

STRENGTHENING HIV/AIDS TREATMENT LITERACY AND CARE PROGRAMMES IN UNIFORMED FORCES

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND INFORMATION NETWORK (CHAIN)
In Partnership with UPDF, Uganda Police, ESO and Uganda Prisons



3rd – 6th December 2006



WORKSHOP REPORT

Sponsored by:



ACRONYMS

ACP	:	AIDS Control Programme
AIDS	:	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ART	:	Antiretroviral Therapy
ARVs	:	Antiretroviral drugs
ASP	:	Assistant Superintendent of Police
CBO	:	Community Based Organization
CSO	:	Community Service Organization
ESO	:	External Security Organization
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MoH	:	Ministry of Health
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organization
PHAs	:	People Living With HIV/AIDS
TASO	:	The AIDS Support Organization
VCT	:	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
UFs	:	Uniformed Forces
UNHCO	:	Uganda National Health Users' /Consumers' Organisation
UPDF	:	Uganda People's Defense Forces
WO2	:	Warrant Officer 2

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FOREWORD

Regina Namata Kamoga – Country Manager, CHAIN Uganda



In Uganda, Uniformed Forces (UFs) are among the high-risk population and vulnerable groups. Among the UFs, prevalence rates are quite high compared to the general population. This is due to the nature of their work which makes them live away from their spouses, thereby increasing the risk of HIV infection.

A number of prevention, treatment and care interventions are in place to mitigate the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This has led to a number of successes for example in Police in 2003 the sero-prevalence rate dropped from 44% to 13%. A significant change in behavior was also realized. (Presentation from Uganda Police).

CHAIN has been closely working with UFs for two years now. In early 2005, CHAIN held stakeholders' meetings with the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), Police, Prisons and the External Security Organization (ESO). The major aim was to explore ways of forming partnerships and also popularize the treatment literacy handbook, 'A Guide to Antiretroviral Therapy' that CHAIN produces once a year. A number of HIV/AIDS issues were discussed among which was the treatment literacy gap which featured prominently in all the four institutions. As one of CHAIN's core objectives, treatment literacy was identified as a potential area for collaboration.

As a follow up on this, CHAIN organized the first three-day residential treatment literacy empowerment workshop for healthcare professionals in the UFs, at Ankrah Foundation in Mukono in November 2005. The main objective of the workshop was to bring together health care professionals to discuss HIV/AIDS treatment updates and prevention strategies. That marked the beginning of our collaboration with the UFs.

Following recommendations from the above workshop, it was agreed that;

- A Steering Committee with representatives from the four institutions is formed
- A pocket-size handbook, 'A guide to Antiretroviral Therapy' is produced (It will be out early 2007).
- Regular workshops are organized

The second workshop was organized from 3rd-6th December 2006 at Ranch on the Lake, Kigo. The workshop brought together social workers, PHAs and healthcare professionals in the four institutions to discuss HIV treatment updates and prevention technologies.

The outcomes of the workshop included among others;

- CHAIN to help fundraise a CD4 count machine for Prisons. There is no CD4 count machine in this institution and clients have to travel long distances for diagnostic tests.
- Increased knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention technologies, treatment and care strategies among UFs.
- Knowledge on the barriers around scaling up on HIV/AIDS treatment and literacy in these institutions and how best to overcome the barriers.
- Skills, experiences and best practices were shared.

I wish to thank MERCK for sponsoring the workshop and also for their continued support of CHAIN's work. Special thanks to the Commissioner General of Prisons, Dr. Johnson Byabashaija for his devotion and commitment to the struggle against HIV/AIDS, and to members of the Steering Committee from the four institutions. Many thanks also to the CHAIN Scientific Committee, staff, trainers/facilitators, participants and all our networking partners.

CHAIN is committed to continue working in collaboration with the UFs to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS.

1.0. CHAIN'S BACKGROUND

CHAIN is an international not-for-profit organization, registered as a charity and company in the United Kingdom and Uganda. Set up in 1998, CHAIN promotes the empowerment of people living with HIV/AIDS, lobbies for increased access to Antiretroviral drugs, promotes treatment literacy, promotes good policies on HIV treatment and care and provides capacity building support to Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Most of CHAIN's work is undertaken in Africa, and currently in the Great Lakes Region (Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

Today CHAIN has worked in partnership with key stakeholders in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, addressing HIV prevention, care, education, policy development and treatment advocacy. CHAIN coordinates HIV Treatment Literacy and Capacity Building workshops in these countries and holds a biannual Great Lakes Conference on HIV/AIDS.

