



AGAINST ALL ODDS

ANNUAL REPORT 2010



**BRANCHES TREMBLE;
THE ROOTS ARE STILL**
- JELALUDDIN RUMI



AFRICAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE



OUR MISSION

African Services is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and self-sufficiency of the **African community**. We provide **health, housing, legal, educational, and social services** to over 10,000 newcomers each year in New York City with a focus on **HIV prevention, care and support**. We also work on the frontlines of the global AIDS epidemic; operating four **clinics in Ethiopia** and through **advocacy and policy work** in the U.S. and abroad.

"I TRULY DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT AFRICAN SERVICES, THEY ARE MY FAMILY, MY SUPPORT SYSTEM, MY EVERYTHING."

Rouguiatou 'Rougi' Tounkara – Read more about Rougi's story on page 5.

Cover Photo: Stephanie Kaplan (Rouguiatou 'Rougi')

Graphic Design: Mackenzie Crone

DEAR FRIENDS,

Growing up in Liberia, my grandmother's home was always bustling with potential playmates. Without explanation I would be introduced to a new 'auntie' or 'uncle' and they were immediately woven into the fabric of our family. Access to education was not a guarantee for most children, and for those that lived in remote villages near my Grandmother's farm it was an even greater luxury. My grandmother ensured that every child that stayed in her home attended the local school and received an education. She was by no means a wealthy woman, but would often say, **"We are blessed in this life to be a blessing to others."** Regardless of her means, she constantly opened her home and made it a place of refuge... a place of opportunity. Years later when my grandmother passed away, we counted more than seventeen children that had passed through her small home in Careysbury, Liberia. For some, the stay was short, but for many they became family, and today they are my Uncle Kekula, my foster brother Emanuel and my Aunt "Small Ma".

In the last two years, the global economic crisis has driven governments, cities and organizations to make tough choices, and to cut back on essential social services. Not-for-profits have been particularly affected by these hard economic times. However, African Services continues to stand strong. By working hard, being accountable, and innovative, **African Services has not only been able to survive during these times, but has grown its services.** In 2010 African Services' Testing Center documented record numbers in walk-in HIV testing, and added health services including glucose and blood pressure screenings. The case management program expanded its client roster, and abroad in Ethiopia African Services opened a 4th free HIV testing and counseling clinic. African Services partnered once again with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Public Health Solutions and launched, "Why Stand", a thought-provoking anti-stigma campaign aimed at combating HIV stigma, one of the greatest barriers against HIV treatment and prevention.

African Services continues to ensure that it provides outstanding services as well as being at the forefront of public policy advocacy. As a board member, I take great pride in being involved with an organization like African Services, an organization with a **village spirit.** As an African immigrant — even after all this time — I know how it feels to sometimes long for the familiarity of home. As part of the African Services family, when I walk through the doors at 429 West 127th Street, **I find a piece of home, a piece of Africa, right here in New York City.**

Uzoamaka N. Okoye, Esq. | Board Member



Uzo is an attorney with the law firm of Gibbons P.C. and concentrates her practice in the areas of commercial, construction, and environmental litigation in New York and New Jersey. She is also licensed to practice law in her native Liberia.

MAY 1981
Asfasha Hadera
founds the
Committee to
Aid Ethiopian
Refugees

Nov 1982
We open our
first office at
the Community
Church of
New York

July 1987
Our refugee
resettlement
program begins
in NYC

March 1991
We launch our
HIV prevention
outreach program
for African
immigrants

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2010

Increasing Awareness

As HIV prevalence rates continue to rise in at-risk communities—including the Immigrant community—the need for outreach, **HIV prevention** and testing is more important than ever. For over 29 years, African Services has been providing essential HIV prevention and **testing services** to anyone who comes through our doors.

This year was no different, as nearly 4,000 people—a 33% increase from 2009—took advantage of our testing services. African Services' counselors also provided multi-lingual HIV and STD education, risk reduction, counseling, referral to care and treatment support. This comprehensive approach enables us to serve as a beacon of hope and assistance to the community.

Providing Security

Housing is one of the most important and basic needs for newly arrived immigrants to New York City. Combining newcomer status with an HIV positive diagnosis results in an even greater barrier to locating safe housing.

