

## **KAIPPG (Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Project Group) ICTs Projects:**

### **GenARDIS 2003:**

HIV/AIDS remains a major problem in Kenya, and it is often women and girls who bear the brunt of the pandemic. They have no rights to own property such as land, and are physiologically at greater risk of catching HIV/AIDS. They are generally less well educated and only a handful are employed, and so are socio-economically more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection. Many women also suffer from malnutrition.

To help address these problems, the Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG) has established community-based informal learning centres, called nutritional field schools, in six of its 28 project sites in western Kenya. Each field school works with 30 participants, giving priority to orphans, widows, low-income women and older vulnerable children from HIV/AIDS-affected households. The participants are taught about nutrition, and receive training in relevant skills and techniques to enable them to care for people living with HIV/AIDS, to maximize crop yields and, generally to become more economically and socially empowered.

Using the GenARDIS grant, KAIPPG organized a health and agriculture community radio network for women who had completed the training. The participants were organized into six radio listening groups, and were trained in the use of audio and video recording equipment to enable them to exchange information on farming techniques, on healthcare matters, and to raise public awareness about HIV/AIDS.

The groups were also trained in photography and the use of drama and traditional oral storytelling as tools for learning, education, and development. A radio cassette player and one mobile phone were distributed to each of the groups, and the participants were encouraged to communicate with national FM radio stations, to respond to programmes, obtain information, and share their experiences with a wider audience. The mobile phones served to help organize and catalyze the women to meet their own needs and work for collective empowerment, and they were also an essential tool for information-gathering, outreach and communication, and income-generation.

Each group prepared and recorded on tape a presentation, song, poem, role-play or story on a relevant topic of their choice. One

women's group performed a play about farming and the preparation of nutritious food for people living with HIV/AIDS. Another group sang traditional songs on planting, harvesting and the preparation of sweet potatoes. The tapes were then exchanged among the groups so that each group was able to learn about the work of the others. Each group also set up an information kiosk stocked with the tapes they had produced and other information. KAIPPG hopes to translate the tapes into English and French (they are in Kiswahili), and to release the content also on diskettes and CD-ROM.

### **GenARDIS 2005:**

The second GenARDIS grant will be built upon the successes of the first, and will entail the introduction of the project in 4 new sites. Women who were trained in GenARDIS 2003 will be used as the trainers in these new sites. In that first project, KAIPPG implemented its pilot project on integration of ICTs in HIV/AIDS prevention, gender empowerment, and agricultural improvements. The results of this initiative were quite striking and proved that ICTs can add value to existing projects and speed up an understanding of gender equity, agricultural development, and the amelioration of rural poverty.

The lessons learned in this pilot initiative have been widely disseminated through print and electronic media, and also workshops, such as the 2004 CTA Observatory in Wageningen, the 2004 GenARDIS After-Action Review Workshop, and the 2004 Women and ICTs Conference in Tanzania, The COL/OLSET Expert Workshop on Development of Poverty Alleviation Radio Programs in Johannesburg, the 2005 International Nutritional Conference in Nairobi, and many local workshops.

GenARDIS 2005 will again build upon the Nutrition Field School template and program we integrated into our GenARDIS 2003 design. We have also incorporated elements of the GRASSUP NOW project (four-party ICTs/ODL project in Kenya) in which we are involved, sponsored by The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), which is developing both a model for cooperation in information dissemination and modules of learning materials in the areas of nutrition, income-generation, and environmental education.

With support from COL, KAIPPG has partnered with the Open Learning Systems Trust (OLSET), a South African NGO, to prepare a series of generic radio programs focusing on alleviation of poverty through locally designed community initiatives. The current partnership with

OLSET will ensure that the information modules developed through the GenARDIS 2005 grant program will be packaged into radio programs aired not only through Kenyan radio stations but also through South African stations.

At the local level, there is a strong partnership with a range of government and non-governmental facilities providing various forms of community support services to complement the KAIPPG efforts. These include Public Media Communications, providing technical training on production and directing of radio programs; K-Rep Bank, providing micro-financing to vulnerable households; IRAM Consultants, providing business development training skills to our community groups; local Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Health, providing technical expertise and materials for our HIV/AIDS and agricultural programs; and several other private sector and faith-based service institutions.

