



Innovative New Aftercare Program Helps LGBTI Survivors in Nairobi

Many refugees in Nairobi who are members of the LGBTI community fled their home countries because of persecution and violence specifically targeting them. In some countries near Kenya, it is illegal to be gay. The consequences are devastating and often brutal. Once people escape to Nairobi, they may find relative safety, but they can still face harassment, barriers and challenges in addition to those they face as refugees.

For this group of survivors, CVT Nairobi has become known as a place where they will find help and care. And because survivors expressed a need for support beyond their course of rehabilitative counseling, CVT developed an Aftercare program to meet the ongoing needs of this community.

Psychotherapist and trainer Elizabeth Mbatha Muli said, “The objective was to provide more social connections and focus on enhancing coping skills. We give

them a forum to talk about feelings and learn from each other how they’re doing, to hear what others are doing about their problems.”

Another key component of the Aftercare program is the work of peer facilitators, former clients who are members of the LGBTI refugee community. While developing the new Aftercare curriculum, CVT’s clinicians provided training and support to new peer facilitators, working closely with them to get ready for the first cycle of continuing support sessions.

“Once they’ve been through counseling, they say, now we are done, what now? As LGBTI, we still are facing discrimination,” said Francis*, a trained peer facilitator. “We give them the opportunity to see things differently... we help them get back on their feet.”

The community responded positively. Timothy*, another of the peer facilitators, said, “Participants ask to be in another session—they don’t want it to end. And now they refer their friends.”



From left: Joanne Jepkemoi Kibet, physiotherapist/trainer; Rosina Mruttu, psychotherapist/trainer; and Elizabeth Mbatha Muli, psychotherapist/trainer.

Timothy said he feels much more hope about his work prospects since he came to CVT. He said, “I feel like even when I’m resettled, that I’m supposed to continue this work. This is the best work I’ve done, the best place I’ve been. I want to find a way to help others in some way.”

“I wish I’d found CVT earlier,” Timothy said.

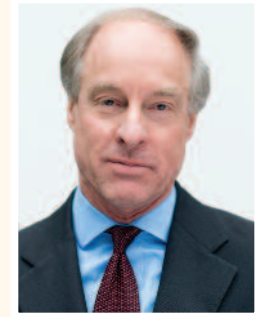
* Names and some details have been changed for confidentiality and security.

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CVT’s work in Nairobi is made possible by Steven Walker and supported by funding from the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture; the S.L. Gimbel Advised Fund at The Community Foundation – Inland Southern California.

Letter from the Executive Director



Curt Goering

Dear Friends,

I recently visited CVT's healing center in northern Uganda, where we have been caring for torture survivors in the city of Gulu for the past nine years.

Thanks to your generosity, over the last year we have been able to expand our rehabilitative work with traumatized survivors and communities targeted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) militia in the 1990s and 2000s. One of the LRA's most brutal attacks took place not far from Gulu in 2004 in what has since been called the Lukodi Massacre, when more than 60 people were mercilessly killed.

The LRA committed massive and uniquely horrifying human rights violations. It was known for its widespread abduction of children, both boys and girls, who were forced to become child soldiers, "wives" of fighters or porters carrying supplies. Abducted children were often forced to kill their own family members—and if they refused, they themselves would be killed.

Virtually the entire population of northern Uganda—up to two million people—was displaced during this period. Since the fighting subsided after a ceasefire was agreed upon more than a decade ago, the population has gradually been returning to their villages. Entire communities were deeply traumatized by the horrific events and many remain so today.

During my visit I had the opportunity to meet with survivors of the massacre in Lukodi, as well as with abductees. Many specific details of their stories were terribly gruesome—the individual and collective pain in the stories they related defies description.

But I also heard about how CVT is enabling survivors to reconnect with their families and communities. They are picking up the pieces and rebuilding their lives under circumstances that few of us can begin to comprehend. Community leaders and other members of the community in Lukodi recognized that CVT's assistance allowed survivors to rebuild the social fabric the LRA had destroyed and urged individuals to seek CVT's healing care.

