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# YOUNG VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS GROUP (YUDWAG)

**Introduction: An Overview**

The Group was formed in 2000 by a young youth development worker, Joseph Noah Alwanda with a calling towards alleviating the causes of poverty among the young people in the then greater Nyando District (currently Nyando, Nyakach and Muhoroni Sub Counties). The young people were faced with a myriad of challenges like ignorance, un employment and underemployment, AIDS pandemic, lack of access to youth friendly services, marginalization from the mainstream development, widespread poverty which led to their over dependency on parents/community’s social support systems compounded with a lack of role models to ape against a backdrop of an already overwhelmed social support system, these notwithstanding their potentials and their being the majority in terms of their population (60%).

The Founder then embarked on a callous journey of mobilizing other community members to join hands in addressing the aforementioned challenges with a strong belief on the strength of unity for a purpose. Thirty three people cutting across all the age groups joined the ship and within a short stint we started with HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns targeting the community at large (note: there were vast myths on AIDS without technology on testing and/or life prolonging ARTs meaning those infected could be known when they had wasted and on their death beds). This task was made easier through collaborative and networking linkages with the Provincial Administration, Department of Social Services, Ministry of Health, Future Group Europe’s HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Program, Major Steps Consultants, Women Fighting Aids in Kenya, Society for Women and AIDS in Kenya, NEPHAK, Global Voluntary Development Association (GVDA), local churches, schools and the community support structures especially the Welfare Associations which were then shouldering the burden of AIDS pandemic.

As AIDS victims succumbed to the nemesis, most of their household members were being left in very pathetic state thus forcing us to come up with modest interventions to unravel their suffering in a humane and dignified manner hence the scaling up of our activities to include Home Based Care and Support for the affected families and the infected persons while at the same time doing a pro – active Behavior Change Communication Project to uphold the gains made as the locals were still deeply in their cultural practices like wife inheritance among others while young people were overindulging in promiscuity further immensely contributing to the spread of the menace.

Overtime, we have engaged on pragmatic interventions like Malaria Prevention through raising awareness, organizing community work days to rid the community of mosquito breeding grounds, provision of Insecticide Treated Mosquito Nets courtesy of the Population Services International (PSI) and Rotary Safe Water and AIDS Program to curb the incidence of Malaria and its debilitating effects on the community while at the same

time liaising with the Ministry of Health on referrals for Malaria cases; Adolescent Reproductive Health Program to address knowledge and access gaps to sound reproductive health services in liaison with the Family Health Options, Swedish Centre for Sexuality Education amongst others; Orphans and Vulnerable Children Education and Welfare Support through networking with HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Program III courtesy of DFID/Pact – Kenya; enhancing the knowledge of HIV/AIDS status for the Prevention of New infections and positive living in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Council (NACC), Centre for Disease Control (CDC), Liverpool VCT Care and Treatment (LVCT) and DASCO- Nyando amongst others; Prevention with Positive incorporating a Rights Based Approach in liaison with FIDA, SWAK, SWAP, CJPC amongst others; Food Security interventions in liaison with the Ministry of Livestock and Agriculture and the Anglican Development Services (formerly the Inter Diocesan Christian Communities Services) amongst others.

**Where we are today**

Based on the foregoing background and the need to facilitate justice, equity and sustainable development and global peace and due to an undying demand by the poor of the poorest needy, orphaned and vulnerable children of school going age with a lack of access to basic education opportunities due to lack of support as underlying factor, we started a School christened Charlotte Educational Centre in January, 2014 on a rental parcel of land with semi permanent structures, later forced to move out and pitch up makeshift structures for classes on an idle parcel of land (courtesy of a local well wisher)within the host community due to financial constraints later the same year to date and have embarked on a heart rending journey of mobilizing resources to realize our School’s Project goal of restoring hope to the hopeless children by improving their access to quality basic education opportunities and enlighten, inspire and empower them through a rich variety of activities in becoming holistic individuals prepared to face the challenges of the dynamic global village.

Our want is still manifest with the pathetic state of the School comprising the five iron sheets walled semi permanent structures for classrooms and an incomplete two doors urinal for both boys and girls, lack of own toilet facilities within the compound hence the over reliance on the goodwill of a neighboring homestead with who we share their toilet facilities, inadequate and or lack of decent seats among other deplorable situations within the set-up against a backdrop of lack of own land and classrooms to enhance learning and accommodate many cases; new and emerging dimensions in educational spheres like the need to fit the school with electricity power, acquire equipment including soft/hardware for e-learning (digitalized learning) which is long overdue as it was to commence in January, 2017, need for teachers’ capacity building to handle emerging trends in learning and the need to recruit more teachers and remuneration, need to acquire teaching and learning aids, need to acquire birth certificates for all the learners and get them encoded under the Ministry of Education’s National Learners Data Base, need to prepare the School for the inspection, assessment and registration by the Public Health and Ministry of Education respectively for legalization of operations and registration with the Kenya Private Schools Association (KEPSA) among others.

**How we have managed it so far**

To attain our benchmark of improving the target group’s access to quality education, we have taken intensive strategizing and planning as a working effective team comprising of staff, learners and parents/guardians while embracing the unceasing mutual working relationship with various government line ministries and the civil society organizations among others.

**Group’s and the School’s Visions**

**Group’s Vision:** A dignified humanity enjoying the fullness of life and responsible to the stewardship of God’s abundant resources

**School’s Vision:** We strive to fulfill our School’s vision of offering an all- inclusive rich variety of co – educational programs and being the first choice in the provision of quality and results-oriented education to our children in a God fearing environment.

**Our Mission**

**Group’s Mission:** to enable the youth, widows, orphans and people living with HIV/AIDS within Nyando Sub County achieve fullness of life and the integrity of creation through sustainable, participatory and integrated community development projects

**School’s Mission**: To restore hope to the hopeless children by improving their access to quality basic education opportunities and enlighten, inspire and empower them through a rich variety of activities in becoming holistic individuals prepared to face the challenges of the dynamic global village.

**Our Core Values**

* Integrity
* Service
* Teamwork
* Excellence
* Professionalism
* Humility
* Inclusiveness