### **Project Activities:**

KAIPPG intends to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to address the linkages between HIV/AIDS, gender, agriculture, and rural development.

KAIPPG will build this project on the already established community-based non-formal learning centres--called Nutritional Field Schools (NFS)--currently funded by Pathfinder International, and the information kiosks which house the materials created for the program. The NFS comprises 30 beneficiaries drawn from vulnerable households, who meet at a demonstration site once a week to receive training and share issues of concern and successes.

KAIPPG Nutritional Field School facilitators, Ministry of Agriculture extension officers, and community health nurses facilitate the trainings. Each member of the NFS donates a small plot (from one-half acre to one acre) on which to grow specifically selected crops.

They are supplied with farm inputs and supplies, and where needed, equipment. They are taught relevant skills and techniques to enable them acquire the needed agricultural techniques, nutrition and patient care skills, maximize crop harvest and have the potential to become more economically and socially empowered

The GenARDIS grant will be used to organize the NFS members who will have completed the initial training in health and agricultural production into radio listening groups. They will then be trained in the use of mixed ICTs in content development, storage and access of

information, and dissemination of the acquired indigenous knowledge and techniques. They will be trained in photography, participatory drama, and traditional oral storytelling as tools for learning and public education; and also trained in the use of audio and video recording equipment for information access, storage and dissemination. In addition, KAIPPG will purchase one set of "Simu ya Jamii" (community phone) for each information kiosk.

This is a kind of mobile phone handset that can be used as a public payphone. One simu ya jamii phone booth will be set up in each of the information kiosks, where the public can make phone calls at a small fee. This will particularly benefit the women who were previously not able to access telephone facilities due to the long distances involved in reaching the nearest commercial phone booths. The groups will be trained in the use of the "Simu ya Jamii" to access and send health and agricultural information and to connect with local/national FM radio stations to share or obtain information on health and agricultural development.

On completing the training related to equipment use, each group will be supplied with a radio cassette player and trained in its use to record and disseminate information. All groups will record on tape a presentation, song, poem, role-play or story on a relevant topic of choice. The tapes will then be exchanged among the groups so groups are able to learn about the work of each other. In addition, community artists will be supported to produce posters and other artistic work on various topics, which will be used to disseminate information for the illiterate audiences.

Priority Information Themes (PIT) methodology will be used to review the available HIV/AIDS, agriculture, and rural development materials, and put them on print, audiotapes, CD-ROMs and the KAIPPG website.

An information kiosk will be set up for each group and stocked with the information on various media, including the Simu ya Jamii, from which the surrounding communities can make telephone calls and also access information on health, agriculture, and rural development.

Mobile phones, radio listening groups, and all other ICTs devices will be used not only for knowledge and skills acquisition, income-generating activities and food security enhancement, but also to increase the capacity of individuals and groups to become advocates for their own needs and interests. This will not only improve the knowledge base of communities, but also empower them socially and economically, since information is power, and education makes for a

better quality of life.

### **Project Beneficiaries:**

The direct project beneficiaries will be rural communities and women affected by HIV/AIDS, who usually happen to be smallholder farmers. A limited number of men will also be considered in order to enhance joint ownership of the project. More specifically the project beneficiaries will include women and in some cases men drawn from households affected by and individuals infected with HIV/AIDS, caregivers of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAS), widows and small-holder women farmers' groups.

The project will directly train 120 low-income women, and older orphans, in ICTs-enabled rural development skills. Assuming each household comprises 8 individuals (which is typical of Kenyan families), the skills acquired through the training will directly benefit 960 individuals. It is anticipated that the information kiosks, and the Simu ya Jamii (community phones) which will be set up in the communities, will help improve the socio-economic status of the immediate communities and the nation at large, while the skills that will be gained through the produced materials on various ICTs media will benefit wider populations beyond Kenya.

### **Intended Impacts of the Project:**

- Community telephony will not only facilitate effective, affordable and accessible communication, and hence the benefits of ICTs for all, but also make a positive economic contribution to the community, through the small fee charged for using the community phone.
- The use of the information kiosks as community information, knowledge preservation, and access points is one of the most innovative and practical ways to bring the benefits of the information society to the less privileged people. It will attract more youths and development players to remain in the rural areas, hence reducing rural to urban migration, stimulating development and growth of local business, improving local understanding of gender issues, increasing agricultural productivity as well as ICT skills among the local population, and reducing rural poverty.

