



WTE: Peer Education and Community Responsibility

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As a student and resident of Lugufu refugee camp, Edward has taken a community leadership role by speaking to thirty-three village leaders about HIV/AIDS. He is among a group of selected participants from the recent HIV/AIDS seminar that will continue education and sensitization on an incentive program. Such peer educators will ensure that education and teaching can become sustainable. Their outreach projects range from sports-education, church talks, school visits, video shows, and small seminars.



Within all of WTE's projects there is a desire for both local empowerment and sustainability. During the planning phase, local partners requested and designed initiatives suited to their area.

Within the implementation phase local organizations took the leading role and were financially responsible. After completion, continued work leaves responsibility with the locals for their own community rather than having to rely upon outside organizations. Sustainability is sought after is the latter of these projects, ensuring that community based work continues and empowerment via the support, funding, and control provided during the implementation.

ACDA is one such partner. As with others it is run by volunteers due to financial hardships, common among all WTE partners. Such groups are created out of a local concern for their community. ACDA originally gathered small amounts of money to return the bodies of those murdered by the LRA rebels and have them properly buried. Working in this war-torn region of Uganda has not stopped their success, in fact today they have seventy-eight volunteers. Since their origin they have opened a day-care with the help of the UN that now cares for over 1400 children, run a vocational school, run computer trainings with a donation from RESPECT International, and hold many

community outreach works on conflict resolution and health. With visions for the future ACDA is held back by finances and a lack of capacity/training.

Working To Empower collaborates with such organizations to implement locally desired projects. Driven by this demand and run by community members empowerment and sustainability are the core factors in program creation/implementation. Partnership with WTE facilitates organizational dreams into realities.

The HIV/AIDS peer educator program is one outcome of this process. Empowerment and sustainability are unachievable in one-time seminars or handouts. Instead, community responsibility is cultivated and supported for continued and expanded locally based work. One additional expansion has been the creation of resource centers in partners' offices. This approach allows a group of concerned individuals to implement their plans. Acting for their own community instead of being dependant upon foreign organizations for teaching. Continued work builds a sense of community responsibility and fosters grass-roots action. Long-term community building changes are the aim of WTE and an approach focused totally upon sustainability and empowerment.

