

Dear Friends,

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Enjoy!  
The Firelight Team

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Get free life-saving information on child health

JOHANNESBURG, 8 April, 8 (IRIN) - The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has launched the fourth edition of "Facts for Life", a handbook filled with information that could save the lives of some nine million children across the globe who die from preventable and treatable illnesses every year before they reach the age of five.

CLICK ON LINK BELOW FOR FULL REPORT  
[Http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=88746](http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=88746)

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Conference: Global Youth Enterprise & Livelihoods Development

September 15-16, 2010  
Washington, DC, U.S.

Making Cents International is organizing the fourth Global Youth Enterprise and Livelihoods Development Conference. After an extensive global consultation with stakeholders in this field, the following themes have been identified as priority

areas for the field this year and thus will comprise the conference's tracks: Youth Enterprise Development, Workforce Development, Monitoring, Evaluation & Impact Assessment, Youth-Inclusive Financial Services & Financial Capabilities, Adolescent Girls & Young Women.

[www.youthenterpriseconference.org/](http://www.youthenterpriseconference.org/)

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## Call for Applications: NGO Global Meeting: World Youth Conference Mexico 2010

In the context of the International Year of Youth, proclaimed by the United Nations from August 12, 2010 and on, you are invited to participate in the World Youth Conference (WYC 2010) that will take place in Mexico City from August 23 to 27, 2010. The WYC Mexico 2010 will be composed of 3 main events that will be interconnected, each representing the actors involved in strengthening the youth's participation in the development of the future: the Governments Forum, the Legislators Forum and the Social Forum (the latter composed of the Global NGOs Meeting and the Global Youth Village). Deadline to apply and become a delegate has been extended to: April 30, 2010.

[youth2010.org](http://youth2010.org)

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## Building the Home-Based Care Alliance in Ethiopia through Peer Learning

In March 2010, a team from GROOTS Kenya traveled to Hawassa Region, Ethiopia, for a peer learning exchange with four local NGOs - Mary Joy Aid through Development, OSSA, and Medan ACTS and SHAFON - in order to share tools and best practices in organizing a Home-based care Alliance. These organizations work closely with home-based caregivers to enhance care and support for people living with HIV and AIDS, and orphans and other children in the communities. The organizations expressed interest of organizing existing caregivers into an Alliance after being exposed to the methodology during the Huairou Commission's August 2009 Grassroots Academy on Home-Based Care in South Africa in which representatives from Mary Joy and OSSA participated.

The Kenyan team kicked off their visit by participating in a Wellness Day Celebration of home-based care in Hawassa region, which included an estimated 200 caregivers plus NGO partners, government officials and media. The Kenyan grassroots women leaders were able to share their own experiences and achievements organizing the HBC Alliance in their communities, such as caregivers receiving greater support and recognition for their work, and being

actively consulted by the government and other development partners on various health and development initiatives. They then participated in a march to raise awareness on HBC in the region.

The next several days, the Kenyan team travelled around Hawassa, meeting with caregivers and professional staff from the 3 NGOs spearheading the HBC Alliance process in the region. The Kenyans got an in-depth sense of the type of HBC being done in the region, how it was happening, how the caregivers are currently organized and relating to the NGOs and the government, and they provided concrete advice for moving forward with the HBC Alliance organizing. The Kenyans shared their own context and experiences, and had several in-depth conversations about the different situation facing the Ethiopians and how to adapt the HBC Alliance model to their context. The Ethiopians agreed that the Alliance will be an important tool for the caregivers to build their leadership skills and structures, to document the contributions of caregivers and raise awareness of their work and role, to reach out to more caregivers than those currently working within particular NGOs and increase coordination, to prevent burnout, to strengthen caregivers' voice and participation in planning and priority setting in partnership with the government and NGOs and to ensure that real and emerging challenges are being responded to. Because some of the caregivers in Ethiopia have already begun to mobilize for an Alliance, the Kenyans were able to provide concrete recommendations to strengthen their organizing, to ensure that it is really being driven and led by the grassroots caregivers themselves, and to respond to challenges that were arising through the course of the organizing.

