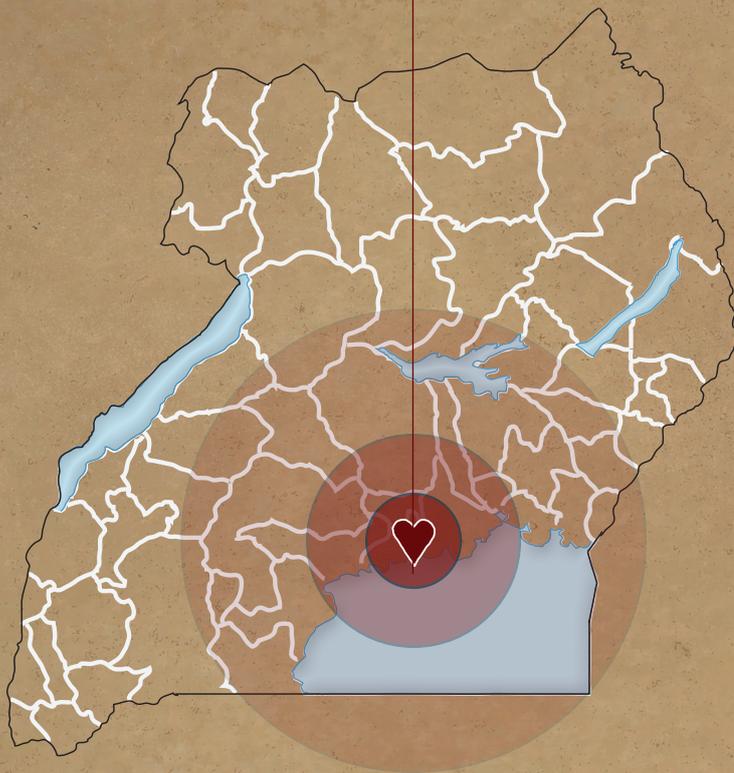




**Meeting  
Point  
International**

Annual Report

**09/10**



Meeting Point International activities are made possible through the generous support of the following organizations and public institutions:

- AVSI Foundation
- CESAL
- Support International
- Abbracci Senza Frontiere - Association Onlus
- Insieme Si Puo'
- United Nations World Food Program
- United States Agency for International Development

Special thanks is also extended to the many people who have accompanied and supported Meeting Point International.

# Meeting Point International

Kampala, Uganda

Our Mission:

“To offer a friendship



and embraced



are looked at



for their infinite dignity.”

in which people are not reduced



but instead



to their problems or sickness



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## What Is Meeting Point International?



“Belonging to a design that is not yours, knowing who you are, knowing that you belong to someone - that is having a link with which you become free. You can face everything without fear because you know to whom you belong.”



Meeting Point International (MPI) is a non-governmental organization registered with the Uganda NGO board. Active since October 1992, we work primarily in the Nakawa Division of Kampala. Our administrative offices are based in Kitintale. Working here in Uganda we have become a part of the experiences that are lived, like a dear friend to whom one would find solace and a belonging with; MPI has grown to an integral part in the lives of thousands of families.

MPI has become known for its unique approach to HIV/AIDS which places a person's value as being of greater importance than any of his/her circumstances. We have found that acceptance of disease has become a key to our success. The knowledge that the virus that causes HIV/AIDS is harmful to more than an individual's physical wellbeing has helped us build an approach that goes far beyond physical support. We strive to end the stigma associated with disclosure by accepting everybody as they are and encouraging open and honest discussions about the disease.

Through the peer based approach, our staff utilizes home visits, community talks, drama performances and songs to reach out to the sick. Patients who may have felt alone, ashamed, guilty or scared are given an opportunity to feel supported, loved, and feel like they are truly a part of other people's lives.

