

A young boy in the foreground has his right hand over his eyes, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. Behind him, a young girl wearing a yellow headscarf is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. The background is a soft-focus green outdoor setting.

# deaf without limits

Giving ears to the deaf



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## KAMBARA, hope of deaf people in western Uganda

**T**he deaf and the community they live in will never be the same. KAMBARA Deaf Development Project (KDDP) was the silver lining on a dark cloud among the deaf community in western Uganda. It was a breath of fresh air, air that reignited the deaf movement in the western Ugandan districts of Mbarara, Isingiro and Kyegegwa.

KDDP was a result of a partnership initiated in 2000 between ActionAid and Uganda National Association for the Deaf (UNAD). Back then it operated in the then Kabarole and Mbarara districts hence the acronym Kambara

The project is operational in 12 Sub Counties including four in Mbarara (Nyamahende, Rubindi, Rugando and Bugamba), three in Isingiro (Kabuyanda, Nyakitunda and Kikagate) and five in Kyegegwa (Hapuyo, Mpara, Kasule and Kyegegwa) districts.

The overall aim of the project was to “build the capacity of the deaf to be able to access opportunities and demand for their rights to improve their social and economic welfare.”

The project sought to respond to specific problems that perpetuate the marginalization, isolation and poverty among Deaf people in the in the target

communities. These include; limited awareness on the potential of deaf persons, low communication of the deaf amongst themselves and the hearing, low access to education for the deaf, lack of access to economic opportunities, low awareness amongst the deaf, on HIV/AIDS, its causes, effects and prevention, limitations in the legal, policy and institutional framework for enhancing the rights of deaf people in Uganda.

The project objectives were; to create awareness amongst the deaf and entire community about the potential that deaf people may have to build their self es-

The last objective was to create awareness amongst deaf persons on causes, effects and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.



teem, to improve communication ability between the deaf and the community to ensure active participation of the Deaf persons in the community activities

The other objective were to increase access to education by the deaf children and improving literacy amongst the deaf adults in order to ensure participation and integration of the deaf

The last objective was to create awareness amongst deaf persons on causes, effects and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

In addition to the primary beneficiaries, the KDDP also targeted other community members and local government actors and service providers (health workers, law enforcement officers, probation officers and community development assistants, teachers) through a range of activities that were aimed at enhancing their capacity in providing services to deaf persons. These activities included training, networking, sensitization, experience and information sharing and policy engagement.

## Giving ears to the deaf through education

**C**ommunication is one of the crucial parts that define the human race and without it, inter-personal interactions can be difficult. Having been born deaf and an only child to Florence Kabasomi, Silvia Atuhura would take longer naps unlike other babies who wake up at any excuse of a bang or something as minor as a hiss within the house.

Kabasomi who is born in a family of eight, where none of her siblings has any disability turned to her mother for answers but she didn't have them. Her



Silvia Atuhura with a fellow student at the proposed site of Kinyinya Unit of the Deaf



family was really disappointed that she had a deaf child. In fact her child was considered a “missed call” but that didn't deter her need to communicate and connect with her child.

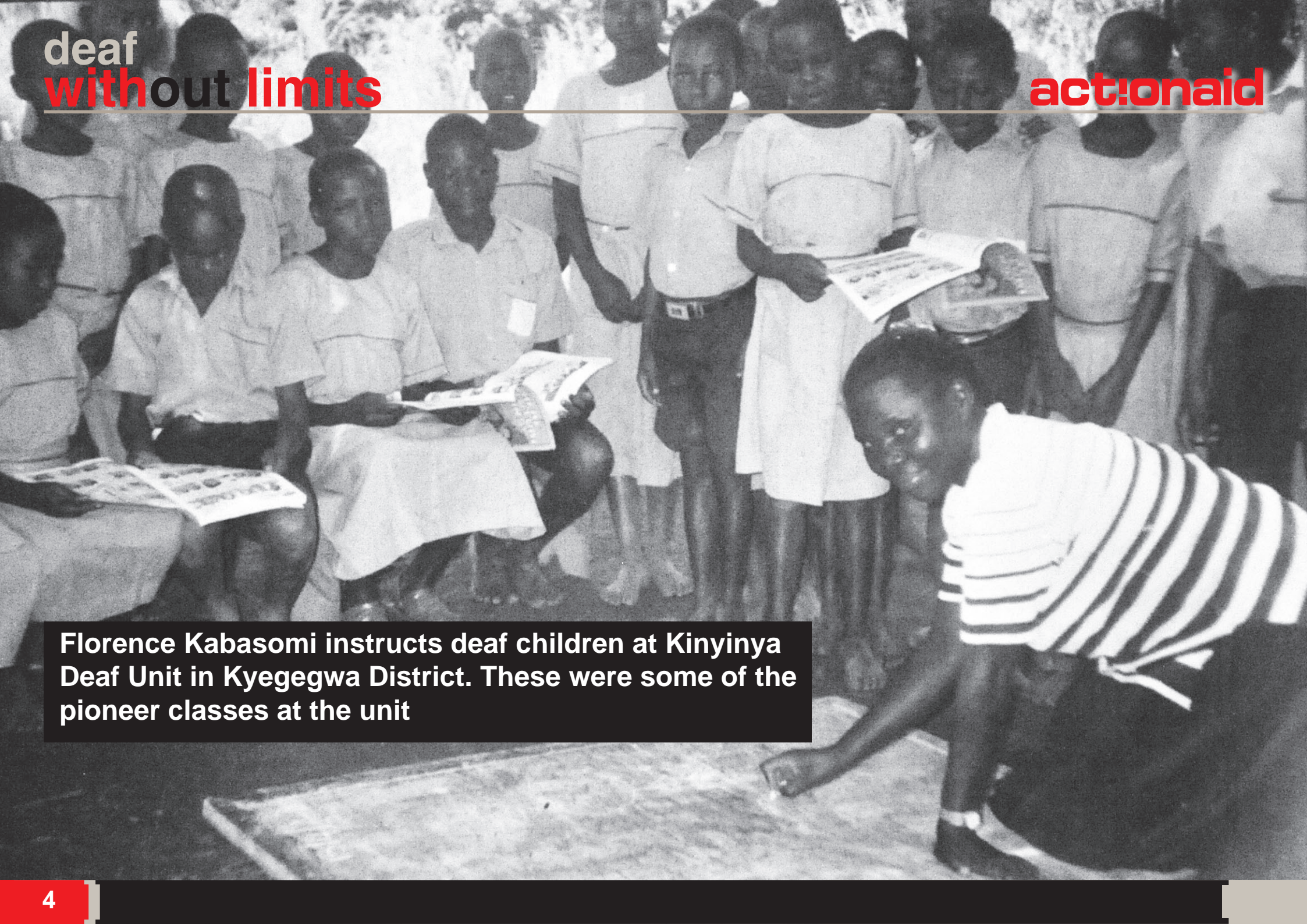
Kabasomi's love for the deaf has since turned around the lives of many deaf children in this region. From a humble