The African Services housing department assists HIV positive clients in **securing permanent housing**. This past year, they set a housing record by placing more than 350 men, women and families in secure housing. In addition to housing placement, the department also implemented “safe home” trainings and educated clients in basic money management skills.



Dec 1994
Our name
changes to
African Services
Committee

March 1998
We begin HIV
legal services & case
management for
immigrants and
their families

July 1998
The UN Economic and
Social Council approves
African Services special
consultative status to
the United Nations

June 1999
Our HIV
Housing
Program
begins

Engaging a Community

HIV Stigma remains one of the paramount barriers keeping people from walking through our doors for testing and treatment. African Services aims to combat this through our continued partnership with the New York City Department of Health. In the third year of the **HIV Anti-Stigma Initiative**, African Services launched the **Why Stand** campaign.

This multi-year social marketing initiative is aimed at breaking the silence and shame surrounding HIV in African and Caribbean communities, and challenges these communities to confront stigma and make a choice to stand in solidarity for those living with HIV. From **street teams** to **YouTube** videos to subway advertisements we blanketed the neighborhood with our message of **love and acceptance**.

Expanding Services Abroad

African Services proudly opened its doors in Ethiopia almost 7 years ago. As we close 2010, African Services Ethiopia continues to expand its operations, broaden its partnerships and diversify its offerings.

Since opening our clinics to present day, more than 100,000 people have learned their HIV status. In addition, thanks to partnerships with Becton Dickinson, BGI, Vitamin Angels, TOMS shoes and our generous **Positive Kids** donors we continue to expand our Pediatric HIV Program. To date, we have enrolled over 2,000 children in the program which provides, in addition to medical care, comprehensive case management, treatment adherence counseling, and linkage to social services.

To further meet the growing demand for testing services, African Services looks forward to opening its **fourth clinic** in the **Oromiya** region in the Fall of 2010. This clinic will allow us to address demand for HIV prevention and testing in the southern region of Ethiopia.



April 2000
African Services moves to Harlem

June 2001
We play a key role in the first UN General Assembly Special Session on AIDS

April 2002
African Services joins the NGO Communities delegation to the board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria

January 2003
UNAIDS appoints African Services as the North American representative to its Programme Coordinating Board

EMPOWERMENT FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT



have enabled the family case management program to broaden its reach and services to clients. African Services, in collaboration with Dominican Sisters Family Health Services, conducts monthly on-site HIV counseling sessions for clients. Additionally, African Services has partnered with Kings County Hospital, enabling us to bring our services to clients living in Brooklyn. The case management program has consistently outperformed its contracts, to the extent that the New York City Department of Health has increased contract targets by 30%.

Thousands of immigrant families arrive in this country every year. Many are unaware of the basic rights and services afforded to them in the United States, making them easy targets for those looking to take advantage. African Services recognizes these difficulties and continues to expand its legal services, advocacy, and family case management programs to assist and advocate on behalf of our clients.

The legal services department reached a milestone in 2009, assisting over 450 clients in adjusting immigration status for themselves and their children; in qualifying for public benefits; in fighting housing and employment discrimination; in resolving custody issues; and in obtaining child support.

Clients receive additional support from our case management program. Strategic partnerships with local and city agencies

African Services takes on the fight for immigrants' rights nationally and internationally through the work of our policy and advocacy department. Advocacy staff travel far and wide representing African Services and influencing global HIV/AIDS treatment, access and immigration policy. Co-Executive Director, Kim Nichols, was selected to serve as a UNITAID Alternate NGO Board Member, representing the interests of NGOs worldwide. Amanda Lugg, Director of Advocacy and Andrea Panjwani, Supervising Attorney, represented ASC at the 2010 International AIDS Conference in Vienna, voicing our concerns over lack of funding for universal access to HIV/AIDS medication and treatment. Bakary Tandia, an African Services Case Manager, has been working tirelessly to champion the cause of comprehensive immigration reform. He received a Human Rights Fellowship at Columbia University where he collaborated with other noted human rights advocates.

July 2003

African Services Ethiopia is established, launching our first testing center in Addis Ababa

March 2005

Our second clinic in Ethiopia opens, a public-private partnership to serve employees of BGI and greater Amhara Region

Sept 2005

African Services Ethiopia marks an important milestone: 25,000 HIV tests provided

May 2006

We celebrate our 25th anniversary in NYC



ROUGUIATOU

Rouguiatou, or “Rougi” as she is more affectionately known, came to the United States in September 2009, leaving behind her life and her family, including her 11-year-old son, to earn money in the United States. Like many, her only wish was to make a decent living for a short while and return as quickly as possible.