The Kenyans were also able to take home some ideas from the Ethiopians, such as the use of the traditional coffee/tea ceremony for holding community conversations about sensitive subjects such as HIV and AIDS and raising awareness about what home-based caregivers do and offer to the community. They were also impressed by strong PLHIV networks they interacted and learnt ways of enhancing savings through revolving funds within the groups. Caregivers' psychosocial support through debriefing sessions was also another best practice they learnt from the Ethiopia and committed to introduce such sessions in their country.

On the final day of the visit, the Kenyans led an Action Planning session with representatives of each of the organizations, resulting in concrete plans to continue organizing, strengthening and formalizing the Alliance, with clear roles for the grassroots leaders and NGOs, and for communication between the NGOs in the different villages to ensure a coordinated strategy. In the following months, the Huairou Commission, with support from CORDAID, will be following up on these plans, and will continue to provide peer mentoring support through our network and particularly with the leadership of GROOTS Kenya, to the Ethiopian team.

This visit was part of the Huairou Commission and GROOTS International's on-going work to strengthen the position of grassroots home-based caregivers through organizing and advocacy. The Home-Based Care Alliance has become an important tool for organizing community based health care volunteers (including caregivers and community health workers) as well as the wider community to collectively address health and development challenges in general and particularly at the grassroots level. The Alliance was initiated in Kenya by GROOTS Kenya and GROOTS International 5 years ago, and has achieved some major successes towards the empowerment and recognition of grassroots caregivers at the local and national levels.

The Alliance began with the aim of ensuring recognition and support for caregivers leading to an increase in the quality of care and support they offer to ailing people (particularly people living with HIV) in their communities. GROOTS Kenya is presently working with district level home based care alliances within six regions.

Through several Grassroots Academies organized by GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission, many grassroots caregivers and NGOs working on Home-Based Care across Africa have been exposed to the Alliance objectives, successes and organizing methodologies, and have expressed interest and commitment to intensively organize Alliances in their own communities and countries. For the past several years, GROOTS Kenya has worked closely with Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC) and grassroots leaders in Uganda to forge a Home-Based Care Alliance in that country. In 2009, GROOTS Kenya with input from UCOBAC developed a simple "8 key steps to organizing the HBC Alliance" tool, to facilitate organizing the Alliance in new regions and countries.

In the past 6 months, with financial support from CORDAID, the Huairou Commission has been coordinating a number of peer learning exchanges, in which seasoned grassroots women leaders from Kenya have traveled to Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa, to share the methodology and provide mentorship to caregivers and NGO partners. The trip to Ethiopia was a continuation of this regional peer exchange process. GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission are providing on-going support to and fostering more regional communication between groups in each of these countries, in addition to members in Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Thanks to OSSA, Mary Joy, Medan ACTS and SHAFON for hosting the Kenyan team, and for their leadership in taking this process forward. Thanks to GROOTS Kenya, Ann Ondaye, Florence Ambuka and Ruth Kihui for their participation in this peer learning process. Thanks to Jennie van der Veer and CORDAID for

their financial support and commitment to strengthen the organizing of grassroots home-based caregivers through peer learning.

For more information on the Home-Based Care Alliance, write to Shannon.hayes@huairou.org

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## National Women Leader of the Democratic Party of Uganda Awarded to Maxensia Nakibuuka

A message from winner, Maxensia Nakibuuka, UCOBAC, Uganda

Sincerely this is an achievement to me arising from the grassroots leadership that I have pursued for the last five years!!

Uganda will be having national elections next year right from the Presidential and Parliamentary levels and downwards to local leaders at all levels beginning from Local council 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1. The campaigns will kick off this year in September. Since we are in multiparty politics, parties are organizing and holding delegates conferences thereby electing leaders respectively.

The Democratic Party, the oldest and strongest party, was the first to hold its delegates conference in the Eastern part of Uganda. Representative of all delegates from the 56 Districts of Uganda and 1,300 voters turned up. Given the encouragement and support from the Huairou Commission for grassroots women to place ourselves into positions of leadership, I also had potential to contest for National Women Leadership post. It wasn't a walkover as I contested with a Deputy Mayor of Kampala city whose career everybody thought would contribute to her victory. But despite all this I emerged the winner in the election fetching 518 votes and my opponent getting 428!! Even now nationals still wonder about my victory!!

We had a very short time to campaign but I used the grassroots tools of advocacy and lobbying to convince the electorate to vote for me: "Please vote for me:

- I have the qualities of a good leader having been a grassroots women leader for the last five years
- I know the problems of grassroots people in our communities, and I know the solutions to these problems
- I have the support of the communities I have worked for and I'm committed to continue pursuing this kind of work etc.