- Involving the project beneficiaries in choice, design, packaging and dissemination of content will have an impact of ensuring project relevance, increasing interest and a feeling of personal and community stakeholding in the project, and will attract more rural women towards ICTs training and use for their own empowerment and self development.
- The strong training component of the project will increase the local knowledge base, expose the women to the existing potentials and opportunities in the area of ICTs, level the playing field of opportunities for both men and women—as well as boys and girls--and increase long-term sustainability and replicability of the project.
- Communities will increase their skills in the use of mixed ICTs for content development, storage, access and dissemination of both modern and indigenous techniques, practices, and knowledge, thus contributing to sustainable development and general improvement of life-quality for all.
- The project will contribute towards improved partnerships with local FM radios in dissemination of health and agricultural information for low-income rural farmers.
- Women will become advocates for their own needs and interests, and be better able to engage both in self-help measures for themselves and their families, and also in community and national development. ICTs policy in Kenya is a subject currently being addressed by the Kenyan government, and women are at the forefront of consideration in this regard. Hence any type of ICTs activity to benefit women at the grassroots can and should have a direct spillover effect into the national policy debates, and any policies thus formulated. We would like to ensure that the women of our communities have the chance to engage in and influence those debates and the direction of public policy towards greater inclusion and equality for women.

Understanding gender differences with regard to ICTs, and developing relevant content based on gender-specific needs—while working towards mainstreaming and gender equality and inclusiveness—will be another benefit of this project.

### **Follow-On Project:**

A new project is now in the works, combining elements of the first two projects. The direct project beneficiaries will be rural communities affected by HIV/AIDS, who usually happen to be smallholder farmers. More specifically, these will include women and in some cases men drawn from households affected by and individuals infected with HIV/AIDS, caregivers of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAS), and community groups involved in HIV/AIDS work.

ICTs elements will include: radio and radio-listening groups, kiosks and IEC materials, photography and video, cassettes and recorders, some computer use.

The project will directly train 360 widows, low-income women, men, and older orphans. Assuming each household comprises 8 individuals (which is typical of Kenyan families), the skills acquired through the program will directly benefit 2,880 individuals. It is anticipated that the information kiosks to be set up will target whole communities. Assuming 20 individuals will visit each of the 12 information kiosks each week, then it can be estimated that 8,640 individuals will initially benefit from the information kiosks for the 36 weeks of the project period, and those benefits will extend to larger numbers of people after the initial project period, when the kiosks will be set up permanently.

The skills and knowledge acquired through the produced materials in various ICTs media can benefit wider populations beyond Western Kenya, and hopefully further afield to others in Africa and elsewhere.

#### Overall Objective:

To build the capacity of rural farming communities of Western Kenya in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for health improvement, agricultural development, and poverty alleviation.

#### Specific Objectives:

- Establish 12 Nutritional Field Schools (NFS) in selected project sites in Western Kenya, where rural farming and HIV/AIDS affected communities will be trained in information and communication management as this relates to gender issues, health challenges, poverty alleviation, and agricultural knowledge.

- Train 360 low-income rural women and men in the use of mixed ICTs for content development, storage, access and dissemination of both modern and indigenous health and agricultural techniques and technologies, as well as themes related to skills-building, income-generation, gender issues, and literacy (both in terms of ICTs and generally).
- Establish 12 Information Kiosks in rural Kenya, where 8000 rural farmers and others so interested can access information on health, agriculture, and rural development, in a variety of media, including radio programs, video and audiotapes, and CD-ROMS.
- Package 12 unique health and agricultural information themes and record them on 360 audiotapes, 360 CD-ROMs to disseminate widely in the communities.
- Collaborate with the local FM radio stations in dissemination of the community-produced health and agricultural information resources to the wider public.

**GRASSUP-NOW Project:**

[http://www.onevillagefoundation.org/ovf/projects/ovf\\_kenya/grassup.html](http://www.onevillagefoundation.org/ovf/projects/ovf_kenya/grassup.html)