about RBM or to help apply it to positively AFRICA, please contact Paul at paul@positivelyafrica.org.

Volunteer!

A message from our new Volunteer Coordinator, Sabine Laubental.

There are many fun and interesting ways to get involved - you'll meet wonderful people and gain new experiences. And there is likely no greater contribution you could make to positively AFRICA than sharing your skills and passion with us. We will work with you to find activities that are meaningful to you and that fit with your schedule.

Please contact me at 250 598 0708 or sabine@positivelyafrica.org. I would be very happy to chat with you about different ways you could get involved.

Here are a few examples of volunteer activities:

- Special Events (eg: planning, promoting or working at events such as the art auction)
- Fair Trade Fairs (eg: helping sell fair trade goods at fairs)
- Running your own mini-fundraiser (eg: a garage sale, bake sale or afternoon tea for your friends)
- Administration (eg: filing, writing letters, etc.)
- Board of Directors (becoming a Member of the Board)
- Graphic Design (eg: helping with the design of posters, etc.)
- Newsletter (eg: helping to edit the newsletter, writing articles, etc.)
- Computer (eg: helping with computer & website needs)
- African handicrafts (packaging and marketing jewellery, yoga bags, dolls, etc.)
- Public relations/communications (eg: helping to contact and involve the media)
- Institutional support (eg: identifying & approaching foundations & organizations to fund projects)
- Grants (eg: writing proposals to foundations and other funders)
- Project support (eg: providing guidance and support to our African partners)
- Monitoring (eg: tracking and assessing the effectiveness of projects)



Sabine Laubental

We are very grateful that Sabine Laubental is volunteering to help organize our many volunteers!

Sabine's background includes an undergraduate degree in Social Work from the University of Victoria. Now retired, she worked for many years in the fields of women's issues, poverty, abuse, and employment readiness.

Sabine recently initiated, and raised all the funds for, the Eye Care Program for the

people of Kapasseni, Mozambique. Sabine's motivation for initiating this program was based on her own experience of being legally blind.

Sabine is also working to establish a rotating loan to develop income-generating cooperatives in Zambia.

Masai Battle vs. HIV/AIDS

By Samuel Godfrey

Samuel is our part-time staff person. Last fall, Samuel traveled to Zambia with VIDEA and also spent a week with three positively AFRICA supported projects in Kenya. The following article describes his experiences with Osopet.

I visited Kenya last October and want to share a little of what I learned about Osopet, an inspiring group of rural Kenyans working in the far reaches of Masailand.

Founded by Peter Otuni, a Masai Baptist Pastor, Osopet is helping hundreds of desperately poor, HIV-afflicted families.

Peter Otuni was working as a preacher when, in 2001, he began to see the ravages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. He told me that he could no longer just watch as people all around him were abandoned by their friends, places of worship, and even their own family, as prejudice and fear of this cruel virus overtook the region. He saw his own loved ones die from HIV/AIDS, and witnessed the pandemic devastate a generation, leaving children orphaned, and adults widowed and destitute. He decided to leave behind sixteen years of preaching and pour himself into Osopet.

Otuni had run eight chapels, spread out in a hundred km radius from the town of Narok, about eighty kilometers from Nairobi. In 2002, he converted all of them into centres of respite. Over the last seven years he has -- with the help of sixteen other key volunteers -- created an extraordinarily effective non-profit Kenyan development organization.

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Kibera Youth help HIV+ Women

By Sonia Bianchi

Sonia Bianchi is a Board Member of positively AFRICA and the Country Coordinator for Kenya.

The Kibera Community Youth Project (KCYP) is a group of amazing young people from the slums of Kibera which is located on the outskirts of Nairobi.

KCYP first came together in 2002 and has made very impressive progress towards their goals of 'advancing the well-being of young people by enabling their personal growth and participation in societal development'.

positively AFRICA has partnered with KCYP since 2007. We are currently funding a project that supports vulnerable HIV+ women in Kibera. The initial goal was to give HIV+ women access to the nutritious food at a subsidized cost so that their anti-retroviral drugs would be more effective.