beginning, Kabasomi in 1997 started teaching her daughter and four children sign language under a mango tree at the Kinyinya Catholic Church. She now boasts of being a mother to hundreds of deaf children in this region.

Her love for deaf children gave birth to Kinyinya Deaf Unit, a primary school

that transitioned from the mango tree to solid classroom blocks.

Over the years the number of deaf pupils at the school went on increasing and in 2001 the Uganda National Association of the Deaf supported by Action Aid under the Kambara Deaf Development Project visited the school



**Florence Kabasomi instructs deaf children at Kinyinya Deaf Unit in Kyegegwa District. These were some of the pioneer classes at the unit**



and provided 10 sign language manuals and numbers and sign charts. The support improved the school's curriculum and over the years the partnership has seen Kinyinya receive funds for constructing a dormitory, vocational centre and a fully furnished dining hall with two water tanks.

Kabasomi was beaming with a smile as a truck of benches and tables was offloaded to the dining area as ActionAid was full filling its promise to provide a fully furnished dining hall.

In 2015, ActionAid is planning to phase out child sponsorship program under the Kambara Project, which benefits both Kinyinya and Kajaho deaf located in Isingiro district. The project

beneficiaries can now sustain themselves.

Kabasomi says the past was harder than the future and she believes that with ActionAid's guidance and advice, the project will not phase out because of their withdrawal.

With a smile on her face, Kabasomi says some of those funds have seen her daughter go through her education and she now works with the Kambara Project Office in Kyegegwa district as an Office Manager. The same funds have helped 88 deaf students learn to communicate within their communities and at the same time get an education at Kinyinya Deaf Unit ■



**Silvia Atuhura at her work place**

## Deaf without limits, a story of the deaf in western Uganda

Imagine a business where service speaks louder than words. Where verbal communication is, but an irrelevant tool compared to gestures, where owner-client relationship is reached at, silently, but with a lot of observation.

Welcome to the Deaf in business. Joyce Kobusingye, Chairperson of Mbarara Deaf women's development project and 12 other deaf women run a tailoring business in the busy town of Mbarara.

The group started the business five years ago supported by the Kambara Deaf Development Project. Kobusingye recalls the first time Emmanuel Africano, the Project Officer of the Kambara project in Mbarara, told them about the seven million shilling grant given to the project for economic development of deaf people. Kobusingye and group sat down and deliberated on how they could benefit from the grant.