By providing a living example to their peers, the clients of MPI offer an encouragement whose strength goes far deeper than a solely technical intervention could. MPI invests in education as an avenue for self-discovery: it is a way for individuals to find their own worth and pride. Education gives hope for those who find themselves in time of great need, but, most of all, education for us is the greatest need of man that when responded to can result into the development of a mature mentality that can last a lifetime.

The reason for our work is not merely to alleviate suffering, but to create dignity and lasting relationships that foster happiness and good health.



Above: Clients of MPI's Naguru office gather regularly to share songs and dances as well as to offer the comfort of support to each other.

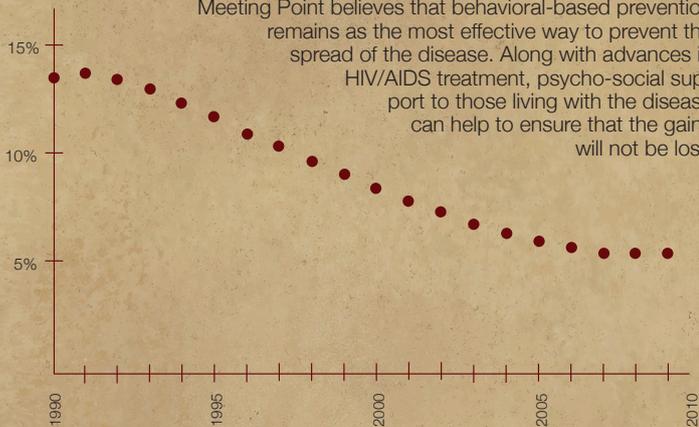
## HIV/AIDS in Uganda

- Estimated adult HIV prevalence rate: 6.5 percent
- Estimated number of people living with HIV: 1,200,000
- Estimated number of children living with HIV: 150,000
- Population with comprehensive knowledge of HIV: 35 percent
- Children (aged 0-17) orphaned by AIDS: 1,200,000

2009 data courtesy of [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda_statistics.html)

Although Uganda has made significant progress in its fight against HIV/AIDS, there are still more than a million people living with the disease in Uganda, and more than a million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS<sup>1</sup>. Alarming, in 2008 HIV prevalence stopped reducing in some areas<sup>2</sup>.

Meeting Point believes that behavioral-based prevention remains as the most effective way to prevent the spread of the disease. Along with advances in HIV/AIDS treatment, psycho-social support to those living with the disease can help to ensure that the gains will not be lost.



<sup>1</sup> UDHHS 2006. 2. AVSI PMTCT Data Review, Kitgum Graph; Epidemiological Fact Sheet on HIV and AIDS: Core data on epidemiology and response – Uganda, Geneva: UNAIDS/WHO Working Group on Global HIV/AIDS and STI Surveillance, 2009-02-12, p. 4



“The reason for our work is not merely to alleviate suffering, but to create dignity and build lasting relationships that gaze at the fullness of the human person.”

## A Message From Rose:

Rose Busingye has been given the Servant of Peace Prize by the Holy See Mission of the UN, the Woman of the Year Prize in Valdaosta, Italy, and the International Award for Peace and Solidarity in Pistoia, Italy.

“The greatest need of a human being is the need of belonging, which gives stability and certainty in all aspects of life. Meeting Point International has discovered that with a belonging you can approach others while taking into account their reality and you can be able to truly embrace him/her which-ever are the differences that separate you. MPI creates simple environments where each person can find it easier to belong, and experience love.

In an environment where this belonging ceases to exist, where external circumstances deny this or are not clear, there is a possibility of violence and war in all aspects. MPI avails conditions where adults, youth and children can feel loved and have a link to someone, a relationship, a bond that they can turn to. The secret of everything is this belonging. Inside this, one can discover his/her value and dignity that helps him/her face any kind of challenging situations in life.

The value of the person is only possible when paying attention to something greater. The support we give is an instrument to tell these people that they have a value and that they are responsible for it.

MPI did not invent this method but even scientific studies have proved this method of ours works. Depriving a person of love and belonging causes physical and functional harm. Specifically the results can be reduction of the size of the hippocampus a fundamental cerebral structure that regulates the body's response to stress and the evolution of logical thinking and the capacity of reflection!

