

2003

A N N U A L R E P O R T



AFRICAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE

African Services Committee

From his first hospitalization, care providers referred Ayawo to African Services Committee. But he scoffed, "Africans based organization dedicated to improving the health and assistance at city offices, but was turned away because of self-sufficiency of the African community in New York City his immigration status. "But I kept hearing the name of African Services." he said. In 2001, Ayawo became ill. "You could see every rib through my skin," he said, believing he was going to die. On that first visit, Ayawo met with a health worker at African Services. "She asked me how I was doing, refugees and immigrants, and I told her, 'Ça ne va pas [It's not going well]', and she kept AIDS advocacy, policy work saying, 'Ça ira [It will].'" A year later, Ayawo has regained and technical assistance his health. "I can't believe it! The one place I was avoiding... benefiting African NGOs in And they gave me everything I needed." both the US and Africa.

DEAR FRIENDS

We are refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers who have come to the United States from all walks of life in Africa—a continent with vast resources that suffers from the absence of good governance and mismanaged wealth. Our minds and hearts have been attacked, and we have abandoned our roots as a result of repression, violence and reprisals. We have fled our countries of origin to escape persecution based on race, religion and political beliefs.

It was not our intention, nor desire, to choose the road to exile, simply, because it means to be uprooted. We know the pain of leaving, but understand that to stay is to wait for the worst. We were left with one option: to seek safe haven. Only with that option secure can we rebuild our lives as productive citizens of new countries and the international community.

Our mission at African Services Committee is guided by our experiences as refugees and immigrants who have walked in the shoes of the people we serve. As advocates, we are driven to alleviate rootlessness and create opportunities for self-sufficiency for other newcomers.

Refugees and immigrants in the US and abroad have proven our determination to make a place for ourselves through effective participation in social, economic and political development. Not only have we become a force in our new countries, we are also valuable negotiators in conflict resolution for a better world, including the world we left behind.

Thank you,

Asfaha Hadera
Founder & Co-Executive Director



It has been ten years since we changed our name from the Committee to Aid Ethiopian Refugees, reflecting a broader focus to serve the diverse pan-African immigrant, refugee and asylee communities in New York City. In 2003, we took our programs back to Africa,

registering African Services Committee as a local NGO in Ethiopia and establishing offices in Addis Ababa.

Last year, our staff grew to over 40 people and we surpassed gender parity—we are now more women than men. For the first time, we have a Communications Director to share our news. We also began domestic violence prevention and policy work. And five former staff are currently enrolled in medical school pursuing careers in public health begun at African Services Committee.

Despite taking our first hit in federal funding in 2003, we launched our Independent Living Skills Program for people living with HIV/AIDS. African Services became the North American NGO representative on the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board. Also in 2003, the United States went to war in Iraq, and security considerations began to seriously impact US immigration policy toward people from Muslim nations.

It's been a year of enormous growth in programs and organizational capacity, as well as political and economic challenges. We give deep thanks to our board, staff, clients, and supporters who have helped us through these watershed months.

Sincerely,

Kim Nichols
Co-Executive Director

OUR PROGRAMS

HEALTH PROMOTION FOR THE AFRICAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

Health Needs of African Immigrants

In 2003, one in twenty New Yorkers was born in Africa. African immigrants face enormous barriers to health care for both acute and chronic disease. For the estimated 450,000 largely uninsured African immigrants in New York City, African Services Committee has been a primary source of information on health care access for the past 15 years.

Community and Street Outreach

African Services reaches over 8,000 refugees and immigrants each year through community and street outreach. Our African outreach staff works in low-income neighborhoods, goes to hospitals in all five boroughs, and reaches out to community leaders and African associations. They provide culturally-relevant information about HIV/AIDS, STIs, TB and sickle cell disease and promote awareness of medical services for immigrants. By working locally and being there during crisis, African Services has established itself as a trusted partner in African immigrant communities.