When a participant's health improves enough so that she is able to work and provide for her



*Neddy Musotsi
HIV+ Group Member*

Musotsi was diagnosed with HIV in 2005. Her employer, a hospital where she had worked for seven years, discovered her status soon afterwards and immediately fired her - with no severance or disability pension of any kind. She was thrown into poverty and ended up in Kibera. She is often sick and struggles to care for her children through occasional work doing laundry. She asks that positively AFRICA help market the jewelry the group is making and help to increase the food support. She asks we support her group, saying: "We are positive so we know what needs to be done".

Samuel Godfrey met Musotsi in October 2008. He writes: "I met with her for half an hour but the only time she smiled and looked happy was when I asked her if I could share her story and picture with people in Canada."

family, she graduates from the program and another positive woman can be included.

What started as a simple subsidized food effort has now grown into larger project which includes weekly support group meetings for the women, education on health and nutrition, and a rotating microfinance programme to help women start their own businesses.

Successes of this project include:

- twenty women are receiving urgently-needed food support;
- a post HIV-test club has been formed and participants support each other;
- eight women have established viable businesses as a result of the micro credit program;
- enhanced self-esteem among the women and KCYP;
- four women have enrolled with Comprehensive Care Clinics and are benefiting from enhanced service provision; and
- fifteen of the twenty women report that they become

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A Rwandan Profile

By Logan Broeckaert

Logan recently returned from six months working with Umuhuza, a Rwandan community association that positively AFRICA has supported since 2006. Logan went to Rwanda under the auspices of positively AFRICA and VIDEA through a CIDA-sponsored internship programme.

I'd like to introduce a very special man named Eric Kalisa.

Eric is the son of Umuhuza's president, Emerithe Nakabonye and a full-time student at Kigali's Adventist University, studying Information Technology. He is also the Assistant Manager for a local division of the international NGO, World Vision.

As I was about to take this picture of Erik, he told me to wait until he had pulled out his cell phone: he wanted it in the frame.



Eric Kalisa

"I always worry about the disease of my mother and other members of Umuhuza. I always think of what can raise my family up because I do not want my brothers and sisters to experience the same life as I did when I was still in secondary school."

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'Masai' continued from page 4.

Osopet's main activities are to offer direct hospice support to people suffering with AIDS. They assist with the care of HIV+ and impoverished children. They also run community groups which provide a crucial and often rare support for those living with HIV/AIDS. And, they are committed to providing HIV/AIDS education to the public.

AIDS continues to wreak havoc in their communities. Sadly, five of the original group of volunteers who created Osopet have died of AIDS, including one of Pastor Peter's brothers.

For hundreds of children and adults in these remote areas, Osopet is the only source of support for people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and living in great poverty.

And positively AFRICA is the only outside community supporting Osopet. Both the Kenyan government and the Kenyan Baptist Church laud the work of Osopet, but the only assistance they offer is indirect and non-monetary. They report that they do not have the resources to contribute financially.

Osopet has defined their priorities for 2009. positively AFRICA is fundraising for the top two:

(a) continued and increased support for twenty-eight vulnerable HIV+

children; and

(b) a motorcycle to allow educators and home-based care-givers to reach isolated homes.



*Pastor Peter Otuni
October 2008*

Pastor Peter is adamant that the support of positively AFRICA is profoundly valuable to his work.

For example, the funds we provide support twenty-eight children who are HIV+ with transport (for medical attention), anti-retro viral drugs, testing and vitamin supplements. Between mid 2005 and June 2007 – and before positively AFRICA was involved – six of twenty HIV+ children supported by Osopet died of opportunistic diseases. However, since positively AFRICA has been involved, no children have died. With your financial support, Osopet is saving lives.

Education & Outreach

Many of the people in this community still refuse to believe HIV/AIDS is real.

Many are reluctant to get tested or to change their behaviour.

And many who are positive are deeply suspicious of the stomach-churning pills they are directed to take.

For these reasons, Osopet does a lot of education, traveling out to very isolated communities and sharing knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

Reaching these communities is not easy - this is why they need a motorcycle.