Things unfortunately don’t always go as planned, and 3 months into her stay she fell ill. After several months of being ill, Rougi

visited the hospital. It was there that she received the disheartening news; she was HIV positive. Fearing that her roommates would discover her illness, she was forced to move out of the apartment she occupied in the Bronx. Rougi’s first thought was to return immediately to Guinea.

“I didn’t want to stay here and die alone,” she said, “but it was explained to me that if I stayed, I would get treatment, I could have children and I could have a better life.”

June 2007
Doors open at our
third clinic in Mekele,
Northern Ethiopia

May 2008
Pediatric HIV care
is begun at all three
clinics in Ethiopia

May 2009
African Services
Co-executive Director
joins UNITAID as NGO
alternate board member

Luckily, one of the nurses at the hospital was very familiar with African Services, and immediately recommended that she visit our offices to get assistance with housing, medical care, and more.

Even a year later, Rougi recalls the first person she met, "When I arrived I met with Aida, she was from Senegal and spoke French, so I immediately felt at home." Aida, the African Services Housing Coordinator, enrolled Rougi in the housing program, and assisted her in getting her very own apartment. In addition, Rougi was enrolled in the Case Management Program. Her case manager, Willa Cochran, has become a trusted friend and confidante as she has helped Rougi to navigate the complicated waters of hospital visits, medication adherence, employment, and more.

Rougi's involvement with African Services didn't stop there. With political tensions in Guinea rising, it was becoming increasingly

unlikely that she would be able to return home with guaranteed access to medication and treatment. African Services' legal team stepped in and assisted Rougi in applying for political asylum in the United States. In December 2010, only one year after Rougi was diagnosed with HIV, she received the amazing news. Her petition was successful, and she had received asylum for herself, her son, and her husband.

Rougi was able to take advantage of almost every service that African Services has to offer, and in less than one year after being diagnosed positive, her life has definitely taken a turn for the better. With an apartment to call her own, a steady job, and good health it seems like the sky is the limit for what Rougi can do.

"I truly don't know what I would do without African Services, they are my family, my support system, my everything. All I could do was cry before...but now, I can't help but smile," says Rougi.



June 2009

Love & Let live, the first African-language HIV awareness campaign launches in NYC

April 2010

We celebrate 10 years based in Harlem

December 2010

ASC begins anti-retroviral treatment provision in Ethiopia

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION

When clients first learn their HIV status, it is a life-changing, and often devastating, discovery. African Services works closely with clients to deal with this news, and to help build strength and self-reliance within our clients. In an effort to aid in this process, African Services operates several programs aimed at supporting clients and assisting them in reclaiming their lives.

One such program is our **Independent Living Skills (ILS)** program, a holistic health education and peer support program that empowers HIV positive immigrants with the skills, knowledge and social networks they need to lead healthy and engaged lives. In 2009, African Services added to this program with a peer-led sewing and knitting cooperative. Led by Peer Counselor, Tembeni Fazo, clients meet each week and are taught basic knitting, crocheting, and sewing skills. Since their creation, they have held two sales and are planning on expanding their services.

Aside from the practical skills that the participants learn through the ILS program, it is the camaraderie and openness that they can have with one another. Ida, a long time ILS program participant said of the program, "I like to come here...I feel better with people like me around me. We can share everything. African Services is like a family to me."



EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY TO STAND UP AGAINST STIGMA

“Stigma remains the single most important barrier to public action. It is the main reason why too many people are afraid to see a doctor to determine whether they have the disease [HIV], or to seek treatment if so. It helps make AIDS the silent killer, because people fear the social disgrace of speaking about it, or taking easily available precautions. Stigma is the chief reason why the AIDS epidemic continues to devastate societies around the world.” - UN SECRETARY GENERAL BAN KI-MOON



Ban Ki-moon stated these words in 2008, and sadly, in 2010, the climate towards those living with HIV hasn't changed. Stigma continues to be one of the primary barriers to the detection and treatment of HIV. African Services has been working on the issue of stigma for more than seven years and in 2010 we mounted our most ambitious campaign to date. In collaboration with the **New York City Department of Health**, we launched the Why Stand campaign—the first anti-stigma social marketing campaign targeting African and Caribbean immigrants. The campaign aimed to break the silence and shame surrounding those living with HIV, and to create a dialogue for acceptance among those living in the wider community.