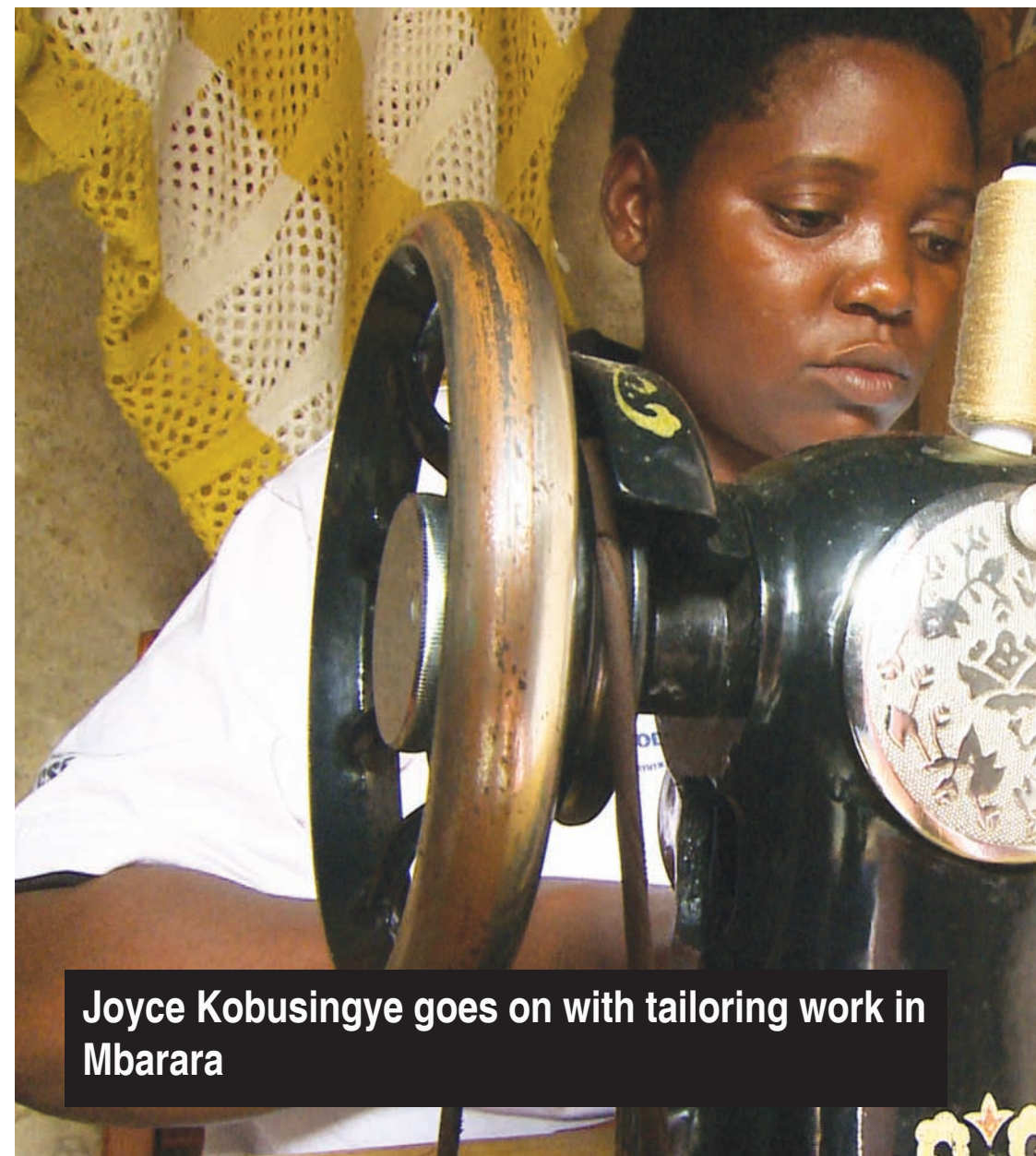
As a group, the women came up with a proposal which impressed Africano who immediately cashed and now five years later with a lot of supervision the business is still standing.

Although it is internationally known that verbal communication gets most deals done, these deaf women are surviving in a market where their competitors are not deaf. There are more than 30 shops in their cluster. When you walk through the corridor that separates their shops, their billboard is seen six shops away, an advertising stunt they pulled off really well.

The women specialize in making school sweaters, school uniforms and handicrafts like table clothes and baskets. But they also work for independent customers who come in with different requests. Most customers are not deaf so Kobusingye is always compelled to pull out her notebook as standard practice to back up her lip reading or use of gestures. Sometimes it culminates into writing and reading from both parties when they seem not to understand each other.

Her vulnerability does not deter her from working, in fact it has helped her get more customers because her customers trust her group.

"Our vulnerability may help, but also perfect work does a lot of the talking for



**Joyce Kobusingye goes on with tailoring work in Mbarara**





“Our vulnerability may help, but also perfect work does a lot of the talking for us”

Joyce Kobusingye

us,” she said. On average in a month, they make 400,000 shillings in profit after deducting the rent, electricity and raw material bills.

In 2007, the business started receiving funding from ActionAid and Uganda National Association of the Deaf. These funds helped them in the day to day running of their business and in sensitizing the local communities about deaf people alongside teaching the deaf about their rights and capabilities.

These women have become a centre of inspiration in their community, as other deaf people go to them for help in starting up tailoring shops like theirs and some want to be taught the craft of tailoring and knitting.

Kobusingye, who also doubles as a sign language instructor at Kajaho Deaf Unit located in the neighboring Isingiro District, says that although the child sponsorship program is being phased out after 12 years of existence, it has helped build a good foundation.

She however notes that with increased funding, they would have been able to get a bigger business space to accommodate enough deaf people who go to them to learn the craft of tailoring.

Currently the space they rent can only accommodate one student which Joyce views as a problem since their goal is to economically liberate as many deaf people as they can.

“The phasing out is definitely going to affect us,” Kobusingye notes. “But we still have more funders like the Mbarrara Municipality which contributes 1.5 million shillings to our business.” She believes they will carry on with business as usual as five years experience is enough to keep them a float ■



## Restoring self esteem among deaf people in western Uganda

**S**itting on an African stool in front of a mud and wattle house is Umar Bwerere, a 14 year old deaf boy from Kamuli village in Isingiro district. At a glance it's hard to imagine that Bwerere is deaf, with his charming smile he welcomes you to his home while whisking away the hens and ducks patrolling the compound for small insects.

