



# **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**



**10 Years of HIV/AIDS Prevention,  
Care/Support and  
Community Development**

**RWEYOWA 10TH ANNIVERSARY REPORT**

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ABC</b>	Abstinence, Being faithful and Condom use
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
<b>ARVs</b>	Anti Retro-Virals (Drugs)
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>FEED</b>	Family Empowerment and Economic Development
<b>FP</b>	Family Planning
<b>HCT</b>	HIV Counseling and Testing
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>KACCAD</b>	Kyosiga Community Christian Association for Development
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PLHIV</b>	People living with HIV/AIDS
<b>PMTCT</b>	Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission of HIV
<b>RWEYOWA</b>	Rescue Widows, Elderly, Youth and Orphans with AIDS
<b>STDs</b>	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis
<b>UNASO</b>	Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organizations
<b>VCT</b>	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
<b>YEAH</b>	Young, Empowered and Healthy

## 2. FOREWORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.



Ten years ago, a unique organization was formed, inspired by the tragedy and suffering that the community could no longer ignore. By improving the lives of those affected/infected with HIV/AIDS, RWEYOWA brought hope to the community. Ten years later, that hope has turned into a reality. Thousands of people are now receiving antiretroviral treatment through our referral system and thousands more are accessing HIV counseling and testing services through

RWEYOWA's HIV counseling and testing outreaches. The number of Ugandans dying from HIV/AIDS related illness has reduced by 50.7% according to the new report from the Ministry of Health, and this is a great progress in the country's quest towards containing the HIV/AIDS scourge. As RWEYOWA, we're proud of our contribution towards this change but our work is not yet complete because many people still need to identify their HIV status and others need to start treatment as well as other services related to our programs. We're skillfully led and supported by a senior management team and volunteers every day. We're profoundly moved by the commitment and ability of our volunteer's persevere, often in the face of adversity. We thank and salute them all. We're especially grateful to the dedicated international volunteers who have continuously worked with us even when are in their home countries. We thank all our partners, you have been a pillar to RWEYOWA throughout these 10 years and we promise to offer continuing support to everyone under our eligibility and to keep making our success possible. We're to maintain doing this together and every day we shall be reminded of the vitality of this organization. We thank everyone for this opportunity to serve.

**Kasamba Ronald**  
Executive Director

### 3. MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAMS MANAGER



It has been 10 years but I feel like it is yesterday when RWEYOWA started as a small group of youth working in Namasuba, and now we have emerged to become a non-governmental organization operating in Wakiso and Kampala districts.

This year 2016 marks the 10th Anniversary of RWEYOWA. Our establishment stemmed from the mission of curbing the further spread of HIV and improving the livelihoods of those affected/infected with the virus in the community.

Since RWEYOWA opened its doors in 2006, it has become a popular icon in HIV/AIDS

prevention, care and support in Wakiso and Kampala districts. Over the past 10 years, RWEYOWA has provided trusted, life-saving support services to the people infected/affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as targeted prevention services reaching out to people who are most at risk of HIV.

We have achieved clear and visible results through our community-based programs especially HIV/AIDS Sensitization/Education, Orphan Support/Sponsorship, Community Outreach, Family Empowerment and Economic Development, Family Planning, among other health and community development interventions. This report summarizes RWEYOWA's milestones of its first decade. Our achievements wouldn't have been possible without the contributions of all our partners/sponsors and the intelligence, creativity and commitment of our tremendously talented volunteers. Moreover, I would like to thank the entire Management of RWEYOWA for the brilliant leadership and selfless dedication.

It is my hope that you would all join us with your courage and incessant efforts in this struggle of curbing the further spread of HIV and improving the livelihood of those infected/affected by the virus.

Through partnership we can make a difference!

**Wilson Ssekibuule**

Programs Manager

## 4. INTRODUCTION

### Background

Rescue Widows, Elderly, Youth and Orphans with AIDS (RWEYOWA) officially opened its doors in May 2006. Seven dedicated volunteers involved in the door-to-door housing and population census of 2002 established RWEYOWA after realizing the need to respond to HIV/AIDS and its devastating effects in the community. In its first decade, RWEYOWA has grown from just a small community based organization in Namasuba into an influential non-governmental organization operating in Wakiso and Kampala districts.