Branded **Why Stand**, the campaign engaged African community leaders and 'celebrity' spokespeople to assist in spreading the message of support and acceptance for those living with HIV. Messages from **Imam Konate** to **Miss Senegal** blanketed Harlem's subway stations and streets. Street teams combed the neighborhood handing out custom campaign materials and sharing the Why Stand message. In the dark of night we reverse stenciled the streets with the campaign's website - **www.whystand.org**. All of these media shared the same message, **"Would you stand up for those living with HIV?"**

In three months alone the street teams distributed over 2,000 postcards, 1,000 campaign condoms, 1,000 key chains, 2,000 stickers and more. We look forward to continuing this campaign's success into 2011 and expanding our reach in the community.





POWER THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS: AFRICAN SERVICES IN ETHIOPIA

It's hard to believe that African Services Ethiopia is going into its 8th year of operation. What's not hard to believe is that we continue to meet and beat expectations and goals every single year.

In 2003, African Services took its comprehensive HIV care model to the front-lines of the pandemic in Ethiopia. Using our knowledge and experience in HIV/AIDS care for African communities in New York, we established communi-

ty-based clinics in three locations in Ethiopia – Addis Ababa, Kombolcha and Mekele. Strategically located, these clinics are able to reach out to the most at-risk populations, and provide comprehensive HIV prevention education, testing, family case management, and nutrition services. Since beginning our work in Ethiopia we have provided free HIV testing to over 100,000 people.

African Services' comprehensive approach to HIV prevention and care





has enabled us to help people beyond simply testing and education. Micro-lending and small business training has become an important part of the outreach program. This enables clients to sustainably provide for their families and become productive members of the community.

Although facing a tough economic climate, African Services Ethiopia was able to continue to grow and expand its services in 2010 thanks to strategic

partnerships. Working closely with Vitamin Angels, another non-profit, African Services was able to expand its vitamin distribution program to children, pregnant and lactating women enrolled in our Pediatric HIV care program. Since the beginning of the program we have distributed over 100,000 vitamin supplements. These supplements provide essential vitamins and minerals needed for child development.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

2010 2009

Support & Revenue

Support

Grants and Contracts	2,618,035	2,466,328
Contributions	528,173	637,284
Total Support	3,146,208	3,103,612

Revenue

Miscellaneous Income	33,821	8,870
Total Support & Revenue	3,180,029	3,112,482

Expenses

Program Services

Health Services	1,176,512	1,144,902
Housing Services	344,344	324,467
Legal Assistance	336,355	285,925
Social Services	325,939	347,208
International Program	265,733	190,548
Total Program Services	2,448,883	2,293,050

Supporting Services

Management and General	478,716	449,350
Total Expenses	2,927,599	2,742,400

Change in Net Assets

Net Assets (deficit)	252,430	370,082
Beginning of Period (as adjusted)	827,342	502,179
Net Assets at End of Year	1,079,772	872,261

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Government

Federal

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Intergovernmental

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

State and Local

New York State Department of Health; AIDS Institute

New York State Employees Federated Appeal

New York City Bureau of Maternal, Infant and Reproductive Health

New York City Council

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (CDC, HRSA, HUD/HOPWA)

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development

City University of New York Campaign

Corporations & Foundations

AIDS Walk New York

American Jewish World Service

Becton, Dickinson and Company

BGI Ethiopia

Ethiopian Airlines

Fairway Market

High Mowing Seeds

H. van Ameringen Foundation

The Izumi Foundation

MAC AIDS Fund

New York City AIDS Fund

New York Community Bank Foundation

Penny Harvest of Cristo Rey High School, Inc.