While touching his neck he tells his story with frustration. "I feel like a prisoner in this home, all my four siblings and my parents hear and talk." Every time he wants to communicate with his family he is compelled to use sign language.

"I cannot communicate well with my siblings; they are not well conversant with sign language." Bwerere who uses only sign language narrates through an interpreter. He says sometimes his sibling's converse with each other and he senses they are really enjoying themselves but when he asks them to repeat for him, they often refuse. Sometimes they even laugh at him and walk away. In such situations Bwerere cannot help it but feel so small, humiliated and useless. In his village lives another deaf boy only known as Hussein, Bw-



**Bwerere tries to communicate with his Mother Mariam Katushabe**

erere usually goes to visit him when he feels rejected to seek solace, a thing his mother detests. Bwerere's mother Mariam Katushabe, is ignorant about what really goes on with him emotion-

ally.

"I need to be patient with my mother because she is very scared that her deaf boy walks around alone without protection."

In Bwerere's village people relate with him in different ways, some are cordial and others are rude to him, including his father.

Education is an obvious gift to nor-

mal children but to Bwerere it came with a price. His father used to be so fond of him that he often referred to him as his heir. But when he discovered that Bwerere was deaf, he started insulting Bwerere's mother together with her son. Mariam Katushabe, Bwerere's mother became so emotionally drained when the husband finally disowned Bwerere and refused to educate him since he is deaf.

"I was at a cross road, a friend had told me that if the boy went to school and learnt sign language, I would be able to communicate with him but my husband wouldn't allow it," Katushabe said. She was too desperate to get into her sons world. Her first attempt was to sell off some of her food stuffs and poultry to meet the tuition fees for him at Kajaho deaf unit, but her attempts were futile. She then pleaded with his father to pay his tuition fees but he declined. Katushabe teamed up with a savings scheme in her village which her clan mate Peter Tibenderana told her about and raised 80,000shillings. This was enough for Bwerere's tuition fees but did not meet the other school requirements.

Katushabe talked to Tibenderana, a retired government official who threatened her husband into submission.

Bwerere is now promoted to prima-



**Umar Bwerere expresses himself during the interview**

ry seven and he is very happy that he learnt sign language and can communicate with his family.

"I cannot get tired of using sign language because it is the only way I can hear". Currently he is looking forward to completing his primary level exams to join secondary school in Wakiso. His dream is to study up to university level and become a Reverend or a police officer to rid his community of all injustices.

Being deaf comes with its challenges and it takes a lot of adjustment before one starts to enjoy to the fullest.

Joyce Kobusingye, the Chairperson

since there were no schools for the deaf in their village or neighboring villages at that time.

Staying at home while her siblings went to school every day was quite painful to bear. She said, "I suddenly lost all sense of living, I had no peace, I hated myself and I was really disappointed that I couldn't hear." As she grew older the reality of a soundless world sank in and she imagined whether she would have a career or even get married some day. But after learning sign language at the Kambara funded Tukole Invalid school for people with disabilities, she managed to complete primary seven and joined a vocational school to train as a tailor.

Today Kobusingye is happy and thanks ActionAid for funding the Kambara Project. She can now communicate using sign language. Kobusingye who is now a professional tailor and sign language instructor at Kajaho Deaf Unit, a school where Bwerere studies, says it is totally normal for Bwerere to feel like he does not fit in his family. The fact that he is an early adolescent and also a youth adjusting to being deaf, Bwerere needs a lot of counseling and peer education for him to feel better and with the limitations he faces ■

## The deaf, rising above HIV/AIDS stigma

**W**hen you mention the disease AIDS, you may not get anything close to a cringe from the audience listening to you. But when you ask an individual out of the audience to do a voluntary HIV test which is to be declared to the public or a third party, it takes much more than just courage to do it. Only the thought of the procedure done before testing is enough to cause a lasting psychological impact, as the mind is cut between anticipating the best and the worst result.

It is unfortunate that this is the true story of a deaf person going to a health centre to do an HIV/AIDS voluntary test. The health workers they meet at these centers are not trained in sign language hence less prepared to give deaf pa-



Beyond learning and knowing about HIV/AIDS, 83.9 percent of the deaf have tested for HIV/AIDS.



tients the same service as people who can hear.

Robert Tusiime, an Enrolled Nurse, also doubling as an HIV/AIDS counselor at Mpara Health Centre III says he fumbles around when he receives a deaf patient for counseling since he cannot communicate through sign language.

"If luck is on my side and the patient is literate, I eliminate the interpreter and counsel the patient through exchanging information in a book where I write and he reads and vice versa." This Tusiime finds hard at times because it takes a lot of time.

Tusiime who receives three deaf patients on average in a month says his biggest wish is that The Aids Support Organization and Ministry of Health come up with sign language charts that are specially made for the deaf on HIV/AIDS awareness and health at large.

The charts he believes will also provide some privacy for people like Sarah (not real name) a 12 year old deaf girl who was born with HIV/AIDS. This girl's HIV/AIDS status is public knowledge to most people in Nabyongora village where she stays and even at her school. But it's quite unrealistic that the girl herself doesn't know her HIV/AIDS status. All that Sarah knows is, she swallows Seprines daily because she is special. Every time it clocks 8:00 P.M., she asks her father for medicine.