We have come to learn that the experience of abandonment comes with far-reaching psychological damage and therefore we always strive to meet the total needs of the children we care for. A key lesson we have learnt through the years has been the importance of introducing a person to whom the children and their parents can refer to; someone who loves them and is present for them more than just plainly implementing a project that doesn't touch the very depth of hearts.

In brief, the situation is not only for the poor and sick people but for everybody who lacks a link to someone. This belonging may end up having lasting consequences that shape ones destiny.

Having this in mind, my work in MPI is to create or try to create original structures of the values and meaning where each one can develop and discover himself. We have groups where adults and children are introduced to this meaning and sense of things that surround them. For us it has been a marvelous eruption of discoveries of the wonderful consequences of steps

which become a chain of education. It becomes a place where each can be himself, where an individual can express himself freely and live a constant comparison with his own humanity.



Rose Busingye,  
MPI Director

The person who belongs becomes protagonist because he receives a face, and receives a consciousness that unites him with the reality, he becomes the lord of the reality not because he possesses it himself, but because he discovers the belonging to someone else.

Belonging to a design that is not yours, that is to say belonging to somebody else, you become free.”

## MPI Locations



- Meeting Point International Staff
- 15 full-time employees
  - 15 full-time volunteers
  - 19 part-time volunteers
  - 2 part-time doctors
  - 2 part-time nurses

### 1. Naguru

The Naguru offices of MPI are located in a small primary school. Across the field stands the old Meeting Point International building, where meetings, dances, health education and literacy classes are held every Monday and Wednesday.

In Naguru as clients filter in throughout the day. Everyone who comes into the office is a friend and has a story to tell. The women here have formed a tightly knit group, but they are open and inviting. New friends are made every day and no one goes home feeling alone.



### 2. Kitintale

The administrative headquarters of Meeting Point International is located in Kitintale. The Kitintale office is responsible for the tracking of children under sponsorship, the repayment of loans, distribution of medicine and allocation of donated funds.

The tasks undertaken in Kitintale, especially those regarding educational sponsorship, are of great consequence in ensuring these activities continue. In a newly remodeled facility with office rooms, and a courtyard for gatherings clients, visitors and volunteers will always find a Meeting Point International employee with a welcoming smile.

### 3. Kireka

Kireka is constantly evolving. The continuous flow of migrants from northern Uganda, mostly of Acholi descent, has given this area its' nick-name of "The Acholi Quarter." In their songs, the women of MPI affectionately call it "New York City".



The Acholi Quarter's colorful residents have created a tightly knit community, unified in many ways by the bright blue and white structure built by Meeting Point International. Women gather there during the day to make necklaces and dance; while other men and women come for literacy classes.



Katale

1

Jinja Road

3

Katalma Road

Kinawataka Rd.

Kireka

Kampala, Uganda

Portbell Road

Kireka Road

Spring Road

2

Bugolobi



2,190 Persons Directly Supported	Kireka			Naguru		
	Women	Men	Children	Women	Men	Children
Registered HIV Clients	1,210	20	60	775	14	111
Clients on ART	70	5	20	84	11	50

## Support to Persons Living With HIV/AIDS

### Home Visits

The unique strength of MPI is apparent with the home visits. Everyone who works at Meeting Point International checks regularly on those who are sick in order to provide supportive care including help to bedridden patients and to provide adherence and compliance counseling at home. On a typical home visit, our staff walks out into the neighborhood, stopping at each home where they know someone is sick. Usually more than one woman makes the trip, greeting everyone along the way. Inside the patient's homes, conversations remain upbeat.

Serious discussions are punctuated with jokes, gossip and laughter. Receiving visitors gives everyone a sense of honor, reminding them that they are respected and helping them re-discover their value and dignity.