The Council of Fashion Designers of America

The Emanuel & Anna Weinstein Foundation

The Hyde and Watson Foundation

The International Foundation

United Way of New York City

Individual Donors by Giving Level

\$10,000+

Michael Smith

\$5,000+

Anonymous

David Corkery

\$1,000 to 4,999

Ann Nichols

Beverly Anderson

Gary Cohen

Mary Beth Kelly

Nathalie Weeks

Rick Azar

\$500 to 999

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Nadya Salcedo

Nina Collins

Philipos Mengistu

Sheila Balter

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Individual Donors by Giving Level

Tiffany L Koch
Timothy Thomas
Uzoamaka N Okoye
Vanessa M Sobers
Vicki Hovanessian

\$100 to 199

Dinah Day
Ellen Shumsky
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Up to \$100

Abner Taub & Liliane Sznycer
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Mary Moran
Matthew Bremer
Melanie Havelin
Melissa Carp
Meredith Berlin
Meredith Finkelstein
Michael Lawson
Michael Tuckman



“Vitamin Angels is pleased to partner with African Services Committee in providing essential micronutrients for children in Ethiopia. Together we are giving children the opportunity to lead meaningful and productive lives.”

**- Amy Steets,
Program Manager,
Vitamin Angels**



Michael & Tanya Sparer
Michael A. Robinson
Michaela Hewett
Mintwab Demessie
Muhamadou Salieu Suso
Natalie Blazer
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Vinson German
Vivian Ubell
Wendy McKenna & Suzanne Kessler
Zohar Levy

“TOMS Shoes is excited about our partnership with African Services Committee in Ethiopia. They are integrating our shoes into their programs so that they can have a meaningful impact on children’s lives.”

**-Jenise Steverding,
Giving Account
Manager,
TOMS Shoes**

Special Partners

ACRIA
Africa Action
Blue Marble Ice Cream
Central Harlem Community
Supported Agriculture Program
Donna Gould
David Greeley
City Council Member
Inez Dickens
City Council Member
Robert Jackson
Columbia University School
of Business
Fordham University School of Law
Mackenzie Crone
Ethiopia Federal Ministry of Health
The Fresh Air Fund
Global Business Coalition on
AIDS, TB and Malaria
GMHC
Sue & Judy Greenwald
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Health GAP
(Global Access Project)
HIV Law Project
The Mayor’s Office
of Immigrant Affairs
The New School
New York State and
City Departments of Health
New York City Health and
Hospitals Corporation
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New York Immigration Coalition
New York University
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SMART University
State Senator Bill Perkins
Dr. Michael Smith
Sydney Dennison
UNAIDS

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Ethiopia

Addis Ababa

Alem Mekonnen,
HIV Counselor

Ayele Asrat, Guard

Benyam Tadesse, Driver

Birtukan T/Silassie
Store Keeper

Buzuneh Arega, Guard

Desalew Adane
Director of Programs

Ejegayehu Taddese
Site Coordinator

Fisiha Molla, Guard

Genet Tsegaye, Janitor

Gulelat Kebede,
HIV Counselor

Haben Abrha
Outreach Coordinator

Habtom Aboye
Outreach Worker

Hailu Aregaw, Guard

Hanna Abebe Worku
Administrator & Financial Manager

Haregewoyen Asrat
Lab Technician

Helen Tadiwos, Janitor

Mekonen Tadesse, Guard

Netsanet Haile Mariam,
Lab Technician

Negussie Gonche
Pharmacy Technician

Seblewongel Berhanu
HIV Counselor

Seblewongel Tamiru, DOC

Selamawit Tesema
Office Assistant

Sewhareg Tadesse
Outreach Worker

Shikur Kelifa, Guard

Sintayehu Merete, Cleaner

Tsegereda Getachew
Outreach Worker

Yokabel Abdo, Accountant

Zaid Gidey, Outreach Worker

Zewdinesh Ademe
Data Encoder

Mekele

Abeba Gebru, Office Assistant

Amare Hiluf, Guard

Aberaham Gebre Hiwot
Site Coordinator

Alemtsehay Kalayu
Outreach Worker

Aselefech Halefom
Lab Technician

Atsibaha Kidane, Guard

Benyam Belay
Outreach Coordinator

Emenet Haddis
Junior Accountant

Goha Abera Mekibib
Shoe Project Clerk

Kebedech Seyoum
HIV Counselor

Mehari Hargot, Guard

Mulugeta Abay
Outreach Worker

Rahel Mulu, Janitor

Tirhas Hagose
Outreach Worker

Tirhas Haile, Lab Technician

Tsegaye Mekoya
Outreach Worker

Wudnesh Girmay, Pharmacist

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Data Encoder

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