Their outreach is often the first time people are learning factual information about HIV/AIDS!

Imagine the long-term benefits of this educational work.

Contact Samuel at 250 882 5292 or samuel@positivelyafrica.org for more information.



How can you support Osopet?

1. Use the donation form at the end of the newsletter to make a financial contribution.
2. positively AFRICA is asking ten people to come forward in 2009 to donate \$500 each to buy a motorcycle for Osopet. Please be one of these special people!
3. Give Twice: the next time you need a gift for a friend or loved one, buy them a goat! If you buy a goat for an impoverished and HIV-affected family we will send you a specially made gift card describing what you've bought and including a personal message from you as you like. You can give this card as a gift so the recipient understands the kindness offered in their name. See www.positivelyafrica.org for all the details.
4. Help us network with local Baptist churches to encourage them to engage with Osopet.

Strategic Planning Update

By Peggy Frank

Peggy is positively AFRICA's Co-Founder and President.

To kick off 2009, the Board and a few other interested people met in early January of this year for a one-day strategic planning session. The stated objective of this meeting was to “to establish a plan for the next one to five years for positively AFRICA to ensure that we are achieving what we set out to do and having fun while we do it! “

Deborah Le Frank and Laura Thomson did an amazing job at co-facilitating the session. They used a

“graphic facilitation” method to first brainstorm and then document the various components of the plan. The benefit of using a visual process was that the Board members could jointly brainstorm, see, and finally agree upon the key steps in a one to five year plan for positively AFRICA. The outcome of the one day session was a “living” strategic plan document. The image below is one of Deb's impressive templates that captures our core values. Seven of these templates were produced at the meeting and formed the basis for our

strategic plan. A mid-year follow-up is planned for June when Deb and Laura will again facilitate a session with the Board to see how well we are meeting our planned objectives.

For more information about graphic or general facilitation please call:
Deborah at 250 479 4140, or:
Laura at 250 592 6399.



Our Mission Statement and Core Values, developed through the excellent graphical facilitation skills of Deborah Le Frank.

'Reflections' continued from page 2.

hung from trees close by.

One night I woke to the sound of a chorus of men's voices: aaaah! aaaah! ooooh! Over and over again, with beautiful variations in note and tone. I was mesmerized with the soft sounds of this rhythmic chant. It was the fishermen in their boats on the lake, in the silence and dark of night, calling out in song, communicating with each other about their catch.

It was 2008 and I was visiting a small village named Kibogora in the southeastern corner of rural Rwanda. Imbabazi, or "Mercy" in the language *Kinyarwanda*, is an association of widows and children formed in this tiny village by a strong willed and magnanimous woman named Xaverine.

Its purpose is to provide medical care, nutritional support and educational fees for twelve hundred men, women and children from Kibagora and 14 surrounding villages, most HIV positive or traumatised by the genocide.

These personal experiences, and my overall sense of spectacularly beautiful Rwanda, were profound. That so much pain and sadness can coexist alongside such beauty and creativity succours hope.

Travel Committee

A new committee led by Sherri Hohert and Su Russell has been formed to assist people who are traveling to, and returning from, Africa.

The vision of the committee is to be helpful both in a practical sense prior to departure, and as emotional support upon return: from helping people figure out what they need to do as they prepare to go, to what they need to bring, to how to stay engaged and safe when there, to decompressing upon return.

The Committee will also support people who would like to visit a positively AFRICA supported project on their travels and debrief them when they come home.

Please contact Sherri Hohert at 250 658-5891 for more information or if you would like to get involved.

Eric works hard, worries that he does not pray enough to God, helps to support his family and likes to listen to hip hop music. He thinks his English is not good enough but he remembers everything that we ever learned together. He is thoughtful and gracious.

It took some time for me to understand that my attachment to Eric grew from a sense that we had been empowered to contribute to our communities by similar childhoods, and because of this I felt closer to Eric than six months should have allowed.