Almost 30% of the people knew about my commitment and service to voters from different local/national networks I work with and religious leaders were also so supportive because of my position as Secretary General of the whole of Archdiocese of Kampala (catholic church) and also people from my region (Buganda Kingdom) whom I represent as a commissioner in the Ministry of Gender, community development and people with disabilities also helped me to campaign. When people saw me stand up and publicly speak they saw determination and self confidence in me.

A couple of reasons contributed to my victory. However, I feel I have a great change of delivering to the expectations of my party members and the country at large. I'm considered as the minister for women affairs in the Democratic Party now!!! I need a lot of support from everyone, be it social, economical, physical and mutual. Continued empowerment from the Huairou Commission, Groots International and UCOBAC will help me achieve the objectives of my representation.

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HIV patients 'need drug lifeline'

The opportunity to save tens of thousands of HIV patients with a simple, cheap, drug treatment is being missed, say researchers.

Giving some newly-diagnosed patients an antibiotic would significantly reduce the death toll in the early stages of the disease, they say.

A major study in The Lancet medical journal found it halved mortality.

The World Health Organization already endorses the treatment, but specialists say many people are not given the drug.

Much of the focus of the pharmaceutical battle against HIV has been on antiretroviral drugs, which can greatly extend life.

However, many patients are at greatest risk in the first weeks after diagnosis, with a variety of infections ready to take advantage of their weakened immune systems.

Studies have estimated that as many as a quarter of people who enter antiretroviral drug treatment programmes in sub-Saharan Africa will die in the first year.

But the addition of co-trimoxazole, an inexpensive antibiotic, to the long-term treatment plan of those with the worst affected immune systems appears to prevent many of these deaths.

The Lancet study, carried out among 3,179 Ugandan patients, suggested a fall of 59% over the first 12 weeks, and 44% between 12 and 72 weeks.

### Call for action

Its authors, from the Medical Research Council Clinical Trials Unit and Imperial College in London, and centres in Uganda and Zimbabwe, say the antibiotic is not available in many places.

They say their findings reinforce the need for swifter action by those responsible for drug treatment programmes.

Professor Charles Gilks, who led the study, said any arguments over the effectiveness of the antibiotics were now "well and truly answered".

He said: "Tens of thousands of lives can be saved by more universal use of the drug, costing just a few pence a day."

Co-author Professor Diana Gibb, from the Medical Research Council, said the availability and supply of the drug needed to be "ramped up", and offered to all new patients for the first 18 months.

"There is a significant benefit now - waiting to be grasped," she said.

In addition to preventing bacterial infections in HIV patients, the drug had a another welcome benefit - it cut the incidence of malaria by a quarter.

Dr Sarah Walker, also from the MRC, said: "The benefits of using this drug are huge, and it's so simple and cost-effective to administer."

However, Dr Alvaro Bermejo, the executive director of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, said access to antiretroviral treatment remained an even bigger problem.

"We need to remember that there are still millions of people in Africa who need antiretrovirals and can't access them.

"In Uganda the Alliance is seeing people turned away from clinics because they don't have the treatment available.

"As the study confirms, antiretroviral treatment cuts the risk of death by more than 90% - with co-trimoxazole reducing the risk still further.

"We have the knowledge available to save lives but we need to increase efforts to make sure that everyone who needs treatment can actually access it."

Story from BBC NEWS: [news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/8589959.stm](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-4589959)

Published: 2010/03/28 23:18:07 GMT

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#### FIND Partners Upcoming Activities;

1. 2nd Regional Training Workshop in Resource Mobilization, Fundraising and Proposal Writing (3 days) to take place in Eastern Uganda (Busia) – July, 2010. Registration is now open.
2. Workshop on “How to develop and make your NGO business plan work” – August, 2010. Free and only for FIND Partners current fundraising groups
3. 2nd Kampala International Training Workshop in Resource Mobilization, Fundraising and Proposal Writing (3 days) to take place in Kampala, Uganda – September, 2010. Registration to open in May

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As part of the Firelight Foundation’s Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides “Newsflashes” to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.php>.

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at [newsletter@firelightfoundation.org](mailto:newsletter@firelightfoundation.org).