Access to Health Care, Medical Escort and Interpretation

African Services Committee bridges the gap between African communities and New York's health care system. In partnership with hospitals and clinics, we work to provide access to care and low-fee payment plans for clients and their families regardless of immigration status. Free vision, diabetes and blood pressure screenings are offered regularly at African Services.

African peer health workers also serve as escorts on hospital visits providing patient advocacy and medical interpretation in more than twenty African languages. As liaisons between patient and health care provider, they help facilitate diagnosis, treatment and adherence to therapy. More than 1,000 immigrants access health care each year through African Services.

HIV PREVENTION, CARE & SUPPORT

Since 1991, African Services Committee has offered comprehensive HIV prevention and care programs for immigrants from all regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, where the AIDS epidemic is most devastating. Our integrated HIV Prevention and Care Program promotes access to treatment and positive client self-image through a recognition of the right to health and human rights for all people, including immigrants living in the US.

Prevention and Education

Promoting knowledge of HIV/AIDS among newcomers and its impact on their immigrant communities is the foundation of African Services' integrated prevention and education services. Through outreach, voluntary counseling and testing, and workshops for African community leaders, we disseminate accurate health information and work to reduce stigma around HIV/AIDS.



Testing and Early Intervention

African Services encourages African immigrants to learn their HIV status in our confidential and caring setting. Rapid HIV testing; serotyping for non-B subtypes common among Africans; and TB, STI and pregnancy screening is available at our on-site testing center. Among those who came for testing at African Services in 2003, 4.4 percent were HIV-positive. African peer counselors work to de-stigmatize testing and convey an HIV-positive result as a treatable medical condition.

Access to Care, Case Management and Individual Counseling

African Services provides case management to over 300 HIV-positive immigrants and their families each year. In partnership with hospitals throughout New York City, case managers facilitate access to a range of medical and supportive services for clients regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, age, or sexual orientation. Our Risk Reduction Program facilitates clients' understanding of HIV infection, disclosure and partner notification, behavior modification, harm reduction, and treatment adherence.

Building Self-Sufficiency and Independent Living Skills

Successful HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment utilization is sustained by building stability and self-sufficiency among immigrant families. Each year, more than 180 immigrants secure housing through our HOPWA Program—Housing Opportunities for People Living with AIDS. In coordination with HOPWA, the Independent Living Skills Program offers employment assistance, computer classes, budgeting and money management workshops, and assistance accessing community services to help newcomers increase their opportunities for true self-sufficiency.

POLICY, ADVOCACY, ACTIVISM & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

African Services integrates direct service with policy advocacy on global issues that impact African immigrant communities, including immigrant rights, global HIV treatment access and debt relief for impoverished countries. We advocate on behalf of individuals, organizations and communities locally, nationally and internationally.

Our legal advocacy program provides client immigration assistance with respect to HIV status, often helping to stay deportation to a country of origin where treatment is unavailable.

Through community activism, African Services Committee offers immigrants living with HIV/AIDS the opportunity to speak with one voice and influence policies that impact their health and human rights.

African Services also provides technical assistance and training for NGOs in the US and Africa, with a focus on program development, in the belief that strong community-based organizations are crucial to fighting AIDS globally.





HIGHLIGHTS 2003

SERVING IN AFRICA

In July 2003, African Services-Addis Ababa proudly opened its doors and began providing HIV services in Ethiopia. Staffed by nine local community health workers, including people living with HIV/AIDS, the project conducts outreach and prevention education in the urban markets of Addis Ababa. Free HIV voluntary counseling and rapid testing is offered at our new offices near Shola Market.

Uptake of testing has far exceeded expectations. In the first four months, more than 3,000 people were tested, 17 percent of whom are HIV-positive. African Services-Addis is demonstrating the viability of a low-cost diagnostic facility for HIV/AIDS in Africa, and we look forward to integrating ARV treatment into our services. We thank American Jewish World Service for investing in this innovative project.