RWEYOWA is dedicated to activities and campaigns designed to reduce the further spread of HIV/AIDS and improve the livelihood of those affected/infected with HIV/AIDS in the community.

RWEYOWA's core strength lies in its excellent understanding of the community it serves and

its practical approach of finding solutions to problems within the community. This strength

is derived from the fact that many of its staff members themselves come from the same vulnerable groups that RWEYOWA targets.

### Mission

To curb the further spread of HIV and improve the livelihoods of those affected/infected with the virus in the community.

### Vision

A community accessing HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support services in the most prosperous and sustainable way possible.

## Objectives

- To establish care and support activities/projects to improve the lives of those affected/infected with HIV/AIDS
- To prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS and STDs among people of all ages through the ABC strategy
- To promote sexual reproductive health among young people in the community
- To advocate for equality, respect, and protection of all those infected /affected by HIV/AIDS
- To improve coordination and cooperation with other partner organizations through mobilization, information sharing, and expertise in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

## Operational Principles

- ❖ Principle of practical involvement and participation of beneficiaries in the identification of key areas of operation and possible solutions in tackling issues associated with HIV/AIDS
- ❖ Principle of non-political and non-partisan operating environment
- ❖ Principles of non-discrimination
- ❖ Principle of confidentiality
- ❖ Principles of adaptation, responsibility and partnership



*One of the families under  
RWEYOWA's community  
outreach*

## 5. 10 years of making a difference

The priority HIV program activities implemented at RWEYOWA in its first decade are informed by the best available scientific evidence in HIV research findings by RWEYOWA and various partners that have maximum impact on reducing new HIV infections and save/improve the quality of lives of persons affected/infected with virus in the community. RWEYOWA's programs have distinct approaches which are in line with the key national strategic frameworks; National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan, Health Sector Strategic and Investment Plan, Health Sector HIV / AIDS Strategic Plan and the National HIV Prevention Plan.

HIV prevention has continued to take more emphasis in RWEYOWA's effort to respond to HIV/AIDS in the community. During the course of this past decade, RWEYOWA carried out HIV/AIDS prevention and care/support interventions with the aim of further reducing the spread of the virus and improving the livelihoods of those affected by the virus in the community.

Activities that were implemented include among others: Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Sensitization/Education, HIV Counseling and Testing, Orphan Support/Sponsorship, Empowerment and Economic Development, Community Outreach, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) and Family Planning.



*Racida, one of the children under RWEYOWA's orphan sponsorship*



## 5.1. HIV/AIDS Sensitization/Education

As one of the critical and proven efforts to prevent new HIV infections, RWEYOWA conducted its comprehensive HIV/AIDS sensitization program among its clients, school communities, and the general public. HIV/AIDS sensitization/education was used to save people from contracting the virus, as well as addressing stigma and discrimination against People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLHIV), which are fueled by misunderstandings and misinformation.

The HIV/AIDS sensitization and education activities depended on the audience. Among the young school-going communities, emphasis was put on abstinence as the best means to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV. Discussion groups were conducted, and HIV/AIDS reading materials were also distributed among young people in schools to equip them with comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention knowledge and skills.

As far as HIV/AIDS sensitization/education among PLHIV and the general public is concerned, condom use, faithfulness, safe male circumcision, HIV/AIDS treatment adherence, discordance, and gender-based violence among PLHIV were our main areas of interest.

During these past 10 years, RWEYOWA's HIV/AIDS sensitization/education reached 23,504 school going young people and at least 28,472 people out of school. Conducting discussion groups, staging drama shows and distribution of HIV/AIDS Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were the main approaches used to carry out HIV/AIDS sensitization/education activities. Lots of thanks to Straight Talk Foundation for providing RWEYOWA with reading materials (Information, Education and Communication materials) about young people/youth and HIV/AIDS prevention.



*Launching RWEYOWA's HIV/AIDS sensitization campaign, 2006*



*HIV/AIDS sensitization Radio Talk Show*

*In-school HIV/AIDS sensitization through reading materials*

## 5.2. HIV Counseling and Testing Outreach (HCT)

In all our endeavors, RWEYOWA emphasizes that the only true way to know your HIV status is to get tested for HIV on a routine basis (every 3 months). We have been able to facilitate this process for our community during the past 10 years by conducting outreaches to provide voluntary counseling and testing services. This service promotes behavioral change in case of HIV negative results, whereas once tested and found positive, individuals can then receive support from RWEYOWA's outreach services and referrals to partner health centers/hospitals for free HIV/AIDS treatment services.