Sarah's father 50 year old, Serapio Karubanga, who is also living with HIV finds it very normal to declare his status to anyone who inquires but finds it awkward to tell his deaf daughter why she swallows Seprines daily in fear of stigmatizing her.

"I want my child to have a future brighter than the education barriers put around deaf students," Karubanga said. "Distracting her with her HIV/AIDS status can only limit her hope and possibilities in her future, he says.



**Serapio helps his daughter to do house work**

Being stuck between a protective father and a very harsh community, Sarah's only knowledge of HIV/AIDS are the posters scattered in her school compound saying "HIV/AIDS kills" and the school dramas organized by her teacher Florence Kabasomi, that are geared towards sensitizing them about this scourge.

For the adults, Kabasomi says the Uganda National Association of the deaf and ActionAid usually organizes seminars at the Kinyinya Deaf Unit where they are sensitized about the disease and its implications. But this awareness may not reach other deaf people from far off villages.

These sensitization seminars are organized under the Kambara Project and those that are found to be living with the Virus are encouraged to seek treatment.

A study done in 2012 indicates that the Kambara project contributed significantly to increasing awareness on HIV/AIDS among the deaf.

While the deaf had no knowledge about HIV/AIDS at the baseline level in 2000, the evaluation shows that 91 percent of the deaf people had heard about HIV/AIDS, and posses fair knowledge about HIV prevention, care and support. 72 percent of the deaf attributed their increased awareness about HIV/AIDS to project activities.



Beyond learning and knowing about HIV/AIDS, 83.9 percent of the deaf have tested for HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, there is need for more in-depth engagement of the deaf in order to increase their knowledge of care and support for HIV positive people.

After 12 years, the Kambara project is now coming to a close. Although the beneficiaries have wished for its continuation, they argued that they now have to focus on the sustainability, to use the knowledge they have acquired to make the lives of the deaf better.

“ I want my child to have a future brighter than the education barriers put around deaf students, Distracting her with her HIV/AIDS status can only limit her hope and possibilities in her future ”

Karubanga

## A blind man with a passion for the deaf

**T**raversing the rocky grounds in the western Ugandan district of Kyegegwa is John Nyandera in his red truck. His son who acts as his driver drives him right up the bend where we were waiting for him under a mango tree at the Kyegegwa district head quarters.

On stepping out of the car his coat runs into different directions because of the wind as he thrusts us a big smile. At age 14 Nyandera was really fed up of being treated like an underdog whose purpose in life was to be a pitied blind boy who they hid behind the house. With a lot of enthusiasm he stepped out to join the then Kyaka sub-county people with disabilities group. From them he learnt the skill of holding sensitization campaigns and activism.

It was not so long before Nyandera started doing the activism on his own. On one of those fateful days as he wandered the rolling grounds of Kinyinya village with his white cane, he was stopped by a woman only known as Joan who asked him where he was headed to. Nyandera clearly laid out his mission and informed her about a group of people who were waiting for him to be sensitized about people with disabilities.

Joan was so impressed with this blind boy and she bought him a brand new bicycle in 1990 to ease his movement. Since he couldn't ride it himself, he met with a deaf boy called Moses Happy. "Happy was what his name meant and quickly assimilated into our group and started advocating for the deaf," said Nyandera. They would sometimes ride on empty stomachs for miles but their satisfaction was in meeting other people with disabilities and empowered them.

Nyandera's relationship with Happy was indeed interdependent on each other's strengths. He could hear for him and Happy could see for him. By the time Kambara Deaf Development Project reached Kyaka sub-county, they had done their share of activism. Kambara as a project recruited them to join their planning committee.

The project started off by teaching all the deaf people sign language and even instructed some community volunteers to help in communicating with deaf people in their communities. But then they realized that the deaf children wouldn't have careers without any form of education.

So they directed some funds to the already existing Kinyinya Deaf Unit



which was under a tree at the Kinyinya Catholic Church. "Am so proud to say that with the success of that school currently we have scored as a project, two of the first students Silvia Atuhura, is now an office manager at the Kambara Project office branch in Kyegegwa District and also a tailoring student at a vocational school. Apollo Murungi who

was also in the first bunch of students is a member of the district committee for special grants for the deaf," said Nyandera. Kyegegwa has 42 parishes and in all of them they have a sign language volunteer who interprets for the deaf. This is a sign that the KAMBARA project has been a success ■



## The interpreter's word

**G**odfrey Tenywa is one of the longest serving sign language interpreters in Uganda. He has been in the profession for the last over 13 years. His long interaction with the deaf has made him know that confidentiality is ultimate.

“Confidentiality is one of the codes of ethics that govern interpreters, when you go out to interpret the information you pass on is not yours. But you go as a borrowed voice just like a microphone whether what is being said hurts you or your friend you are not supposed to share it with any other person because professionally it is one of the basics of hiring an interpreter.”

“That is why when you go to the hospital with a deaf patient you have to be discreet and unless the deaf person asks you to share with someone else their health problem you are not allowed to discuss it.”

As a professional interpreter Tenywa argues that when interpreting you are not supposed to participate in the conversation.

The professionalism of a sign language interpreter develops over time and it comes with a lot of training.

