

**TEST PDF- NEEDS TO BE UPDATED  
BEFORE PUBLISHING**

## **Akello Beatrice**

When Annette's husband first became sick, they did not go to the hospital for a very long time. They could not pay for the medical care, nor could the family afford his taking time off from work. Once his condition became severe, Annette's husband finally went to the hospital. There, the doctors diagnosed him with tuberculosis. When he did not recover, he went back to the hospital where they now told him he was HIV-positive. His condition eventually progressed to AIDS, to which he ultimately succumbed in May of 2019 after ten years of being bedridden.



Because of their father's illness, Annette's seven children did not attend school. Instead, as soon as they could, they worked to help compensate for the family's loss of income. Additionally, Annette admitted that neither she nor her children had been tested for HIV/AIDS virus. Although testing is free, they had not gone to the clinic because they feared the results. Even after the death of Annette's husband, her family's situation remained dangerously precarious. Annette, who sat with her one-year-old twins on her lap during the interview, explained that, "My problem is common. I am not the only person with this story. There are so many of us."

Amid this uncertainty, Annette regretted deeply not being able to send her children to school. When she learned about Speed School<sup>1</sup>, she leapt at the opportunity to enroll two of her children. Since, Annette has noted a positive change in habit and motivation for her enrolled children. In terms of their knowledge, the two can now read in Acholi and speak basic English. Her other children and others in the community cannot read or write in any language. Annette observes that her two Speed School children are more courageous and confident, not reserved and fearful like her others. These developments give her hope for the future.

Despite the benefits of Speed School, Annette still worries about supporting her family. Normally, she would need to spend her days working, leaving the older children to care for her young twins. With the two in school, she had no one to care for the young ones, so she could not leave home to work. This was bringing about food insecurity for the family.

Fortunately, Annette has found support in her Self-Help Group, the community development structure that Geneva Global links to every Speed School class. Joining the mothers of her children's Speed School classmates, Annette now has access to microcredit that allows her to purchase cassava which she uses to brew local alcohol. She then sells the alcohol at the market and pays back the loan from the SHG. Annette uses the additional profits to send her eight-year-old child and third Speed School student, Winny, to

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<sup>1</sup> - Speed School is an accelerated education program that Geneva Global operates in Northern Uganda since 2016 (and Ethiopia since 2011) on behalf of a philanthropic client to give out-of-school children aged 9 to 14 a second chance at formal education. The Speed School model originates with the Stromme Foundation, which Geneva Global funded to operate in West Africa from 2007 to 2010.

school and has money left over to care for her family in other ways, as well. and is now using them to support her family.

Even though putting her children through school is a significant financial burden for her family, Annette has witnessed enough positive results to understand the importance of education. She explains, "If God continues to open doors, I will continue to send my children to school. I want to see my children grow to be teachers and nurses and accomplish their hearts' desires."

(Original Name, Akello Beatrice was changed to Annette for privacy)