



Summer Update

August 2006

Strengthening our Response

We have learned to facilitate the roll-out of free government anti-retroviral medications to Malawi villages. Here is where the majority of people live, including some who are very ill. In May Bill Rankin witnessed at first hand the extraordinary hope that the meds convey. The photo to the right shows him and an HIV positive 10 year-old girl. She now has a chance at life. GAIA Malawi staff is instrumental in ensuring treatment for children and adults like this through the country's southern region.

The first step toward treatment is voluntary counseling and HIV testing (VCT). In our main project in 37 villages, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, GAIA-trained women caregivers have assisted more than 10,000 people in obtaining VCT. Our staff has also enabled all those testing positive to receive further care and has raised awareness of the government medication programs throughout their operational areas. We are now replicating this successful intervention in 20 villages adjacent to the original 37.

We continue to work for the sustainability of our projects through the empowerment of women. The array of enterprises that these highly motivated women have started is collectively showing great success. Generated profits go to support orphans



PHOTO CREDIT: SALLY RANKIN

Bill Rankin visits with an HIV positive child who proudly shows off her handwriting ability.

within their village and provide supplies instrumental in the treatment of home based care of patients with AIDS-related illnesses. The skills that women learn in income generating projects such as crop growing empower them economically and socially, reducing their dependence on men and thus their vulnerability to HIV infections.

"You have to enthuse your way out of the problem!"

—Rachel Nyagondwe Fiedler, Director of the Lydia Project, a women's empowerment and AIDS service endeavor supported by GAIA.



PHOTO CREDIT: JULIANA HALASZ

KASO kids at play

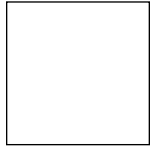
Hope flourishes at KASO

The Kanengo AIDS Support Organization (KASO) provides care to people living with HIV and to many Malawi children orphaned by AIDS. The program responds to both the basic needs of orphaned children for food and shelter, and their emotional needs through an early intervention strategy stimulating young minds.





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GAIA's mission is to partner with religious organizations in resource poor countries for community based HIV prevention and care.



PHOTO CREDIT: JONES LAVIWA

A village woman shows the eggplants her group has grown.

Introducing Meg Styles

Meg Styles is GAIA's new Community Relations Director, working with congregations and community groups that have supported GAIA's work. Meg brings wonderful skills to this job, including many years in the business world and a profound dedication to women's and third world health issues. We are delighted to have her with us. She can be reached at 925-360-1868 or mstyles@thegaia.org.

GAIA by Email

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