“Currently we have been solely de-



**Godfrey Tenywa - Sign Language interpreter**

pending on the programs of the Uganda National Association for the Deaf to train us but in Kyambogo University in

the department of special needs, they offer diplomas in sign language interpretation at a professional level and I

am one of the very few professional sign language interpreters in Uganda.”

## Children's voices about Kambara



**UMAR BWERERE**

I felt like a prisoner at our home, all my four siblings could hear and talk including my parents. Every time I tried to communicate with them I would be compelled to use sign language, a language they did not understand. Sometimes my siblings would converse with each other and I would sense they were really enjoying themselves but when I asked them to repeat for me, they would often refuse since they did not know

how to use sign language. After joining Kajaho Church of Uganda Primary School which has a Deaf unit supported by Kambara, my life turned around. I can communicate with my siblings, my mother and some people in my community. Thanks to the Kambara field sign language instructors. At school I was promoted to primary seven and when I complete my education I want to become a reverend or police officer.



**BURUNO NAMANYA**

Uganda National Association of the Deaf and ActionAid have really helped me personally. They paid for my school fees. I completed primary seven and now am waiting for my results. If we get other donors the situation will be fine and if our parents get money they should pay for our school fees.

**SILVIA ATUHURA**

ActionAid phasing out the child sponsorship program is not a sudden decision because we were informed in advance. For the pupils that are still young and do not know sign language we shall teach them and they start primary and later on join secondary school. We shall also motivate other deaf people to keep on supporting the small deaf people's associations to keep the project going.



## Interview with **Ambrose Murangira, Executive Director Uganda National Association of the Deaf**

*Q: What is the relation between Uganda National Association of the Deaf and ActionAid in reference to the Kambara project?*

**A:** Uganda National Association of the Deaf (UNAD) and ActionAid have been in partnership with the Kambara project for 13 years now. The project has helped in the areas of education for deaf children, HIV/AIDS awareness, and sign language training in the areas of deaf children's parents and deaf children too. We have trained service providers like teachers, doctor's and police officers.

Throughout the partnership, ActionAid has helped in the areas of capacity building and it would fund a company to train the beneficiaries in the area of capacity building and running a Non Governmental Organization.

Kambara has been so good that it has regenerated itself; I am one of its products. When it began in the year 2000 in western Uganda, I was in senior three then and the first time I went to the project office, I learnt a lot of things that helped me gain my confidence. The project raised a lot of awareness

and they told us we could be whatever we wanted to become in life.

That prompted me to continue with my education until I finished my masters' degree and I was appointed the Executive Director of UNAD. The project has not sponsored only me; there are many of us who have benefitted from this project.

*Q: How has the Kambara project helped develop sign language?*

**A:** Uganda is the first country in history where sign language is recognized in law and the sign language dictionary is recognized. We have the biggest sign language dictionary with over 2,000 different signs.

As of now there has been a lot of awareness and we have sign language interpreters on television stations translating the news for us. We also have a member of parliament (Hon. Alex Ndeezi) who is deaf and the parliament of Uganda has a sign language interpreter to interpret for him. Now you can clearly see how sign language has really helped break away the barrier between the community and the deaf.



*Q: ActionAid is phasing out the child sponsorship program do you think Kambara can sustain itself?*

**A:** The project can be sustainable, as of now we have groups for deaf people in business and they have their leaders in those groups who guide them on a weekly basis on what to apply in their farming or tailoring businesses. I believe those groups are a firm foundation for the project continuity and the only need will be monitoring and capacity building. Of which ca-

capacity building should be a continuous course since new members will join these groups.

The future of Kambara can be bright as UNAD we are still confident that we can partner with ActionAid in different ways ■

### FACT FILE

**T**he evaluation study of the Kambara project in 2012 reveals general improvements in respect to enhanced use of sign language communication among the deaf. 77 percent of adult deaf received formal training in sign language. Of these, 65 percent had been trained by the project. One third of the Deaf reported using formal sign language to communicate with fellow Deaf persons.

With regard to communication with other household members, 70 percent of the deaf reported they used uniquely developed sign language or gestures when communicating with household members. Only 18 percent were able to communicate through formal sign language with their family members.

## The future of KAMBARA:

### Interview with Harriet Gimbo - Director Programmes ActionAid

*Q: ActionAid will be phasing out child sponsorship program under the Kambara project. What does this mean?*

**A:** The concept of phasing out is what we call in our language the child sponsorship program, which is a funding mechanism that links the children in the communities where we work with UNAD and the individual supporters in Ireland.

We normally conduct sponsorship in a given period between 10-15 years and do the reviews to see what they have achieved in the last 12 years with the investments we have had in these locations with UNAD.

The projects of UNAD are expected to continue beyond the phase out period that is 2015. Phasing out doesn't mean that we will be closing the project and move away leaving the communities blank.

*Q: What does the child sponsorship program entail?*

**A:** The sponsorship entails the rela-

tionship between the children in these communities and individual supporters that make a contribution to ActionAid funding from Ireland.

In Ireland there are individuals that make monthly financial contributions to support the children sponsorship program in the communities.

*Q: What is being done to sustain the project even after the phase out period?*

**A:** One of the initiatives we are taking is fundraisings to ensure that we get diversified income beyond child sponsorship income. The second one will be making a big investment into capacity building for UNAD staff for community structures so that they are able to work with or without ActionAid.