### Treatment and Medical Care

There are many organizations in Kampala that serve the sick, impoverished or hungry. At Meeting Point International, the focus is not simply on the problem but also on the individual.

Each new client is treated with love; MPI focuses on the value and dignity of every individual, ensuring that all needs are cared for while also activating one's ability to feel pride and responsibility. Every new client of MPI spends time chatting with staff and other patients.

Establishing a relationship with a person is just as important as the physical support provided. Through these relationships, the men and women working for Meeting Point International provide a glue that holds together those with each of their individual needs.

Members of Meeting Point International communities know that if any one they know is sick in any way, they can visit the office. Once there, the staff refers them to the hospital or a center that can provide the treatment they need. Each office keeps certain medicines in stock, such as digestive aids, cold remedies and pain relievers. Additionally, a doctor is present at each center two days a week to advise patients and make treatment more convenient.

Left: The women of MPI Kireka share drama and singing as a way to express their energy for life. Top: Helen, one of the nurses employed by MPI, dispenses medication to clients from the MPI office. Bottom: Teddy, an employee of MPI, carries out home visits where she provides guidance and support to the clients of MPI.

### Antiretroviral Treatment

In the early days of Meeting Point International, ARV drugs were expensive, and in short supply. The registration book was filled with patients who came for help and yet couldn't get it because of the then high cost of the medicines. MPI staff watched in dismay as their attempt to treat infections bore no fruit without antiretroviral treatment.

As international donations arose through and scientific advances made ARV medications affordable, MPI clients have begun now to fully experience the wonder of life. Today, MPI supports 2190 patients, 240 of these are on ARV medications. The men, women and children who receive medicine are generally referred to organizations around Kampala that provide drugs for free or at reduced costs. The groups working with Meeting Point International include Nsambya Hospital, the Joint Clinical Research Center, Bethlehem Medical Care and Mild May. Unlike many patients on ARV medication who fail to follow their treatment regimens, clients of Meeting Point International are educated and monitored to make sure that they take their medicines properly and continually. As a result, patients achieve and maintain great health without stop.

## Livelihood Support



“This is not only for the poor and sick people but for everybody who lack a link to someone that is a belonging, may end up having lasting consequences that shape ones destiny.”



### Necklaces

For years the women of MPI have been making necklaces. At the beginning it was used as part of handcraft together with making sweaters but later it has become a way to sustain their families. Using recycled glossy magazines the women create beads which are then used to produce intricate necklaces, bracelets and earrings.

The process to create the beads is simple but time consuming. Magazine pages are marked off and cut into long, thin triangles. The triangles are then rolled around a needle and sealed with glue, creating an egg-shaped bead. The beads are threaded onto a string and then varnished to give them a glossy shine.

Regardless of the years of experience the women have in manufacturing the necklaces, the process is still a long one. One member insists that she could make one necklace from scratch in just one day if it wasn't for the 2-3 days it takes for varnish to dry. Necklace and bead making has been a wonder for MPI. Many women no longer need to toil breaking stones in the Kireka quarries and women who had no food can now feed their children.

The real beauty of the necklace mak-

ing, lies in the sense of community and pride that it generates. Women gather together to create with each other, sharing ideas and establishing strong bonds. The therapeutic outcome that results from sitting together and making these necklaces together is immeasurable.

Each woman is proud of her jewelry and exercises her mind daily thinking of new and creativity style to bring to the group.

### Loans from MPI

MPI allows its clients to take out small loans so that they can begin businesses to generate their own income. These small businesses enhance the capacity of families, and most of all make families empowered, with a reinforced sense of responsibility and dignity. With loans of only a few hundred thousand shillings (approximately \$150) men and women are able to build vegetable stands, brick businesses and tailoring shops.

Feeling their responsibility, clients take pride in repaying MPI when their businesses become successful, hoping that someone else can benefit as they have. The great success of loan repayment makes Meeting Point International's loan system capable of continuing on for more clients to access.



