

# Tei Wa W'o



Kitui is a dry area located in Kenya's Eastern Province. It is sparsely populated due to frequent drought. The people in the area are primarily of the Akamba tribe, who support themselves by growing drought-resistant crops such as maize, sorghum, beans and cowpeas. Tei Wa W'o (which means True Mercy), is made up of nine sub-groups, with approximately 220 members in all caring for 60 adults and 150

orphans. Tei Wa W'o was founded in 2000 primarily as a women's self-help group. The ten original members participated in a GROOTS Kenya training on home-based care and orphan and widow support in 2002.

The main challenges facing home-based caregivers in Kitui are the lack of food and water and transportation. It sometimes takes group members two hours to reach the households they are visiting. They would prefer to travel by bicycle or public transportation, but a lack of services and resources keeps them from doing this. Additionally, water sources are very far, so collecting enough water for a homestead can end up taking all of the caregivers' time if they are not efficient. The

great energy required for transport, water and firewood collection make caring for their community a great strain. But members of Tei Wa W'o share their time and food willingly, believing that they will be blessed by God for sharing when they have so little.



Tei Wa W'o has focused on HIV/AIDS education for their community, and see this as one of their greatest successes. They have noticed that more relatives are taking in orphans since information on HIV/AIDS and orphan support has spread throughout the area. They also feel that more people are being cared for in their homes and so are able to die with dignity. Because of community trainings and workshops conducted by Tei Wa W'o, everyone in their area now knows about HIV/AIDS. Members say that it has become “the daily song” throughout Kitui.