We have a package of training that we have conducted in the past and we will still do refresher courses to ensure that these communities are able to continue.

There have been economic empowerment programs for deaf women and these women are able to stand on their

own now and therefore such a program will be able to continue.

The deaf units that we have established are under the local government and still we hope to strengthen our collaboration with local government to continue working with the schools and ensure that deaf pupils still get the services ActionAid has been giving them.

We are still hopeful that with government contribution the schools will still be operational.

Then in terms of the deaf as individuals, the deaf are empowered enough to speak about their rights, to demand for their rights in these communities. They have had interfaces with government and other stake holders and hope that they can still do that to get their livelihood from the support.

The other programs that the deaf have been earning through are still linked to government programs like NAADS in their communities where they are able to support their livelihoods.

We shall still partner with UNAD and the phasing out of child sponsorship programs is not the end of the world. ■



Harriet Gimbo  
Director Programmes ActionAid

## Counting the gains after a 12 year long journey

**A**fter 12 years, ActionAid is phasing out its child sponsorship program under the Kambara Deaf Development Project. Looking back, major successes have been registered despite challenges.

### Impact on education of the deaf

One of the main objectives of the Kambara project was to increase access to education for deaf children and improving literacy amongst the adult deaf in order to ensure participation and integration in the mainstream of society. The project baseline identified lack of access to education opportunities for deaf children as one of the key poverty issues that affect deaf people. Low access to education for the deaf is caused by several factors and is compounded by scarcity of special needs schools, trained sign language teachers and appropriate facilities.

Over the last 12 years since the Kambara project started, it has established education infrastructure in Isingiro and Kyegegwa districts. In Isingiro a dormitory for deaf children was constructed in Kajaho Church of Uganda Primary School, while in Kyegegwa the project initiated the establishment of a

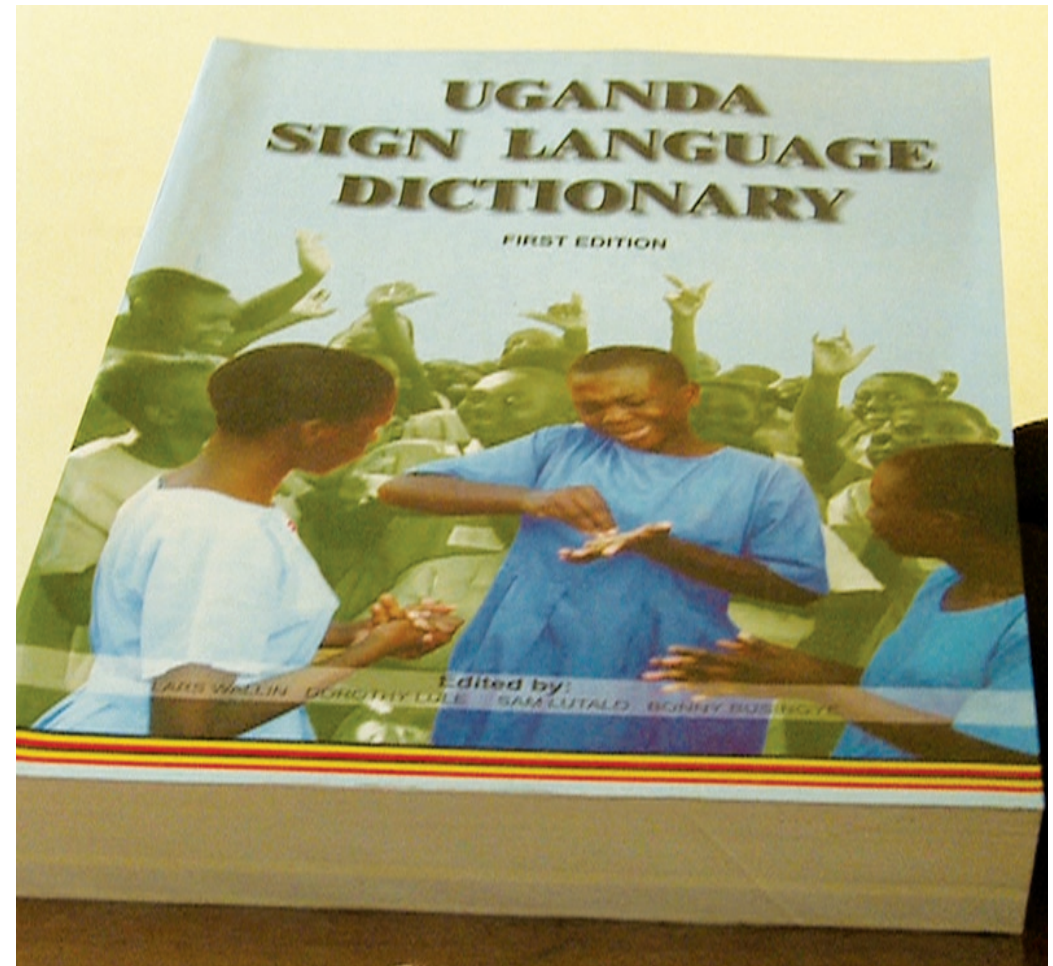
fully-fledged Deaf Unit in Kinyinya Primary School in collaboration with other actors specifically Save the Children, GTZ and the district local administration.