168 HCT outreaches were conducted during our first decade of HIV/AIDS community service, and at least 20,864 people were able to know their HIV status.



*Mobilization for HIV/AIDS counseling and testing*

**Table 1. Clients who received RWEYOWA's HCT services during the past 10 years**

Gender	Adults (18yrs and above)	Young ones (below 18yrs)	Total
Male	7,083	2,806	9,889
Female	9,394	1,581	10,975
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,477</b>	<b>4,387</b>	<b>20,864</b>

### 5.3. Orphan Support/Sponsorship

We strongly believe that "Education is the best gift to a vulnerable child" RWEYOWA's Orphan Support/Sponsorship has been one of the most cherished and far reaching intervention in our effort to improve the livelihood of vulnerable children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in the community. Lots of thanks to the efforts of our dedicated sponsors, RWEYOWA has been successful in setting up regular sponsorship for 97 vulnerable orphans. Of these, 19 have international sponsors and are given strict and comprehensive care to keep them healthy, happy, and ready to learn. Others (78) are under the scholarship/bursary scheme established by RWEYOWA with local schools in the community. We're proud to note that some of the children we started with under this program (Namuli Erinah and Iradukunda Yvonne) are now at the university!

It is the incredible generosity and efforts of our past volunteers and local schools that has made the orphan support/sponsorship program a success during these past 10 years.



*Nakawuma Kruthum in  
2007 before RWEYOWA  
support*



*Nakawuma Kruthum  
today, 2016*



*Kirabo Gift in 2007  
before RWEYOWA  
support*

*Kirabo Gift today, 2016*





*Charles in 2006 before  
RWEYOWA support*

*Charles today, 2016*



## 5.4. Community Outreach

Since RWEYOWA's inception in 2006, we have been providing trusted, life-saving support services to our clients throughout Wakiso and Kampala districts.

RWEYOWA makes weekly visits to the people affected/infected with HIV/AIDS under our care in order to provide routine health checks for opportunistic infections, assistance with necessary medications, and imperative psychosocial support and counseling for the PHA and the families that care for them. Additionally, we provide these clients with stocks of basic necessities such as foodstuffs, clean water and clothing.



*One of the families under RWEYOWA's community outreach*

*Taking an elderly client to the hospital*



## 5.5. Family Empowerment and Economic Development (FEED) Project

The “FEED project” has been considered as the RWEYOWA’s project of the decade. It was the most sustainable and life-changing project implemented during the past 10 years under review. With a mission of facilitating the economic independence of some of the vulnerable individuals and families affected/infected with HIV/AIDS in the community, RWEYOWA designed this project to provide some of our vulnerable clients with the basic capital necessary to earn an income at home by tending small livestock that do not require intensive care. Selected clients/families were given choice of either chicken or piglets to raise, based upon their personal interests and capabilities.

The FEED project started with 14 families during the implementation year 2010/2011 as a pilot project, and it has expanded to benefit a total of 73 families. These home-based sources of food and income empowered clients to take an active role in their own welfare by overcoming the costs of capital investment and allowing them to immediately reap the benefits of a small business venture. The proceeds from these “businesses” provided these families with a degree of financial independence they desperately needed. Rieti Gengo (one of RWEYOWA past volunteers) was the brains behind this RWEYOWA’s best project of the decade.



*Client receiving chicken under the FEED project*



## 6. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

### 6.1. International Volunteer Placement

RWEYOWA hosted international volunteers in the endeavor to enhance the human resource capacity of the organization, as well as facilitating cross-cultural exchange and eliciting new organizational ideas.

This ensured a competent and knowledgeable human resource base needed to deliver effective HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support services.

None of the RWEYOWA's achievements would have been possible without the intelligence, creativity and commitment of our tremendously talented volunteers.

Special thanks to our overseas country representatives/coordinators who have continued to work with RWEYOWA from their respective countries.