CHAIN is committed to developing programmes of work that support and enhance concerted international efforts to reverse the HIV epidemic.

The organisation runs both national and international HIV/AIDS health programmes with a focus on capacity building and strengthening networks and partnerships of grass roots non-governmental organisations operating in the HIV/AIDS sector in Africa.

The main thrust of CHAIN's effort is to galvanise key stakeholders in the struggle against HIV/AIDS. This is done through workshops, seminars, international conferences and community symposia, which bring together activists and community leaders.

2.0. THE WORKSHOP

2.1. Introduction

Since the first cases of HIV/AIDS were reported 25 years ago, its effects have been far reaching on human populations worldwide especially in Sub Saharan Africa.

In Uganda, Uniformed Forces (UFs) are among the high-risk population and vulnerable groups. Among the UFs, prevalence rates are quite high compared to the general population. This is due to the nature of their work which makes them live away from their spouses, thereby increasing the risk of HIV infection.

It's against this background that CHAIN got involved with the UFs to strengthen HIV/AIDS Treatment Literacy and Care Programmes.

3.0. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

3.1. Number and nature of Participants

50 representatives from Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF), Uganda Police, Uganda Prisons and the External Security Organisation (ESO) attended the workshop. These included;

- Healthcare professionals
- Social workers
- People Living With HIV/AIDS (PHAs)
- Policy makers



4.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

- To bring together policy makers, healthcare professionals, social workers and PHAs in UPDF, Police, Prisons and ESO to discuss HIV treatment updates and prevention technologies
- To impart knowledge and skills to policy makers, healthcare professionals, social workers and PHAs in the above institutions
- To discuss barriers around scaling up on HIV/AIDS treatment and literacy in these institutions and how best to overcome the barriers
- Explore areas of collaboration and partnership development especially around

HIV/AIDS treatment literacy, HIV/AIDS prevention, and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) programmes among the above institutions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

- To increase awareness on resource mobilization strategies at national and international levels
- To share practical experience and methods of good practice in the UFs.

5.0. OPENING SPEECH, CHAIN COUNTRY MANAGER, MRS. REGINA N.M KAMOGA

CHAIN Country Manager, Mrs. Regina N.M. Kamoga welcomed the participants and briefed them about the genesis of the CHAIN partnership with the Uniformed Forces (UFs) and CHAIN's pledge to address the treatment literacy gap. She affirmed that CHAIN had lived up its promise.

She lauded the formation of the Inter-Steering Committee which was drawn from the respective institutions to spearhead HIV/AIDS programmes in the institutions. The participants were informed that the committee was formed following the recommendation of the workshop held on 27th-30th November 2005 at Ankrah Foundation in Mukono. This committee was at the forefront of organizing the current workshop and it was commended for the good work done.



Mrs. Kamoga further emphasized the importance of the partnerships as a cornerstone to fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic. She appealed to participants to take advantage of the three days to generate more knowledge and network.

She promised that CHAIN will continue to make efforts to mitigate efforts to fight HIV/AIDS through organizing workshops, symposia that bring together activists, community leaders, PHAs and all those affected by the epidemic.

6.0. GUEST SPEAKERS AT THE OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONIES OF THE WORKSHOP

- Dr. Johnson O.R. Byabashaija – Commissioner General, Uganda Prisons (Chief Guest – Closing)
- Mrs Mary Kaddu – Commissioner Uganda Prisons/Director HIV/AIDS Training Programmes - Uganda Prisons

- Major Dr. Stephen Kusasira – AIDS Control Programme Coordinator – UPDF
- Dr.T. Barungi – Head of Medical Department, Uganda Police
- Dr. Nyabwana Denison– Director Prisons Medical Services-DPMS
- Mr. Balinda Alfred– Head of Welfare, President’s Office