In an environment where parents of deaf children had given up hope of educating their children due to lack of appropriate deaf facilities, the establishment of parallel deaf education units provides an invaluable opportunity. The deaf units have provided a conducive environment in which deaf children can be supported to learn. This has resulted in the increase of enrolment of deaf children in primary schools.

The enrolment statistics from Kinyinya Deaf Unit, demonstrate the impact of the project intervention with regard to increasing enrolment.

Statistics at the school show that following the intervention from Kambara in 2002, enrolment of deaf children began to gradually increase from 29 pupils to 77 pupils in 2012. In 2007 the enrolment peaked at 111 pupils this was mainly because of the UN World Food Program's provision of food.

The availability of dormitories in the Deaf Units provides an opportunity for children who come from far to attend school. Records at the schools indi-



cate that pupils come as far as Ibanda, Rukungiri, Mbarara, Kyenjojo and Mubende to study from Kinyinya and Kajaho.

As a means of providing commu-

nication tools, the project has been engaged in disseminating the Deaf alphabet to schools. The project also developed materials such as sign language dictionaries which are intended

to be used by children in schools.

Despite some challenges, the Kambara project has been instrumental in increasing the access to education by deaf children.

## Impact on sign language development

Sign language communication presents the most effective mode of communication for the deaf. Training the deaf and hearing members of the community in the use of sign language communication was a key strategy of the project. Over the years, the project has trained different categories of the population including adult deaf persons, parents of deaf children, teachers, sign language instructors, health workers, police officers and interested community members.

The evaluation study reveals general improvements in respect to enhanced use of sign language communication among the deaf. 77 percent of adult deaf received formal training in sign language. Of these, 65 percent had been trained by the project. One third of the Deaf reported using formal sign language to communicate with fellow Deaf persons.

With regard to communication with other household members, 70 percent of the deaf reported they used uniquely developed sign language or gestures

when communicating with household members. Only 18 percent were able to communicate through formal sign language with their family members.

## Impact on HIV/AIDS awareness and health promotion

At the inception of Kambara, health communication on HIV/AIDS was not mindful of the disability of the deaf and therefore was dominated by media that are inaccessible to the deaf.

The project set out to improve awareness on HIV/AIDS among the deaf. It has provided information to diverse target groups including deaf men and women, deaf pupils, parents of deaf children, community volunteers and other community members.

An evaluation study done in 2012 indicates that project contributed significantly to increasing awareness on HIV/AIDS among the deaf. While the deaf had no knowledge about HIV/AIDS at the baseline in 2000, the evaluation shows that 91 percent of the deaf people had heard about HIV/AIDS, and possess fair knowledge about HIV prevention, care and support. 72 percent of the deaf attributed their increased awareness about HIV/AIDS to project activities. Beyond learning and knowing about HIV/AIDS, 83.9 percent of the deaf have tested for HIV/AIDS.

The evaluation results also show

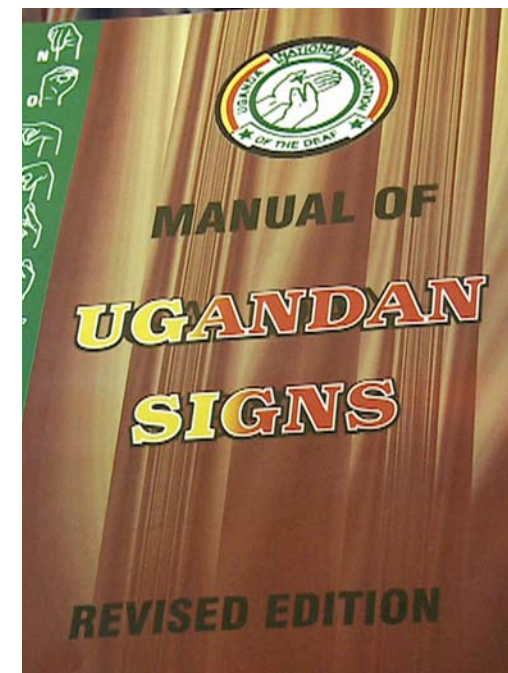
61.3 percent were aware that HIV/AIDS could be prevented through abstinence, 77.4 percent cited condom use, 45.2 percent identified faithfulness while 19.3 percent identified avoiding the sharing of sharp instruments.

## Impact on the economic empowerment of the deaf

The economic status of the deaf and their immediate families were generally poor with no tangible source of income before the project started. This was attributed to lack of relevant knowledge and skills among the deaf, communication barriers and negative attitudes towards deaf people.

To address the low economic status of deaf persons, the project embraced economic empowerment as a main program component. The economic empowerment component of the project was intended to equip the deaf and their families with practical and business management skills that would enable them to establish and manage their own businesses.

The project has over the years extended grants to individuals who are organized in groups. The groups had the leverage to determine the economic activities they would embark on using the project grant. The grants ranged between 1-2 million shillings for a group. In most cases these grants



were used by the group to buy animals such as goats, pigs and hens.

Since 2000 the project has reached a total of 2,435 beneficiaries through formation of community groups and provision of cash support. Of these 35 percent are deaf persons. The project has so far distributed 265.6 million shillings to the beneficiaries. The evaluation found that the economic empowerment programs had some impact. Some of the project beneficiaries were able to transform their economic status using the benefits they accrued from the project ■



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deaf  
without limits

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