

## Report to the Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust

March 2019

### **Introduction**

In March 2018, The Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust awarded Advantage Africa a grant of £1,000 to support the work of our organisation. This report describes what has been achieved by Advantage Africa over a 12 month period and is adapted from the achievements section of our Annual Report.

### What has been Achieved

#### **Empowering people with disabilities in eastern Kenya**

Building on work previously supported directly by the Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust Advantage Africa continued its productive partnership with Kibwezi Disabled Persons' Organisation (KDPO) and significant impact and reach has been achieved with people with disabilities in Makueni County of eastern Kenya.

This year the KDPO rehabilitation workshop has:

- Produced or repaired 65 custom-made assistive devices.
- Assessed and fitted 45 children and adults with rough terrain wheelchairs and mobility tricycles.
- Fitted five beneficiaries with prosthetic limbs.
- Employed a new technician, Michael Munguti. He is a wheelchair user himself and a local role model for other people with disabilities.



*KDPO Team fitting a child with supportive seating*

KDPO have also supported 11 village disability groups with advice to their members and resources to run their own collective income generating activities. KDPO have also continued to develop their community outreach, visiting over 120 homes of people with disabilities. These visits provide vital support to families who often have very little knowledge about managing the disabilities they live with, or what other additional information or services might exist. Where there is most need, Advantage Africa and KDPO provide more intensive family support.

*For example, in the case of Mr and Mrs Mulwa who both have intellectual disabilities and were living in extreme poverty. KDPO found them trying to care for their six children in a tiny and dilapidated mud hut, with no apparent means of making a living. KDPO managed to improve the immediate welfare of the family by engaging some members of the local*

*church and we then raised money to help build the family a basic house, which could accommodate them all and created some security and hope for the future.*

KDPO is now established as the most influential and active Disabled Persons' Organisation in Makueni County. Led by its Coordinator, Agnes Musembi, they advocate and campaign passionately for the rights of people with disabilities in all areas of life. Agnes is frequently interviewed on local radio and consulted by county government with regard to including people with disabilities in decision-making. Amongst their successes this year were:

- Lobbying the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission to make polling stations accessible for people with disabilities.
- Convincing the area MP to support bursaries for pupils and students with disabilities to attend secondary school and higher education.

### **Successful transition of students with intellectual disabilities in Kenya**

Drawing on our long practical experience in this field, we have strengthened our partnership with Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) which is the national body for training of special education teachers in Kenya. This exciting initiative will allow Advantage Africa to greatly expand the impact and reach of this work to a national level.

We have:

- Developed of an illustrated teachers' handbook about transition of students from school to adult life.
- Developed a short teacher-training module for inclusion in KISE's prospectus of courses.
- Made plans to roll out the course with the first batch of 20 teachers next year.

### **Tackling violence against women and girls with disabilities in Kenya**

Advantage Africa is increasing its impact and reach in projects concerned with tackling violence against women and girls, especially those with disabilities. Drawing on our previous extensive research in this field, this year we have:

- Formed a new partnership with Women Challenged to Challenge (WCC)
- Successfully secured funding for a new three-year project to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls with disabilities in three locations in Kenya.
- Reached audiences of 1,500 people through our work with Twaweza, a community drama group that devises and performs its own issue-based plays.
- Run a three-day educational workshop with local service providers (police, doctors, chiefs and village elders) to improve their effectiveness in preventing and responding to reports of violence.



*Drama about women's rights in the community*

## **Empowering people affected by HIV & AIDS in Kenya**

Advantage Africa's long standing partnership with Rescue Team for HIV & AIDS in eastern Kenya continued strongly this year. We provided counselling and HIV tests for 1,646 people (57% female and 43% male) during the year, using 'moonlight testing', 'door-to door' visits, telephone hotline enquiries and plantation worker groups. 95% of those found to be HIV positive were successfully linked to medical support.

Prevention of HIV was achieved by community education and awareness raising activities. Rescue Team:

- organised large-scale events on the Day of the African Child, and a football tournament reaching nearly 1,000 people.
- Provided hygiene kits to 25 of the most vulnerable children.
- Contributed to International Condom Day and World Aids Day in partnership with National Aids Control Council and AIDS Healthcare Foundation.
- Distributed a total of over 10,000 male and female condoms to protect against HIV.
- Held health talks for 650 expectant and young mothers at local health centres.
- Ran inter-School debates on HIV related questions with nearly 600 secondary school students.

With Advantage Africa's assistance Rescue Team continued their programme of support for over 100 orphans and vulnerable children, and 40 of their caregivers. This year they provided:

- A weekly Kids Club for 100 young children to learn about health and safety
- 70 of the most disadvantaged children with a nutritious meal each month
- Support for care-givers (mostly grand-parents) to run income generating activities

The early years school which Advantage Africa and Rescue Team started in 2014 increased its enrolment this year to 64 pupils and an additional teacher has been employed. The standard of education remains high and the school has an ethos of parental involvement and compassion for the children.