*My reason for volunteering with RWEYOWA was quite different from most. My reasons were simply to share a volunteer experience with my daughter, Alena, and to see, first hand what it is that she is pursuing as her career in international public health.*

*What I received was much more than that. To see the inner workings of a small locally run organization was an eye opener. The organization, determination, strength and compassion these young men have for their community is something to be admired.*

*Flexibility and adaptability are good strengths to bring along as every day with them is different. I helped organize and work at VCTs (Voluntary Counseling and Testing), and walked many miles to take food and medicine to community members. Part of my time was spent on Project Restore RWEYOWA, which enabled me to utilize my strengths as a craftswoman. By the time we were done, we had painted, patched and upholstered everything in the office. It felt good to give these young men the office they so deserve, as the work they do is important and necessary for the health of their community.*

*To work with such compassionate, humble and capable men has been life changing. To volunteer with RWEYOWA is one of the most rewarding endeavors in my life.*

Michelle Workowski

*Michelle, Christina and Alena visiting an elderly client*





## Christina Hoffman, USA

Christina is the RWEYOWA's longest serving international volunteer. She worked with us for a period of 10 months.

Christina strengthened the partnership between RWEYOWA and the government of Uganda. She successfully worked on the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between RWEYOWA and Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, which is one of the RWEYOWA's great achievements of the decade. This formal partnership resulted into exemption of RWEYOWA from taxes. It also made it easier for RWEYOWA to acquire resources from the government.

She also fundraised for RWEYOWA's HIV counseling and testing activities, community outreach, and RWEYOWA's special projects like World AIDS Day, Christmas Packages, etc.

During these past 10 years, Christina helped in establishing and maintaining international partnerships and lining up sponsors for our Orphan Sponsorship program. We're very proud to have her as RWEYOWA's Coordinator in the USA.



*Christina  
reaching out  
the vulnerable  
orphan, 2009*

## Lindesay Mace, UK

Lindesay's efforts marked the end of the mobility problem which RWEYOWA had suffered since its inception. Through the remarkable Walk of Life fundraising campaign spearheaded by Lindesay in 2011, RWEYOWA raised resources and acquired a reliable car.

This improved and facilitated our community interventions by allowing our staff to reach our most distant clients in timely and routine manner. This car doesn't only benefit RWEYOWA staff and clients, but also benefits the entire community by serving as an ambulance in case of emergency.

She also put together the RWEYOWA's Volunteer Information Pack, which is helping in improving the experience of RWEYOWA's future volunteers. Lindesay is one of our committed ambassadors in the UK



*Lindesay with an elderly client, 2011*

## Rieti Gengo, USA

Rieti was the brains behind the Family Empowerment and Economic Development (FEED) project, which has been the most sustainable and life-changing project during this RWEYOWA's first decade. He designed and fundraised for the FEED pilot project aimed at facilitating the economic independence of some of the vulnerable individuals and families affected/infected with HIV/AIDS in the community. This project expanded and currently benefiting 73 families.

Rieti also continues to work with RWEYOWA from the USA through fundraising for RWEYOWA activities, and maintaining international partnerships.



*Rieti having fun with kids, 2010*



*Sam Weavers, UK*



*Robin Schaefer,  
Germany*



*Christine Rufener,  
USA*



*Dana Le, USA*



*Alena Mack, USA*



*Devin Faris, USA*



*Bonnie Haskell, USA*



*Lisa Steinbauer, USA*



*Kaitlin Elodie, USA*



*Michelle Workowski,  
USA*



*Patrick Jonker,  
Netherlands*



*Suzan Coerts,  
Netherlands*

## 6.2.RWEYOWA and the Operation Groundswell (OG)

One of RWEYOWA's most remarkable achievements in this first decade was the establishment of a long-term partnership with Operation Groundswell, Canada. In addition to hosting OG's early and late summer volunteers, RWEYOWA also received funding from OG to implement a number of community requested projects. These projects included among others;

- ❖ Expansion of the FEED project
- ❖ Construction of protected spring wells
- ❖ HIV Counseling and Testing Outreach (HCT)
- ❖ Renovation of community schools



*RWEYOWA's Late summer OG volunteers, 2015*

## 7. Financial Resources

RWEYOWA received financial support from international and local sources.