Top: Strands of finished beads will be strung into brightly colored necklaces which are sold to support the women of MPI. Middle: A client of MPI strings beads. Bottom: Taking great pride in their work, the women are constantly imagining new designs and color combinations for the necklaces.

## Worldwide Solidarity: MPI Gives Back

After hearing of the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. the women of Meeting Point International were moved to action. For weeks they crushed truckloads of stones in the nearby Kireka quarry and produced necklaces as a way to raise funds for the victims of the hurricane.

With their hard work the women earned about \$1,000 and planned a festival to celebrate the donation with representatives of the United States. "It may only be a small drop of water in the ocean, but our donation proves that the human heart is international," said Rose Busingye, MPI Director. "Without our unity the human race would become withered like a plant without nourishment."

"I greet all of you, my friends in America" Akullu Margret, a MPI client wrote in the letter to the US Embassy.

"The news of Hurricane Katrina has reached me and I am saddened by the devastation it has caused in your lives. I send you this small gift as a sign of my tears as a cry for what has happened in your lives. I identify with you because I know what it means to suffer. I am sick with AIDS and I know that anytime I will pass away, yet I am not afraid because I know that someone will take care of my children. Even now as I write you this letter, people who do not know me are already supporting my children so they can go to school. I pass on this love that has been shown to me as well."

Holding back tears, Amy Cunningham of USAID accepted the donation, thanking all the women who had worked so hard to support their sisters and brothers overseas. "You may think it is only a drop in the ocean," said Cunningham, "but it is a drop that would be missed without your help."



Above: A woman breaks stones at the Kireka quarry. 15 kilos of crushed stones can be sold for approximately \$0.35.



Nursery: 49  
Primary: 849  
Secondary: 828  
Vocational: 50  
Tertiary: 21

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Students Supported by MPI: 1,797

## Educational Support

Meeting Point International through a project with AVSI Foundation, Support International and Insieme Si Puo' has created a program that links Ugandan children with private donors who provide educational and other activities support. This rather unique project is further colored by the exchanges between sponsors (who become friends) and children in Uganda. At least twice a year, sponsors receive letters and photographs from their "adapted" children. MPI staff stays in close contact with each child's parents or guardians encouraging and providing support so that each child can reach his or her full potential. This involvement keeps every one enthusiastic about the children's education. They send their grades off to their sponsors, and each child hopes to impress! Meeting Point International believes that no child should have to go without a good education. Therefore, MPI staff seeks out orphans and other vulnerable children whose parents are struggling so that they ensure a brighter future for each child. At the same time, each sponsor has the satisfaction of putting a smile on a child's face.





Top: Students Classes at Luigi Guissani HighSchool.  
Bottom: Members of Meeting Point International take part in adult literacy classes on Tuesday and Thursday at the Kireka office.

## Adult Education

Adult education and literacy classes are additional programs provided by Meeting Point International. MPI clients and volunteers are taught basic numeracy (how to read, write and speak English). In addition, current affairs, health science and mathematics are also taught so that they are able to count, add, subtract and divide any figure. This helps them especially for those who are planning to start a business as an income generating activity.

Acquiring new knowledge gives confidence, improves esteem and enables the women to carry on their daily work with pride. English lessons especially help women living in the Acholi Quarters, who often suffer from language barriers. Students in the adult classes work very hard to make the most of their education. They are serious about exams and often request tests to make sure they are learning everything they can. It is a remarkable aspect – especially since it is generally rare thing to see students so excited and enthusiastic about their education!

### Other Program Beneficiaries:

Adult Literacy: 295  
Material Support (Elderly and Poor): 310  
ECD/Day Care: 450



Dancing is an integral part of life at MPI. Even the sick can play instruments, sing and enjoy the movement. Magic happens during dancing time: everyone smiles, and those who are seen to be too weak jump up and join in. Meeting Point International also includes professional dance troupes of teenagers; with striking costumes and an undeniable energy visitors often join the dances, sharing the spirit of life.

