

FRED MUTEBI

STATE ALUMNI MEMBER OF THE MONTH FOR APRIL 2008



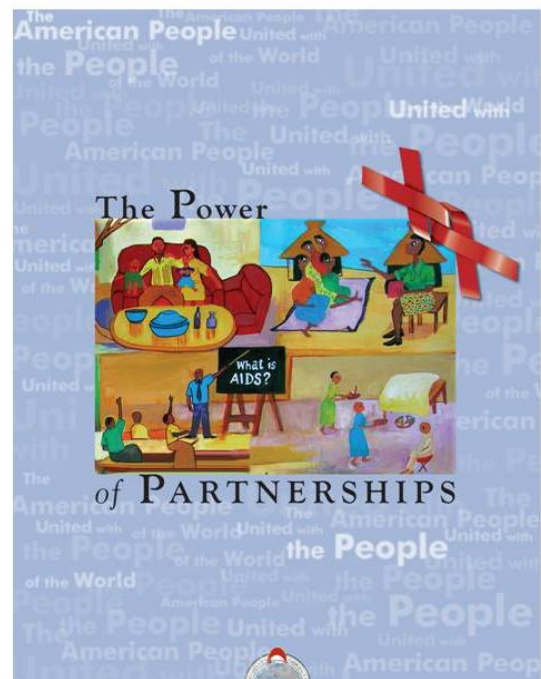
Mr. Fred Mutebi, a 2003 alumnus of the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Program, has made significant strides towards improving the lives of children in Uganda. A true ambassador of the Fulbright program, the Office of Alumni Affairs has selected him as the April 2008 State Alumni Member of the Month.



Mr. Mutebi is a dynamic artist who has demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities since he has returned from the U.S. Through his own organization "Let Art Talk" (LAT) he has worked with children and youth, many of whom have been affected by the twenty-year conflict in the Acholi sub region of northern Uganda. The mission of LAT is as follows: *To take Art to the grass roots communities as well as ensure that Art is used as a vehicle for constructive change in the lives of ordinary Ugandans.* Through LAT, he has brought together youth from various regions of Uganda who have experienced conflict so as to share experiences and learn from one another. Mr. Mutebi taught these children how to use art as a means of therapy and healing.

As the conflict in the north started to show signs of coming to an end, Mr. Mutebi decided to work on another issue that was devastating the region – HIV/AIDS. He has encouraged women and youth to use art as a means of communicating HIV/AIDS messages amongst themselves and the public. By holding art workshops as a means of providing therapy from trauma caused by issues such as war, conflict, and HIV/AIDS among the youth, Mr. Mutebi has actively involved himself in the community.

As one of the most active and dedicated alumni in Uganda, Mr. Mutebi has participated in various alumni activities and can always be relied upon to lead and assist in anyway possible. Working with the U.S. Embassy, he organized a successful International World HIV/AIDS day "North-South Art Exchange for Students" art exhibit event. A number of exchange alumni attended including the guest of honor who is also a Humphrey alumnus. Exhibitors included former child war combatants, children affected by war, and children living with HIV/AIDS from north and central Uganda. For the 2007 International World AIDS Day, a mural Mr. Mutebi created with his students was even used as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) poster! PEPFAR is the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease – a five year, \$15 billion commitment. This Emergency Plan was announced by President Bush during his State of the Union address on January 28, 2003. As a result of this action by President Bush, the United States now leads the world in its level of support for the fight against HIV/AIDS.



The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
www.PEPFAR.gov

PEPFAR poster with Let Art Talk mural

Mr. Mutebi is also reaching out to government entities to try to include his art techniques in their efforts. At a January 29, 2008 meeting with several high level Ugandan Ministry of Health officials, Mr. Mutebi demonstrated how art can be used as an effective means of communication to fight disease and maintain good health. He presented a "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise" mural which was one of the products of the 2007 International World AIDS Day activities.



Talking Mural created by Let Art Talk for the 2007 International World AIDS Day

Fred Mutebi's work has enabled children of northern Uganda to express their most traumatizing moments as well as hopes for the future. This, he thinks, is the healing process that must be continued so that these children do not remain haunted by the past. Children and women living with HIV/AIDS have gained more confidence in themselves as valuable and responsible members of society who need not shy away from revealing their HIV status. Instead, they can use it as a vehicle to help others; HIV prevention and care communication carry a strong and visible message to all members of society.

Mr. Mutebi has this to say about the Fulbright program:

"One year in the USA is enough to positively change any normal person, especially when that person comes from a developing country like Uganda. If that person is not selfish, when they return to their country of origin, they are expected to think and make designs that may turn their country of origin into a sort of USA. At the same time as a follow up, keep educating the USA about their country of origin; Fulbright alumni should be ambassadors of both countries – the USA and their country of origin. The challenge therefore is linking up the two countries as a means of solving global challenges. Thanks to Senator Fulbright who came up with this idea. This program has never been crucial as today when our global village is apparently overwhelmed with old and new emerging political, social, environmental and economic problems. Fulbright alumni should therefore join hands to think for their countries and communicate their knowledge and findings beyond their immediate surroundings as a means of solving our global community problems. As a former [Fulbright] scholar in residence from 2003 to 2004, and an artist who has used my art as a form of communication for more than 15 years, I am doing what an alumnus should do through art."

In addition to sharing his skills with various groups in Uganda since his return, Mr. Mutebi has traveled back to the United States to exhibit his work and hold workshops. From January to April 2008, he visited Dallas, Washington D.C., and Memphis. Additionally, Mr., Mutebi will be returning to the United States in July 2008 where he will visit Washington, D.C. for an exhibition of the children's art at the International Visions Gallery.