7.0. KEY EMERGING ISSUES



- Involvement of the top leadership of the respective institutions in HIV/AIDS programmes
- Adoption of new approaches to enhance HIV testing and treatment e.g. Routine counseling and testing, mandatory testing with the aim of preventing new infections and care for those already infected
- Funding is still a big challenge hampering efforts to mitigate the HIV/AIDS pandemic
- Stigma and discrimination is high in these institutions thus affecting treatment and care
- Treatment to all members of the family. Services needed may include VCT,ART, Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) , treatment of Opportunistic Infections (OIs), health education and condom distribution

- It is important for the Ministry of Health to provide a comprehensive HIV/AIDS care package to UF's institutions



- Observance of patients' rights by commanders, health workers and people involved in care of PHAs
- Institutional advocacy and lobbying to scale up programmes and activities for HIV/AIDS treatment literacy and care
- Formation of groups/associations of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs) to disseminate HIV/AIDS information
- HIV programs for children of members of the UFs
- There is inadequate information on ART
- Training in the area of ART is inadequate thus leading to inadequate medical personnel to manage ART
- Inaccessibility to treatment due to long distances by clients
- Inadequate drug/combination supplies to cater for all people in need of ARVs
- Inadequate drugs to manage Opportunistic Infections(OIs)
- Community involvement, especially communities surrounding the barracks. These should be included in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care programmes of the UFs institutions.
- Issues of confidentiality need to be addressed as they affect treatment
- Sustainability of programmes
- Disclosure to commanders and spouses is still a big problem which, if not addressed, would lead to increased rates of infection as well as affecting treatment

- Nature of deployment and non-adherence that leads to drug resistance.
- Issue of orphans in the UFs institutions needs to be addressed. There is no programme to cater for orphans in most of these institutions and with the overwhelming number of orphans, urgent measures need to be taken to address this problem

8.0. CLOSING SESSION OF THE WORKSHOP

Dr. Johnson Byabashaija was welcomed by a song titled “Let’s keep up the fight against AIDS”.

8.1. The Welcome Song

*Let’s keep up the fight
A fight against AIDS
Giving hope to the hopeless
Giving help to the helpless*

*Don’t give up the fight
A fight against AIDS
That we may have a better world
A safe place to live*

A theme song composed by Mrs Mary Kaddu

8.2. Speech by Guest of Honor, Dr Johnson Byabashaija Commissioner General – Uganda Prisons

The guest of honor, Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, Commissioner General Uganda Prisons commended CHAIN for bringing the Uniformed Forces (UFs) together to discuss HIV/AIDS issues. He agreed that HIV/AIDS in the forces posed a security threat to the nation but through continued partnership with civil society organizations like CHAIN a lot can be achieved.

Dr. Byabashaija declared that his commitment to HIV/AIDS initiatives was derived from the fact that UFs are the pillars of state to whom he attaches a lot of importance and leaders have to be with those they lead even in such programmes, for “a commander who deserts his army is not worthy of being called a commander”.

He asserted that the presence of UFs for such a workshop is another way in which they can help redeem the country from the killer HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Byabashaija thanked CHAIN for its continued support to the UFs and he pledged to support them all the way.



8.3. Awarding of Certificates

The Participants were awarded certificates of attendance by the Guest of honor Dr Johnson Byabashaija Commissioner General of Uganda Prisons



9.0 OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

- Increased knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention technologies, treatment and care strategies among UFs
- The UFs acquired knowledge on the barriers around scaling up on HIV/AIDS treatment and literacy in these institutions and how best to overcome the barriers
- The UFs got better understanding of the development of effective and productive partnerships between them and CSOs like CHAIN
- They appreciated the government's response to HIV/AIDS and how best their institutions can play an active role
- They acquired more knowledge on strategies of resource mobilization at national and international levels
- Skills, experiences and best practices were shared
- Increased awareness on stigma and discrimination, and its effects on treatment.

