

## The Aldo Project Field Visit Report

During a recent visit to Lira International Medical Centre (IMC), Kevin Duffy (CEO) and Clea Meynell (IMF Funding and Reporting Manager) spent some time with Trixcy, the Aldo Project Counsellor. Trixcy has been working as a volunteer on the Aldo Project since 2008 providing help and support to Jasper Okwir, the Project Community Nurse. As Jasper is on leave at the moment Trixcy has been covering for him. She is a qualified Nursing Assistant and has a diploma in counselling; skills which have proven to be of great benefit to the Aldo Project.



***Trixcy providing education on initiation of ART to a group of Aldo clients***

We accompanied Trixcy on a series of home visits to patients enrolled on the Aldo Project. Patients who receive home visits are either too weak or ill to visit the clinic, or as in the case of the second site we visited, Trixcy can follow-up with multiple patients at one time. The services provided on a home visit include one-to-one counselling and advice on positive living and related issues; home-based provision of medication and clinical care (in collaboration with the clinical officers from the Clinic); and health education related to HIV/AIDS.

**Joyce's Story:** The first site that we visited was the house of Joyce, a well-educated woman, who in her time, has worked for the likes of UNICEF and the Electoral Commission. Joyce has been an Aldo client since 2008. She is HIV positive and has TB. Initially she was tested and enrolled for treatment at the Lira Regional Referral Hospital but found that there was often a delay in accessing drugs and that the patients were neglected. A friend told her about the service provided by the Aldo Project and she went to enrol. Since then she has been a client. She received treatment for TB at the AIDS Information Centre and is nearly finished her 8-month course.



*Joyce in the courtyard outside her rented room in Lira Town*

Joyce has no immediate family, she says that they all died of the same problems, and other relatives ignore her. She rents a single room adjoining a courtyard. With support from the Aldo Project, she informed her neighbours and her landlord about her condition, and enrolled them to help look after her. Recently she fell very sick and was bed-ridden. Her friends, neighbours and even Joyce herself thought that she would die, but Trixcy and the rest of the Aldo Team have nursed her back to health and now she is relatively mobile again. The team visits her weekly to check on her progress and provide her with medication.

For an individual like Joyce the care and support provided by the Aldo Project has literally been life-saving.

**Semmy's Story:** Semmy Apoyo greeted us with amazing energy and hospitality under the structure of a semi-built church which was in the process of being constructed near her house. Semmy has been an Aldo client since April 2010 when she came to Lira IMC after trying five times to access HIV testing at the Lira Regional Referral Hospital. After testing positive and being counselled by Trixcy she returned home and disclosed to her family and friends. She rounded up 7 of her close sisters and friends and took them to be tested as well. They all tested positive. One of them was her 11 year old sister.



***Semmy (near right) and four of the women she introduced to the Aldo Project***

We sat with Semmy and four of these other women whom she had introduced to the project and talked about their experience of the services they had received. They talked of the quality of service they receive from the Aldo Project, something they really value. After some enquiries about their needs, Trixcy took them step by step through use of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and the importance of healthy living. The educational materials that Trixcy used for this were provided by Mango Tree, and have proven to be very effective in communicating these messages to our community clients.



*Trixcy making use of the materials*