## Welcoming House



Top: The new welcoming home is home to more than 50 children ranging in age from less than one year to more than 20 years old. Bottom: MPI Director Rose Busingye pays a visit to the children at the welcoming house. Right: A young boy at the welcoming house .

In places where suffering is common, children are often the first fall victim to the problems of their community. For these children, Meeting Point International has set up a home called the Welcoming House to rescue orphans and other children who have nowhere to go.

Fifty-six children have found their way to Welcoming House. Some are brought by concerned adults, especially police, while others are found alone in the streets of Kampala. The staff at the Welcoming House become a family for these children, teaching them self-respect and treating them with all the kindness a parent should.

Though the Welcoming House is a safe haven for these little ones, we continue, with the support of the police, to trace the relatives of these children; if available, a family can offer the best form of care for a child. When placement back in their home fails some of the children are placed into the care of the families in the community. Amidst all their potential suffering, and lack of means, it's often the women of MPI who volunteer to take in a child. The openness with which they receive other children who are not even related to them is always a lesson and a sign for us that humanity is indeed powerful!

## Stories of Hope



Apolot entered Meeting Point International two years ago after being abandoned by her family to find the love that had been missing at home.

“My name is Apolot Florence and I am 35 years old, from the eastern part of Uganda in a district called Bukedea. I am HIV positive. When I realized I was HIV positive I became worried, and weak. The symptoms of HIV had begun appearing as a rash all over my body, a cough, and pain everywhere. After a year of my husband telling me that there was no problem and to forget it, I went for testing where they confirmed my fears.

I thought I was going to die very soon. I would stay indoors because there was nobody in the community who I could tell my status to after even my own relatives had rejected me. They said that they were not the ones who sent me to get this virus, so they would also not be the ones to cure me!

My family separated my plates, cups and wash basins fearing that I would infect them. They even decided to isolate me to a house away from theirs and dig a hole inside that house for me to defecate in so that I wouldn't disturb them.

When the rainy season came with the cold they said I would surely die. When I began coughing, the people in the village were saying that I was not going to live more than a month. When I would hear such words I was very worried and had sleepless nights. It was one of these nights I decided to write a letter to my sister who was staying in Kampala. She arranged for me to come stay with her, and told me of Meeting Point International.

I came to MPI and found Aunt Teddy here. She welcomed me to come to a meeting with the other women. At first I was fearing to talk to the women because there were very many. Over time though I realized that I liked the singing, dancing and making beads. After some time Auntie Rose came and she welcomed me too. I told Aunt Rose about my status, and my children who were at home without school. Aunt Rose gave me the money to send the children to school, to resume treatment, and even the money for rent. After this I began feeling better, and at a certain point I thought I would travel back to village as I was strong enough to live without the support of Meet-

ing Point. I was taking my medicine, though I had to travel far to the health center, but I saw that life had again become difficult. I said to myself, “what is the problem now?!” I realized that even though I was on my medication there was a big part of life that was different in the village, and that was that I had nobody to talk to about my problems or share my happiness. I realized that as much as the ARVs were helping

**“(My family) said that they were not the ones who sent me to get the virus, so they would also not be the ones to cure me!”**

me, it was still of no good without also having the love of others.

So as much as I thank Rose and Meeting Point for everything they have done, the greatest thing that I have been given is the love, peace, and a hope for life. I feel very fine now, and wish to tell my story to any other person who might be feeling as I was. This love is the greatest cure I have found!”



**Mbakire Jessica is a 38-year-old HIV-positive woman from Iganga District who joined Meeting Point International in 2004.**

"I remember waking up with many nurses around me, confirming that this was not a dream; I was HIV positive, and the world was swallowing me up.

It was after having given birth to my second child that I began falling sick regularly. I wondered why this was happening, and I talked to my husband who was always so quiet about the topic. He was so arrogant to me when I asked what could be wrong that I decided to go alone for a blood test at the hospital. This was when I was found to be HIV positive. This is when I collapsed, waking up to these nurses in what felt like a nightmare.