CONFRONTING STIGMA & DISCRIMINATION

For World AIDS Day 2003, African Services partnered with UNAIDS to take the event beyond UN Headquarters and into the community. We sponsored *Live and Let Live*, an evening of commemoration at Morningside Heights' Cathedral of St. John the Divine to combat HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination. Activists, speakers and performers from around the world came together to support the ongoing fight against global AIDS.

African Services has also begun an Anti-Stigma Initiative supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation and the Academy for Educational Development. This 18-month project will examine the roots of stigma in the African immigrant community and the impact of discrimination on African immigrants living with HIV/AIDS. In 2004, African Services Committee will sponsor a campaign in the communities we serve to combat stigma and discrimination as barriers to HIV testing.





PROMOTING WELLNESS

African Services focuses on wellness to bridge the gap between traditional African lifestyles and new lives in New York City. In 2003, our bilingual program for fitness and nutrition came into its own. Each week, clients and staff peer counselors meet in the Annex for yoga and acupuncture followed by a healthy supper. Cooking classes, self-defense, dance and Capoeira are offered on alternate evenings.

We also distributed more than 4,500 pantry bags last year through our Food and Nutrition Program, which enables immigrants to supplement traditional diets with healthy food products. Fresh produce is donated by the Harlem Community-Supported Agriculture Program. Vitamin supplements are made possible with a Vitagrant administered by the New York State Attorney General’s Office through a landmark anti-trust settlement.

ENHANCING SECURITY

Personal security is the foundation of health and well-being. Last year, African Services found sustainable housing for over 200 immigrants living with AIDS and for clients dually-infected with HIV and TB. Our Home and Hearth Program for asylum seekers provides housing and job placement assistance as well as English as a Second Language classes. Through legal advocacy, African Services worked on behalf of more than 100 undocumented immigrants to legalize their status and protect their access to HIV treatment. And in 2003, we began a domestic violence prevention and support program for African immigrant women.

PHOTOS (TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT): Rep. Charles Rangel, World AIDS Day (photo: Jake Price); the Sinikithemba HIV-Positive Choir, World AIDS Day (photo: Jake Price); fitness program at African Services’ Annex.

PHOTOS (BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT): Nitin Sawhney, World AIDS Day (photo: Jake Price); condom distribution in Ethiopia; staff member, Evariste Akpele, at protest; African Services-Addis Ababa staff; staff member, Bakary Tandia, health screening intake; staff member, Amadou Diao.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Summary of financial statements for the years ending May 31, 2003 and 2002.

REVENUES	2003	2002
Contributions	52,607	19,793
Other Revenue		
Miscellaneous Income	10,032	75,511
Grants and Contracts	2,336,164	1,882,567

Total Other Revenue	2,346,196	1,958,078
Total Revenues, Excluding Gifts in Kind	2,398,803	1,977,871
EXPENSES		
Program Services		
Health Services	1,200,336	1,018,474
Housing Services	600,966	333,543
Legal Assistance	54,092	27,367
Refugee Program	17,614	27,329
Social Services	49,801	27,717
Total Program Services	1,922,809	1,434,430
Supporting Services		
Management and General	243,267	296,272
Total Expenses Excluding Gifts in Kind	2,166,076	1,730,702
NET ASSETS		
Change in Net Assets	232,727	247,169
Net Assets at Beginning of Period (as adjusted)	426,576	193,849
Net Assets at End of Year	193,849	(53,320)



FUNDING & SUPPORT

JUNE 2002 - MAY 2003

Government:

Federal

- US Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development, HOPWA
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

State & Local

- Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence
- New York City Department of Health
- New York State Office of Minority Health
- New York State AIDS Institute
- New York State Attorney General's Office
- State of New Jersey, Department of Youth and Family Services

International

- Permanent Mission of Libya to the UN
- Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the UN

