

**A concept note for setting up a HIV/AIDS awareness programme for Youth in Mpigi District**

**Project Description**

The Project will support the Uganda Government efforts to reduce the spread of HIV, it will also support the Government to implement a comprehensive Behavior Change Communication (BCC) action plan, including mass media and community outreach to effect behavior change and reduce the risk of HIV infection among youth (15–24 years). The Project will be implemented in Mpigi District in central Uganda targeting 35,000 youth in all the 9 lower local governments in a period of 3 years (2022-2025)

**Rationale**

It is estimated that more than half of new HIV infections worldwide occur among young people of 15-24 years and up to a third of people living with HIV/AIDS are 25 years or younger. Young people are more disproportionally affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

The national HIV estimates show that there were 1,460,000 people living with HIV in2019. HIV incidence per 1,000 un infected people of 1.4, but higher in specific regions. The national estimates put HIV prevalence at 5.8%. Among young people aged 15-24 years, HIV prevalence is 2.8% and 1.1% among young women and men respectively. Among older adolescents and young people, HIV prevalence is almost four times higher among females and males (The National HIV/AIDS strategic plan 2020/21-2024/25).

The National HIV/AIDS strategy explicitly recognizes the situation of youth; Street children, working young people, school dropouts, commercial sexual workers and young people from fishing communities around lake Victoria are explicitly recognized as being at risk and needing targeted intervention measures, including life skills training, access to services, support, and care. The program calls for policies that mobilize leaders to participate in HIV/AIDS prevention and control and to set examples for the young people, promotes education, and communication programs, as well as harm reduction, as priority activities for HIV/AIDS prevention and control. It emphasizes the need to intensify behavioral change for community groups that specifically include young people, for services that attract young people in order to efficiently manage Sexually Transmitted Infections and provide reproductive health care and counseling services.

Young people are a special group transitioning from childhood to adulthood and this evolution may be associated with increased curiosity and exploration of new sexual and other behaviors like alcohol consumption. Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 account for about 40% of cases and are a key target group for focused prevention efforts **(Mpigi District HIV report shared on bi-annual HIV stakeholders meeting 10 March 2022)**. Young men and their risk-taking behavior (drug use and unprotected sex with sex workers) are a driving force of the epidemic. The Government of **Uganda National HIV/AIDS strategic plan 2020/21-2024/25** endorsed by Hon. Esther M Mbayo-Minister for the presidency identifies social as well as behavioral change communication (SBCC),

**Impact and Outcome**

Consistent with the directions provided by the national HIV/AIDS strategic plan, the Project will reduce HIV infection risk behaviors among youth aged 15–24. It should result in more than **35,000** HIV infections being avoided among youth in a 3-year period. This will provide positive social and economic benefits, including the avoidance of costs associated with reduced productivity and the prolonged periods of care and treatment needed by patients.

**Component 1 activities** will target leaders from the National, District to the community level, with advocacy and support for youth programs. The outcome will be an improved policy environment for a youth focus in the implementation of a National and District HIV/AIDS strategy.

**Component 2 activities** will support the production of a highquality, mass media behavior change communication program focused on youth and their families. The program will include television, radio, and print media in an integrated, reinforcing package. The outcome will be improved knowledge in relation to HIV/AIDS risks and prevention and associated issues for youth, including delaying sexual debut, and consistently and correctly using condoms are all behavioral-based methods to prevent sexual transmission of HIV among others as specified in both the National and Mpigi District strategic plans. Biomedical approaches, such as male circumcision, treating sexually transmitted infections, treating HIV itself and the effect of harmful gender stereo-types, stigma and discrimination on people at high risk and on people already infected will be employed.

**Component 3** comprises three subcomponents:

(i) Comprehensive harm reduction services (including the provision of voluntary counseling and testing, condoms) and the provision of information, and peer education in settings that are accessible to youth

(ii) Peer education and life skills training for vulnerable youth in fishing communities, tourism spots (Kayabwe equator), Universities and colleges (Nkozi University and Nsamizi Institute of Social Sciences)

(iii) Primary prevention through school-based education and community outreach to parents on youth and HIV/AIDS issues. The outcome should be an increase in the proportion of youth with access to services and a reduction in the number of new infections.

**Component 4 activities** will support project management, capacity building, and youth-focused monitoring and evaluation.

**Projected budget**

The Project is estimated to cost USD 266,857 (3 years projected budget)

**Project duration**

The project is expected to commence 1 October 2022 and expected date of Completion is 31 September 2025