Much of RWEYOWA's financial resources were grants and international donations from individuals and institutions.

Thanks to our past international volunteers for their continued

commitment as regards international fundraising for RWEYOWA.

More of the financial resources were allocated to RWEYOWA's direct HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support programs/projects.



*Lindesay receiving a cheque in UK on RWEYOWA's behalf*

**Table 2. RWEYOWA's income and expenditure during the past 10 years.**

Income	Amount (Ug shs)	Expenditure	Amount (Ug shs)
Local donations	19,610,650	Community outreach	20,449,600
Grants	64,864,000	Empowerment and community development	63,741,300
International donations	41,615,250	HIV counseling and testing	19,314,000
Volunteer placement fee	58,035,450	Orphan support/sponsorship	42,370,350
Others	9,619,450	HIV/AIDS sensitization/education	7,034,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>193,744,800</b>	Administrative costs	40,104,000
		<b>Total</b>	<b>193,013,750</b>

## 8. Partnership and Networking

We wish to acknowledge and appreciate all local and international partner organizations/institutions that made our achievements of this decade possible. This fruitful partnership enabled RWEYOWA to receive financial and material support, training, treatment, and educational services. These partners among others are simply second to none:



*Mildmay  
Uganda*



*Operation  
Groundswell,  
Canada*



*Crossroads  
Foundation,  
Hong Kong*



*Straight Talk  
Foundation,  
Uganda*



*TASO Uganda*



*KACCAD,  
Uganda*



*Government  
of Uganda*



*Namasuba  
College of  
Commerce*



*Uganda Network  
of AIDS Service  
Organizations*



*Uganda Cares*

- St. Apollo Health Center
- Uganda Cares
- Uganda Cares
- Ndejje Health Center IV
- Busabala Road Nursing Home
- Watoto Church
- Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organizations (UNASO)
- AIDS Information Center
- Namasuba Parents Primary School and Day Care
- St. John Primary School, Namasuba
- Step Up Primary School, Namasuba
- St. Mary's Primary School, Namasuba
- Star Primary School, Namasuba

With utmost gratitude, we would like to thank the following individuals among others for their financial and in-kind support, without which the RWEYOWA's achievements of the decade wouldn't have been possible;

- Mr. Philip Nelson, UK
- Ms. Christina Hoffman, USA
- Mr. Riet Gengo, USA
- Ms. Jane Nelson, UK
- Mr. & Mrs. Mike Gengo, USA
- Ms. Janet Hoffman, USA
- Ms. Desiree Stewart
- Ms. Lindesay Mace, USA
- Mr. Sam Weavers, UK
- Ms. Elizabeth Alvarez, USA
- MS. Kaye Barnes, USA
- Ms. Victoria Fussy, UK
- Ms. Mylinda Faircloth, USA
- Mr. Randy Pugh, USA
- Ms. Amy Rosen, USA
- Ms. Dana Le, USA
- Ms. Alena Mack, USA
- Ms. Michelle Workowski, USA
- Mr. Charles Juwah, UK
- Mr. Patrick Jonker, Netherlands
- Ms. Suzan Coerts, Netherlands
- Mr. Brian Hoffman, USA
- Ms. Amy Sonnberg, USA
- Ms. Rhiannon McCluskey, UK
- Ms. Linda Ozromano, Canada
- Mr. Adam Darell, UK
- Ms. Christine Rufener, USA
- Ms. Fara Kanji, Canada
- Ms. Naeema Tharani, Canada
- Ms. Jane Rufener, USA



## Pictorial



*RWEYOWA's Test and Treat campaign team, 2010*



*Commemorating World AIDS Day 2009*



*A family receiving livestock under the FEED Project*



*Donation of humanitarian aid from Crossroads, HongKong*



*HIV Counseling and testing outreach*



*Some of the kids under RWEYOWA's orphan sponsorship*



*RWEYOWA's late summer OG volunteers, 2015*



*RWEYOWA volunteers reaching out to the community through sports*



*Construction of a spring well*



*RWEYOWA's early summer OG volunteers (2015) awarded certificates of volunteering*



*Vulnerable children receiving clothes under RWEYOWA orphan support program*



*Client receiving Christmas package*