## **Support for people with albinism in Uganda**

Our work with people with albinism continued to grow to reach nearly 700 people affected by this genetic condition which causes a lack of melanin pigment in their skin, hair and eyes.

Services included:

- Prevention of skin cancer through regular skin clinics in ten districts and provision of sunscreen, hats, long-sleeved clothing cryotherapy and education.
- Eye-care through sight tests, sunglasses, prescription spectacles and other low vision aids such as monoculars and magnifiers.
- Surgery for individuals with skin cancer and palliative care.



*Conducting eye tests*

The services to children with albinism had a striking effect on the attitude of their parents and carers, some of whom had previously been unwilling to send their children to school in case



they fell behind or were ridiculed.

*The mother of Rose (aged nine) told us: 'I had been very reluctant to let her go to school, afraid that her poor sight would mean that she could not study or take care of herself. With her new spectacles, Rose is now able to copy from the chalkboard into her books and is keeping up with her class-mates!'*

### **Research and advocacy on albinism in Uganda**

Building on our action research project in partnership with Coventry University and its subsequent recommendations, our advocacy on albinism reached parliamentarians and mass media including TV and radio and a campaign rally on International Albinism Awareness Day in June, attended by more than 1,000 people. With a waiver on tax and duty on sunscreen for people with albinism now secured, we pressed for the inclusion of people with albinism in the State Cancer Policy and for albinism to be included in the national science syllabus and the training of health workers nationally.



*Children with albinism at International Day for People with Albinism*

### **Sustainable enterprise development in Kenya and Uganda**

Advantage Africa continues to support vulnerable people to start their own sustainable small enterprises with encouraging levels of success. This year, in eastern Kenya Rescue Team and KDPO provided 95 people affected by HIV & AIDS or disability with a five-day training course in poultry and goat rearing. They were then supported to start their enterprises with the provision of chickens or goats, and animal feeds and plastic water tanks. 95 people benefitted directly from this project, with a further 450 family members also benefiting.

*Mwende (name changed) is a widow living with HIV who has two young children, both of whom are also HIV positive. Mwende was struggling to afford their HIV treatment. She attended the project training and benefitted from a donation of two goats. Very soon after starting her enterprise, both her goats gave birth to twins. She now has five animals and is making an income from selling goat's milk and also gives milk to her children to improve their nutrition and help boost their immune system. On a project-monitoring visit, Mwende thanked Rescue Team and Advantage Africa and said 'I now look into the future with less fear and more hope'.*

In Uganda, our partners SPAU supported 250 single parent families (approximately 1,500 people) in the poor rural communities of Ddwaniro, Kasenge and Nsangala who benefitted from enterprise start-ups in pig, poultry and goat keeping or craft / candle making.

### **Community development in Uganda**

SPAU's holistic approach in these communities enabled access to safe water, malaria and HIV prevention, and is inclusive of the most vulnerable people, such as those with disabilities. We provided community training in sustainable water point management for water committees in five locations. This ensured that approximately 4,000 children and adults now have access to sustainable safe water supplies for drinking, washing, cooking, farming and livestock rearing. Our work to help single parents cope with the impact of living

with HIV, included training in memory work for people from Ddwaniro, Muyenje, Kikuyu and Bugabo. Practical topics included child development, parenting, communication, separation, stigma, disclosure of HIV status, will writing and planning for the future.

Harriet from Kikuyu village said *'Thank you for this training because I am now empowered to fight for my property rights.'*



*A new borehole for safe water provision*

### **Building partners' capacity**

We continue to work with our partner organisations in Kenya and Uganda to develop their capacity to work independently and sustainably, with the planned gradual tapering-off of support from Advantage Africa. Partners are developing their own organisational strategic plans, which will include their own targets for self-generated fundraising. They have started making applications to local donors such as foreign embassy small grant schemes and have identified private companies and partnerships that have potential for supporting their endeavours.

In April 2018 we held a week long Partners' Workshop in Uganda. All our partner organisations from across Kenya and Uganda were represented, which meant that the extended Advantage Africa family was together for the first time in several years. The workshop covered a multitude of training subjects such as finance skills, fundraising strategies, safeguarding, policy development and mental health. The group also took the opportunity to make a field trip to share an example of the life-changing impact of our work on the ground. Advantage Africa's partners seldom have the opportunity to meet each other face-to-face, so the workshop proved to be a great motivator, as well as building partners knowledge and technical capacity. Partners reaffirmed their commitment to increasing the impact and reach of our work amongst vulnerable people in East Africa.

### **Thank you**

We would very much like to appreciate the continued support and interest that the Sylvia Adams Trust has shown in Advantage Africa over recent years. In a challenging environment for small charities, we are particularly appreciative of the Trust's understanding of the need for core costs to run our projects. As I hope this report demonstrates, we believe we have substantial and lasting positive impacts on the lives of disadvantaged groups in East Africa. We very much hope that the Sylvia Adams Trust will continue to support us in whatever way you are able.

Rob Aley  
Programme Manager