Foundations, Organizations & Corporations

- Altria Employee Fund
- Altria Group, Inc.
- American Jewish World Service
- The Balm In Gilead, Inc.
- Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
- Compu-Count
- First Data Western Union Foundation
- GMHC AIDS Walk New York
- JP Morgan Chase Charitable Foundation

- Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
- New York City AIDS Fund
- New York Community Trust
- NYMEX Foundation
- United Way of New York City, Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program
- United Way of New York State, Employees Federated Appeal
- United Way of New York City, Combined Municipal Appeal
- United Way Emergency Food and Shelter Program
- Western Union Helping Hands Program
- 1% for Development Fund (UN Staff Foundation)

Individual Donors:

\$25,000+

- Henry van Ameringen

\$1,000 - \$2,500

- Sam Avrett
- David Corkery
- Vouli and Tom Friel

\$500 - \$999

- Grace Nkenke

\$200 - \$499

- Joanne Csete
- Cynthia Jack
- Greg Nichols
- Jerome J. Radwin

\$100 - \$199

- Peter A. Arumemi
- John Brooks
- Craig Calhoun
- Chau-Chun Chien
- Gary Gardner
- Mary Glenshaw
- Eddie Kariisa
- Kevin Kelly
- Joel Maxman
- Joe Pressley
- Ann Reed
- Sue Simon

Many thanks to the following individuals & organizations:

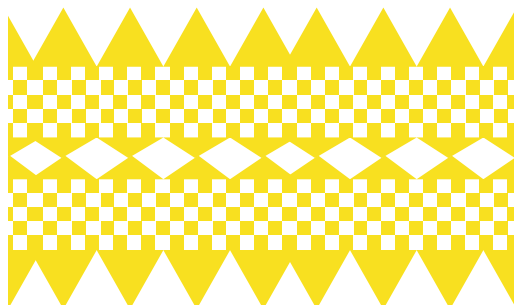
- Morrison & Foerster LLP
- Fiscal Infrastructure Technical Assistance of MHRA
- The Spin Project
- Community Resource Exchange
- GMHC
- Health GAP
- ACT UP
- The Balm In Gilead, Inc.
- Ethiopian Airlines
- Hilton Hotels
- Reebok Human Rights Foundation
- UN Foundation
- Linda Beck
- Jake Price
- Jacque Reid
- Mary Robinson
- Rep. Charles Rangel
- Baaba Maal
- Nitin Sawhney
- Lila Downs
- Harlemm Lee
- The cast of "Rent"
- The Sinikithemba Choir of South Africa
- Marty Rosen
- Bertil Lindblad and UNAIDS New York
- Venture Polygon
- New York Cares
- Leigh Blake
- The Corkery Group

Interns:

- Katia Araujo-Natt
- Tricia Doughty
- Deanna Fowler
- Louisa Fuller
- Cullen Goldblatt
- Sofia Guglietti
- Sam Halajian
- Dvora Joseph
- Alissa King
- Margaret Lawson
- Leslie Mento
- Farrah Musani
- Holly E. Parker
- Andrew Rebold
- B. Scott Worley

Volunteers:

- Guy Agloo
- Seynabou Diop
- Khady Diouf
- Charlie Everett
- Allen Figaro
- Julie Fuller
- Andréa Kassa
- Todd Lester
- Gertrude Maina
- Gregory Mann
- Carnon Marseille
- Toni McRae
- Ruth Mitchell
- Dicko Niandgado
- Jennifer O'Hara
- Robert Oliver
- Mbumwae Suba
- Sowonou Yovo
- Students for Global Justice, Columbia University
- NYC Student Initiative for AIDS





OUR STAFF



NEW YORK CITY

Evariste Akpele (Côte d'Ivoire)
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Mulusew Bekele (Ethiopia)
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Aicha Camara Brown (Guinea)
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Cynthia Chirwa (Zambia)
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Kokeb Tamrat
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