Thank you for helping us give these survivors renewed hope for the future. The resilience of the human spirit is amazing to see, and I am so grateful for your support of this life-changing work. Your generosity is doing more good than I have words to describe.

With my thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curt Goering". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Curt Goering

CVT Opens in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camps

Survivors of torture at the Kakuma refugee camps and in the local community are now receiving CVT's lifesaving healing care. On-site care includes counseling and physiotherapy.

"The need for rehabilitative care here is enormous," said Pablo Traspas, country director for CVT Kenya. "The hard reality is that this region is now home to more than 180,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, thousands of whom have survived torture and the horrors of war, and our dedicated staff is already joining clients on their healing journeys. Our doors are also open to our

...this region is now home to more than 180,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, thousands of whom have survived torture and the horrors of war...

neighbors in the host community, who are struggling with different issues but who may benefit from holistic care, making our healing center unique among CVT's other initiatives. CVT has made it possible to cover the existing gap in mental health and physiotherapy services in the Kakuma refugee camps."

Psychological first aid is delivered by CVT counselors stationed at various locations around the camps. Counselors provide immediate intervention for survivors struggling with trauma and other mental health crises upon arrival at the camps. CVT expects to see as many as 175 survivors of torture and war atrocities through the rest of 2018, and more than 400 in 2019.

"During my recent visit to our Kakuma site and the adjacent Kalobeyi settlement, I was once again inspired by the passion of our colleagues who have begun meeting with survivors while building of the site continues around them, a testament to the dedication at the heart of humani-



PHOTO BY SYDNEY STEAD

tarian work," said Curt Goering, CVT's executive director.

Even as healing work is underway, final infrastructure is being put into place. Modified shipping containers which can withstand the region's windy conditions are acting as temporary staff housing and office space while construction continues for more permanent structures.

Hope and healing are rising with each new day in Kakuma, thanks to the generosity of CVT's supporters who are making this urgently needed rehabilitative care possible.



PHOTO BY SYDNEY STEAD

A Survivor's Story of Determination and Hope

Thomas* is a 36-year-old man from Africa. Soft-spoken and slight of build, he was tortured multiple times due to allegations about his political beliefs. He was diagnosed with several medical conditions as a result of being beaten, dragged, whipped and subjected to other torture while he was detained.

He obtained a visa to come to the United States and is currently separated from his children. Thomas applied for asylum, but due to his immigration status he does not qualify for any public benefits and is not authorized to work. Unable to contribute to his host family, he soon found himself homeless.

Because of his circumstances and chronic health issues, it's challenging for Thomas to meet his basic needs. CVT has connected him to medical care, nutritional food, numerous community resources and volunteer lawyers to assist with his asylum case. But housing has been a persistent issue for Thomas and the biggest

obstacle in his healing journey.

Despite setbacks, Thomas is a resilient and determined individual. He is grateful for the medical care that CVT made possible and the new connections to his community through church and his English learning center. On the anniversary of his move to the United States,

instead of focusing on the reason he fled, Thomas is thankful he found CVT and accessed the care that saved his life.

** Name and some details have been changed for safety and to protect confidentiality.*



ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA SCHEID

Make a Difference in the Life of a Survivor

Your generous support brings healing to torture survivors worldwide. CVT welcomes all types of donations.

- **Monthly Sustainers** allow for ongoing planning and delivery of healing services.
- **Planned Giving** continues your legacy of support.
- **Gifts of Stock** support survivors while offering tax benefits to donors.

- **In-Kind Donations** of specific items improve the lives of survivors.
- **Tribute Gifts** celebrate events or memorialize loved ones.

Donate online at www.cvt.org, send a check to 2356 University Avenue W, Suite 430, St. Paul, MN 55114, or call 612.436.4808 for other ways to give. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to healing the wounds of torture.



The
CENTER for
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