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Nyanza Province, which is the part of Kenya situated around Lake Victoria, has been the hardest hit by the AIDS pandemic. The province has an infection rate of around 15% which is more than double any other region in Kenya, except for Nairobi, the capital city. **The Suba District** has the highest rate in Nyanza. Some researchers estimate the rate to be as high as 40%, but most would agree that it is somewhere around 25% - 30% of the general population that is infected.



There are many factors that lead to such a high percentage including immoral cultural practice such as polygamy, wife inheritance, and marital unfaithfulness and taking advantage of younger girls. The fishing lifestyle around Lake Victoria also contributes greatly to the high rate. Most men fish for Tilapia, Nile Perch and tiny fish all night. They come in to the beaches in the morning and sell them to the fish mongers (usually widows or orphans), but many times sexual favors are part of the transaction. The money they receive from their fish is in cash and there are no banks in this district to save their money in, so most of it gets spent on alcohol and prostitutes. Most widows and orphans have no other way to make an income unless they prostitute themselves. The cycle continues as more people die from AIDS, more orphans and widows fight to look for ways to survive.

That is why **Christ's Gift Academy** began back in 1997. It was created to give a Christian education and meet the basic physical needs of orphans and other needy children. Because they hear me call them AIDS Orphans, people in America often ask how many of our children are infected with HIV/AIDS. The answer is very few. There were four that were identified years back and have been getting proper treatment with Anti-retroviral drugs since that time. When we can identify it early, we can get the necessary help and see their health improve.



A few weeks ago we tested most of our new students. Of the 28 we tested, only 4 tested positive. We are excited to have learned this early so that we can get them help immediately. We think that these ones that have tested positive all contracted it from their mothers at birth. We are going to continue to invite local Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) centers to our school periodically to test our kids with the guardians' consent. Out of our current enrollment of 290 students (190 orphans), only 8 are HIV positive.

Please continue to pray for our children's health.