In the winter of 2008, he founded a youth group affiliated with Umuhuza and committed to encouraging youth to engage their communities in ways which are healthy and constructive. This is not easy in Nyakabanda, the part of Kigali in which Eric lives. Not because the youth are apathetic, but because they are often preoccupied with the pressing concerns of work and family.

And yet Eric and his equally committed friends find the time to generate wonderful projects and initiatives, including a traditional dance troupe that encourages youth to use art to engage their communities. They have also developed an impressive life-skills workshop series that promotes effective awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues.

This is Eric and while he knows he has much to learn, I found he has even much more to teach.

Victoria Doctor brings Hope to Zimbabwe

By Paul Eastman

Paul Eastman is a Board Member of positively AFRICA.

Lorraine Irving, a great friend of positively AFRICA, will soon return home to Victoria after two months in Zimbabwe.

Lorraine is a retired doctor who courageously volunteers for a few months each year at Howard Hospital in Zimbabwe.

With the help of positively AFRICA, Lorraine was able to raise significant funds to support the hospital and related projects.

As we all know from the news, the situation in Zimbabwe is deeply worrying: there is a moribund economy with astronomical inflation, few job opportunities, food shortages, high incidence of HIV/AIDS and cholera, and deteriorating education and health services.

positively AFRICA has always been determined to provide whatever support we are able to the people of Zimbabwe but it has been a challenge.

This year, prior to her departure, we met with Lorraine to discuss several projects that might be supported in the area surrounding the hospital.

In recent emails from Lorraine, she

reports that connections are being made with community groups that are trying to improve the situation for teachers, nurses, orphans, people affected by HIV/AIDS and vulnerable children.

Lorraine is doing a remarkable job and we are so eager to talk with her when she returns home.

In our next newsletter, we plan to include the full story on her experiences. Stay tuned!



Communications Experts offer Pro Bono Services

Imbabazi and a new Relationship

By Peggy Frank

Peggy is positively AFRICA's Co-Founder and President.



Imbabazi is a rural project in Rwanda near Lake Kivu. In July 2007, Peggy visited Imbabazi, connecting with the women and children involved, touring the health clinic, and meeting the staff. Thus began the connection to positively AFRICA.

In 2008, a proposal for a small livestock project for vulnerable families was developed and approved by the positively AFRICA Board. John Jordan, a long-time donor, was moved by the Imbabazi story. He stepped forward and made a long-term commitment to support and become directly involved with Imbabazi.

The moment was right for positively AFRICA to step back. From its genesis, positively AFRICA set a goal of

finding groups or individuals in Canada, who are capable and willing to directly support projects and develop their own relationships. In this way we can “transition” projects to funders and go on to support other efforts.

It was agreed by all to pursue a new direct relationship between John and Imbabazi.

Everyone involved is excited about the potential of this new development.

positively AFRICA will watch closely to learn from this new venture.



Children being fed at Imbabazi

A new Partnership

In January, the B.C. Library Association approved funding for a positively AFRICA proposal that will provide much needed reading and reference materials to the Phelisanong Centre in Lesotho!

The grant of \$2,100 will be used to:

- (a) purchase supplementary reading materials for students at the school and for beginning readers from the wider neighbouring community,
- (b) purchase resource and reference materials for the staff and volunteers who work at the Centre's health clinic, with disabled residents and in the HIV/AIDS outreach programme, and;
- (c) fund a short training course for the Centre's volunteer librarian.

Phelisanong and positively AFRICA are very grateful and thankful for the Library Association's support.

'Kibera' continued from page 5.

sick less often thanks to the availability of affordable food and support.

KCYP now proposes to build on their success and to expand their program by:

- Increasing quantities of nutritional support as many of the women are sharing their subsidized food with their children.
- Funding a volunteer to take courses in nutrition in order to provide desperately needed education in Kibera.
- Supporting volunteers to continue to act as home based care-givers.

To do this, they will need our help. You can read more about KCYP and this project on the positively AFRICA website. Please consider a donation! KCYP needs our support to see their vision through.

For more information, please contact Sonia at sonia@positivelyafrica.org.