10.0.WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

- A Uniformed Forces leaders' workshop be organized to discuss HIV/AIDS issues and inter sector collaboration among the UFs. Involvement of leadership would ensure efficient and effective implementation of HIV/AIDS programmes
- Follow-up workshops be held to address the barriers to effective HIV/AIDS treatment and literacy as identified during the workshop; workshops to be organized at regional level (Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern regions of the country)



- Increased communication and networking with relevant stakeholders in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic to create opportunities and mobilize resources for strengthening treatment literacy
- UFs institutions to put in place mechanisms that would enable sharing available HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care services. Thus increasing access
- Need for inter-forces networking activities sponsored by the respective institutions e.g. workshops, seminars and meetings to address identified issues
- CHAIN to make good the promise made to Uganda Prisons to fundraise for a CD4 Count machine
- Encourage civil society organizations to work with uniformed forces
- Increase PHAs representation and involvement in HIV/AIDS activities at all levels e.g. inter-institutional steering committee



10.1 Highlights from participants' evaluation of the Workshop



- 98% confirmed that the workshop achieved its set objectives
- Among the things revealed to have worked out most for the different participants were; the good selection and relevance of the topics discussed,

professionalism exhibited by the facilitators, the days' recaps and the excellent welfare and hospitality given at the venue

- Training in other key aspects such as resource mobilization and advocacy was very much appreciated. More time for discussion was recommended
- Participants promised to share the knowledge acquired and also address issues such as stigma and discrimination when they go back.

11.0 CONCLUSION:

Knowledge is power; lets all work together to empower the uniformed forces so that they are able to make informed decisions and are able to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic.



Dr Johnson Byabashaija (middle with specs) pauses for a group photo with the participants and some of the facilitators.

APPENDIX I

TOPICS AND TRAINERS/ PRESENTERS

1. HIV/AIDS Science and how Drugs Work in the Body.		
Topic	Presenter	Center
Natural History and path physiology of HIV/AIDS	Dr. Hannah Kibuuka	Makerere Walter Reed Project.
Update on ARVs and how they work, the principles of ART and issues of disclosure.	Dr. Stephen Watiti	Clinical Manager The Mildmay Centre.
2. Update on National, Global HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care strategy and Number of people Accessing ARVs.		
Barriers around scaling up on HIV/AIDS treatment and Literacy in the UFs and how Best to overcome them.	Maj. Dr. Stephen Kusasira	ACP Coordinator UPDF.
National HIV/AIDS treatment strategy, Care guidelines, accreditation process of treatment Centers and the role of NGOs in this strategy	Dr. Elizabeth Namagala	ACP Ministry of Health
3. HIV/AIDS Treatment and Care – Sharing Experiences of Prisons, Police and UPDF		
Presentation by representative from Uganda Police	Ms. Mbabazi Frances.	ASP–Uganda police.
Presentation by representative from Uganda Prisons	Dr. Alex kakoraki	Deputy Director Prisons Medical Services
Presentation by representative from UPDF	Maj. Dr. Stephen Kusasira	ACP Coordinator UPDF
Common side effects of the four first line ARV regimens and how to manage them.	Dr. Angie Kiyonga	Medical officer Mildmay.
Care beyond ARVs (care package for PHAs)	Dr. Stephen Watiti	Clinical Manager The Mildmay Centre

Adherence and how to avoid drugs Resistance	Dr. Stephen Watiti	Clinical Manager The Mild may Centre
Stigma and discrimination and how it affects treatment	Dr. Stephen Watiti	Clinical Manager The Mildmay Centre
Patient/Medical worker relationship in HIV/AIDS and patient rights	Ms. Robinah Kaitiritimba	National Coordinator UNHCO
Life planning skills in relation to HIV/AIDS	Mrs. Mary Kaddu & Dr. Alex Kakoraki	Commissioner Uganda Prisons/ Director HIV/AIDS Training programmes - Uganda Prisons & Deputy Director of Medical services Uganda Prisons.
4. Capacity building sessions		
Advocacy	Mr. Roger. Wamara	Sales Manager & Consultant, SN Brussels Airlines.
Mobilizing Resources at the National and International Levels	Mr. Ben Mugerwa	Consultant, Uganda Management Institute
Note: All detailed presentations are available on CHAIN website www.chainproject.co.ug		



For more information contact:

CHAIN - Uganda Office

Community House
Plot No. 809 Kanyanya, Gayaza road
P.O. Box 16051 Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256 041 568786
email: chainproject@infocom.co.ug
<http://www.chainproject.co.ug>
Reg. No.S5914/4865