

## They're on my side fighting along with me

### Something is changing in Tanzania

The United Republic of Tanzania is a country located on the east coast of Central Africa. Unlike other African countries, whose potential wealth stands in contrast with their actual poverty, Tanzania has few exportable minerals and a rather primitive farming system. Similarly, access to basic social services, such as health, education, water, energy and transportation is extremely limited. Malaria and diarrhea are common diseases, which, together with AIDS, account for the country's high mortality rate.



Mary is a child sick with AIDS, the daughter of an HIV positive mother who comes regularly to receive treatment at the DREAM center sponsored by the Community of Sant'Egidio in the rural outskirts of the city of Arusha, Tanzania.

What is the difference between the diminutive Mary, or her mother, and any other person in any of the developed countries where people have access to medicines to combat this disease? The only difference is that they were born in different parts of the world, a geographical datum that carries with it a death sentence for nearly one and a half million people each year. This is true precisely because where Mary lives, as is the case for 67% of AIDS' victims throughout the world, the medicines are unavailable.

It was in the face of these realities that the Community of Sant'Egidio established the DREAM project ("Drug Resource Enhancement Against AIDS and Malnutrition"), to provide comprehensive care to those afflicted by AIDS.

In its program DREAM offers information about the disease, HIV testing and counseling to those who visit their center. In the event of a positive testing result, the person may be enrolled as a patient of the Center and assigned to a doctor, who will conduct further examinations, take measures to confirm the outcome of the original test and to determine the course of appropriate treatment for that patient. The in-take procedure will also include a check for opportunistic diseases and nutritional deficiencies, making provisions for treatment or food assistance as called for.

Staff members of the DREAM Center are all from the local area and are given specialized courses to train them for their tasks. Quality of training for all health care providers; quality of care provided and quality of facilities and equipment for clinical follow-up are all consonant with Western standards. Both care and training are given free of charge.

## Tanzania

Capital: Dodoma  
Population: 41,463,923 h  
Adult literacy: 69%  
Life expectancy: 53 years



At the heart of the Community is the life of each patient, especially that of the most vulnerable, starting with the children. Each patient is made to feel that his life is welcomed and accepted without being judged, and each can find renewed hope when he sees and realizes that others are as determined as he is to fight for his life.



As it pursues this strategy, the Community of Sant'Egidio has become a veritable movement in the fight against AIDS in each of the 10 African countries where it operates.

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### You can change your world

When we speak of neglected diseases, we are generally referring to those that have a high incidence, that are principally prevalent in poor countries, and that, though they afflict millions of people, their treatment is expensive, ineffective or nonexistent, (e.g. Chagas disease, sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis and malaria, [ all 4 of which are parasitic diseases spread by insects ], as well as tuberculosis and the HIV / AIDS pandemic ...)

The absence of political will, in conjunction with global business interests (e.g., big pharmaceutical companies), driven by the thirst for profits, portends a bleak prospect for millions of victims.

*Get involved. Take action. MSF gives you 10 ideas to help forestall the probability that these people will die of neglect. [www.yonolvido.org/difunde.php](http://www.yonolvido.org/difunde.php)*

**Prayer: «I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me, will never walk in darkness»**

To remain apathetic is like groping alone in the dark. Without light, without help, without a way out, we are constantly bumping into ourselves. Lord, You are never indifferent. You remember me. You always guide my steps with Your light. Lord, help me to see, so that I can be mindful too -- that I too may share Your light with others.

*Jn 8, 12-20*