When I went home I told my husband about this, but he was not bothered, as if he knew already every thing that was going to happen. We returned to the hospital and they put us on ARV. My husband's CD4 was already very low and after a year he died. That was in 2002. I was so confused about where to begin; I was remaining alone

with two children and I did not have any source of income to support us.

I began falling sick regularly and amidst this my sister brought me to Kampala to stay with her. She and her husband tried their best to look after me by taking me to the hospital. But still, they could not afford the drugs I needed.

One day my sister's friend came to visit and found me sleeping on the ground. She asked my sister who I was and what was happening to me. When my sister told her of my problems, this woman she said she was a member of an organization called Meeting Point International, and that they could help me.

I went with my sister to the first meeting and we found very many people - mostly women - seated on the waiting bench. We also sat there, when it came to my turn, a lady with a smiling face welcomed me and listened as I told her that I was sick. She asked me for documents that confirm my sickness, told me how the organization works and how she could help me. I was registered in their book as a new client then another lady took us to in-

troduce our selves to the other women whom we found busy studying. They welcomed us with big handclaps, and that was the moment I realized that I wasn't alone.

Each one of these women had a story of suffering just as I did. I found my self sympathizing with them, almost forgetting my own suffering. I have learned that everyone I meet in life may be passing through the hardest experience on this earth. I looked at my problems as being easy after I heard one of the clients tell the story of her having a zero CD4 count, as she stood there smiling and looking well.

The day I met the director, my strength even grew further, her smile to me was unmistakable. She loved me and I could see it. Despite my disease, I could see that she loved me. I later started ART through Nsambya hospital- in a few months my CD4 count increased, I was also enrolled into the WFP and my children started receiving school fees. I have no exact manner in which I can thank MPI for giving me back my life, but I know that I want to spread this joy they have given me to other women out there who are in a place like I was before I came here."

Acheng Agnes is a 42-year-old client who joined Meeting Point International after moving from her home in Kitgum to Kampala.

I was abducted by LRA early 1997. I stayed in the bush until I was rescued by the UPDF 2006. When I came back to my village, life was difficult. I was rejected by my siblings, my relatives and by people in town. I was traumatized, depressed and the stress made me decide to leave Kitgum for Kampala to stay with my Aunt from Father's side.

When I reached my Aunt's place, the same problem of being a rebel continued following me. Indeed it was not of my own interest to join the rebel group; I was abducted! Still rumours continued circulating. One day I sorted a bag of beans for a lady in the market who then refused to pay me. She told me 'do you think you can kill me as you have been doing?' I was shocked with fear, and I decided to leave quietly.

Through all this my health started changing. I was often sick, and was not getting treatment because of lack of money. At a certain point I was completely down, could not walk, and I would urinate on myself.

At this time even my Aunt deserted me. She transferred me to a room next to their house fearing that my cough

might transfer to them. I was sleeping on a cardboard box and had no food.

One day, one of my neighbours happened to meet one of the volunteers from MPI and explained to her about me; about how I have been rejected because I was from the bush (rebel). This volunteer came and visited me where I was, and then Rose hurried to meet me. She found my condition was not good and nobody from that home responded to me. She decided to take me immediately to Nsambya Hospital where I was tested and found T.B. reactive and H.I.V positive.

I was admitted, and no one to attend to me except Rose! Rose could clean my body, bathe me, bring me food, and visit me three times a day for one full month until I was better. By the time I was discharged, Rose had already rented for me a room, and bought for me mattress and other things. When I came back from hospital, I started imagining 'who is this Rose who can still show love for me?' I thought nobody could love me again. I thought that this was the heart of Christ who doesn't mind whether the person is sinful or not.

One thought kept on disturbing my mind though - I didn't understand if maybe Rose wanted to come close to me in order to get information about my being a rebel as other organiza-

tions had been doing. All these questions continued disturbing my mind.

