



## PROJECT SUMMARY

### Direct Aid to terminally ill AIDS patients, Nakuru

#### Background:

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has taken a serious toll on Nakuru. Nakuru lies on the Great North High Way, which is famously known to attract the commercial sex work industry. Poverty forces lone mothers to engage in sex work against their desire and puts them at high risk of contracting HIV and AIDS. With 150,000 people infected, most of whom are living in absolute poverty, malnutrition takes a hard toll and shortens the life expectancy of an HIV positive and AIDS infected individual dramatically. As a result, Nakuru is witnessing a record low life expectancy of 44 years. This is largely due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Often forgotten in AIDS funding is the need to respond to the infections which are inevitable with AIDS. AIDS patients in Africa cannot afford expensive imported medicines, but simple low cost alternatives do exist for some of the more common conditions (such as malaria, oral thrush, bed sores, etc.). Treating opportunistic infections improves the quality of the last few months of a patient's life, and allows them to die with at least a little dignity, in the knowledge that their community is working to relieve their suffering. This approach also reduces the risk of cross-infection to other members of the household and relieves the trauma and stress felt by the carer and family members.



#### Nakuru District Facts:

<b>Population:</b>	1.5 million
<b>Tribe:</b>	Mixed
<b>Estimated HIV/AIDS infected:</b>	150,000 (10%)
<b>Life expectancy:</b>	44 years



#### ICROSS Role:

ICROSS, with funding from the Global Fund, has a home based care programme where 170 volunteers care for terminally ill aids patients. ICROSS is the biggest home based care provider in Nakuru district. ICROSS is in charge of the training of the community health workers (CHVs) and distribution of drugs for opportunistic infections and nutritional supplements. Aside from drugs, basic amenities such as bedding, blankets, mattresses and insecticide mosquito nets are provided to the neediest AIDS patients.

It is the role of ICROSS to assess the needs of patients and meet their requirements. Moreover, ICROSS ensures that amenities reach the patients and are not utilised by healthy family and community members.

**ICROSS Activities:**

ICROSS has established a comprehensive referral system in Nakuru District. When an AIDS patient in need of support has been identified, a trained community health worker is allocated to care and provide psychological support. The community health worker assesses the needs of the patient and provides drugs and amenities accordingly. ICROSS works in partnership with a number of dispensaries in the district, which function as a distribution centre for ICROSS drugs and amenities. Community health workers report to Ministry of Health trainers of trainers who, through the ICROSS Nakuru office and collaborating dispensaries, provide the community health workers with drugs and amenities.

Our home based care programme has proved very successful with the number of referrals and dedicated volunteers exceeding our expectations. Unfortunately, the need for support is far greater than what ICROSS' current funding can provide. We witness our volunteers visiting and caring for more terminally ill AIDS patients than our allocated resources support. A supplementing donor to the Global Fund is therefore sought. We believe this dedication originates from the fact that our volunteers observe, first hand, the difference that these drugs and nutritional supplements can make.

Since 2001, ICROSS has provided over 9000 terminally ill AIDS patients with direct aid in terms of drugs and amenities, improving the last days of their lives. With an ever increasing number of AIDS patients, more resources are needed and ICROSS pledges the public for support.



These activities are made possible with help from:

