Let’s contest the millions with a good fight:
On the exaggeration of statistics on HIV/AIDS victims in Africa
by
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Posted as “Let’s contest the millions with a good fight!”
See USAAfricaDialogue@googlegroups.com

First, I want to appeal to writers not to make this listerv a terrain for egoistic ‘kantakism.’ I really don’t know the meaning of the word ‘kantakism’ but I heard it in a tirade of ‘agberos’ in Ariara market, Aba, Imo State, Nigeria. I think that ‘agbero’ is often translated as ‘tout.’ While being very artistic, dramatic and witty, agberos can be very garrulous and contentious. I plead that this forum does not degenerate to a level that can turn some people off, because that is what the feeling of ‘kantakism’ can do. I write to plead with us for more restraint.

Having said this, I want to state my opinion on the matter of ‘where exactly are the millions?’ (that has taken up a lot of my computer space). I understand the need to question western-generated statistics, ideas, and experiments on Africans etc. There are issues of their hidden agenda and we’ve read about the subjectivity of some of the most scientifically ‘objective’ research. But this should not relegate the need for action that has been raised and emphasized in recent discussions. Even one person afflicted with HIV/AIDS is enough for a call for action. It spreads through human agency.

The postings on “where exactly are the millions” remind me of the debate in the late eighties and early nineties about the origin of HIV/AIDS. Theories of its origin from African green monkeys and/or western scientific laboratory predominated. But ACTION. The song of the debate was soon drowned by the tragic melody of the cries of victims. I’m not downplaying a debate that I participated in, and I think that it is still relevant just as the debate on statistics. Can we do our own work on the statistics and still pursue strategies that work for the control of the disease? I think so.

My thinking on this issue is facilitated by this market women’s saying: “we telling you say fire burn am, you asking if it burn im goatee?” As long as we have the disease, we should focus our energy on eradicating it. If we succeed in ‘killing’ HIV/AIDS (action), we can all shout WE DON’T HAVE IT. There will be no need for statistics on HIV/AIDS in Africa when it no longer exists in Africa.

So let’s KILL it! Let’s contribute to the fight according to our talents. Generating accurate figures, creating awareness, engaging malpractices, visiting the ‘reality’ (I know a boy who visited an African country with his Nigerian-American mother and took photographs of AIDS orphans. He has raised scholarship money for them). Multi-tasking!
When we succeed, the past/old western-generated statistics will still be there and we can continue to engage them. After all, we are still contesting other data like the number of slaves, women raped and so on.