One day Rose came to check on me, and met my Aunt, who asked Rose a funny question. "Why are you helping her?" asked my Aunt. "She thought death is good... you should have left her to die. Didn't they tell you that she had been a rebel? Be careful she will one day turn against you."

Rose then told me "Agnes look here, do you know that you still have a value? Do you know that a human being can change no matter who he or she is?" I didn't understand these words then, but slowly by slowly I started meeting the members of MPI and began to understand. The love and care I received made me to be filled with joy and happiness from Christ.

I was free from all my burden hope to apply the love they gave me to other people who have problems like I had. On top of all that MPI has done in my life, my 4 children are supported by MPI under school sponsorship, and I was given revolving funds which helps us to run a small business. I also make paper beads as income generating activities, and have adult literacy classes.

With love and care, Rose made me to know more about value of a human being. Through love and care you can be cured without any medication.



LUIGI GIUSSANI  
HIGH SCHOOL

LUIGI GIUSSANI  
HIGH SCHOOL  
With our hands  
we build the future

Vincent is a 17-year-old S3 student at Luigi Guissani High School in Kireka, Kampala.

"I come from a poor family in Lira where I lived with my father, Onyenye. My mother is not there. I was brought to Kampala by a relative who loved me, and said I should come and study in Kampala because I had spent almost three or four years out of school due to financial problems.

A common problem here is that of jealousy. When others members of the family saw how I excelled in school they got bitter and said I should go to the village and study no more. I was determined to continue my studies though, and found a friend of mine who I had been working with in a construction site. He found for me a school where I could work in order to pay my school fees, but this was a very difficult arrangement.

One day I explained my problems to a woman involved with MPI. I knew of Meeting Point International because there are many of my tribes there in Kireka. This woman, Adong took me to MPI in Kireka where I met Margaret.

I was very surprised that when I told Margaret my name she began to cry. She said that MPI had been looking for me, but said that a relative had told them I had gone mad and died!

To my surprise, I also wept and cried with this thought that someone could be so bitter towards me. She told me to be strong hearted though, and that God has a good plan for me and things would become better with time. I met Rose, who told me "you are not defined by the circumstances around you; you have a value." I almost cried again because it was my first time to see someone who is even not my tribe mate saying I have a value. I was shocked and moved with in me totally, I failed to understand her because she embraced me with un usual love.

When Aunt Rose started paying for me fees I had the problem of accommodation because I could not stay with the one who said I was dead. MPI arranged for a place for me to stay. I found belonging with others and saw that out that my nothingness came the same one that has catered for and died for my happiness, justice and love. I've learned about the Uganda Martyrs

and that has made me very strong hearted no matter what comes my way. With all that had happened I am moved most by the love and support of Meeting Point International women of Kireka who not only embraced me but also accepted me their son and keep collecting money for my well being.

I remember when Aunt Rose said that

**"I almost cried ... because it was my first time to see someone who is even not my tribe mate saying I have a value."**

'you are surrounded by angels everywhere, angles are surrounded you'. May God help me in my education that was cursed by many people and may God bless all Meeting Point International."

**For further information, please contact Meeting Point International using the form below:**

**TO:**

Meeting Point International  
P.O.Box 21261  
Kampala, Uganda

Phone: +250 (0) 414222698  
Email: [info@meetingpoint-int.org](mailto:info@meetingpoint-int.org)  
Web: [www.meetingpoint-int.org](http://www.meetingpoint-int.org)

**FROM:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Tell us more about yourself or how you would like to help:**

**Financial Donations can be made by bank transfer directly to MPI using the following account information:**

Account Name: Meeting Point International  
Bank Name: Crane Bank Ltd  
Bank Address: PO Box 22572, Plot 38, Kampala Rd., Kampala  
Euro Acct No.: 0345031101200  
Swift Code: CRANUGKAXXX  
Through: DEUTDEFFXXX