



UGANDA AIDS COMMISSION

UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



**A GUIDE FOR
COMMUNICATING HIV PREVENTION
AND CONTROL MESSAGES TO THE
COMMUNITIES - 2023**

FOREWORD

Uganda has braved the HIV and AIDS scourge for close to four decades. Through visionary leadership, innovation, open dialogue, involvement and commitment at individual, community and Institutional levels, the country has registered significant achievements in addressing the epidemic. Success has been demonstrated through the declining HIV prevalence as well as new infections.

Ending the AIDS epidemic is now seen as a feasible and achievable target. Accordingly, Uganda has put in place the 95-95-95 targets for ending the AIDS epidemic in the country in line with the UN targets as enshrined in the PFTI which is a catalyst for fast tracking our national efforts towards ending AIDS by 2030

Accurate information is very vital in improving knowledge, changing people's attitudes, behavior, norms and practices. This is critical in ending AIDS in the population.

Uganda AIDS Commission developed a National HIV and AIDS Communication Strategy to scale up communication efforts in the National HIV and AIDS Response. A lot of effort has been invested in scaling up communication interventions at all levels by different partners. However, some of the messages that are being disseminated are not accurate and as such they end up confusing the public.

To this end, UAC established a National Message Clearance and Harmonization committee of experts to act as gatekeepers for HIV and AIDS related messages generated by different actors. The main roles of the committee include 1) Review HIV and AIDS related messages for content, clarity, age, gender, and cultural sensitivity, 2) Harmonise messages on HIV and AIDS in accordance to the prevailing National Documents 3) Make suggestions for revision of messages, 4) Clear messages before mass dissemination to target audiences and 5) Monitor and Track messages for impact.

This message guide contains messages that have been approved by the National Message Clearance and Harmonization Committee of the Uganda AIDS Commission.

These are the messages that are contained in the Presidential Handbook that was endorsed by His Excellency the President of Uganda. They have been packaged for use by leaders at all levels but more so Resident District Commissioners and Resident City Commissioners.

Over the years, UAC has worked through the structures of the Resident District Commissioners and Resident City Commissioners and disseminated HIV messages during the Advocacy and community mobilization events. To strengthen and sustainably disseminate HIV messages across the Country and reaching wider audiences /communities, UAC has developed a communication guide with key messages targeting parents, adolescents, men, community members and leaders.

There is available airtime on all radio stations which the RDCs and RCCs will utilize in dissemination of the HIV and AIDS messages that are outlined in this guide.

Uganda AIDS Commission is in the process of translating these messages into local language for easy understanding but in the meantime, make effort to communicate in the local languages that the communities understand. The messages will also be produced to cater for people with disabilities specifically sign language interpretation for the deaf and braille translation for the blind.

This message guide is not limited to use by Resident District Commissioners, Resident District Commissioners but all leaders namely: - Religious Leaders, Cultural Leaders, Political and Technical teams in Ministries, Departments and Agencies Civil Society Organizations, Community of People Living with HIV.

I would therefore like to recognize the efforts of the technical team at UAC and in my Office specifically the RDC desk in developing this guide.

I urge all leaders to collectively disseminate the messages in the guide as we continue the journey towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.



Hon. Babirye Milly Babalanda
MINISTER FOR THE PRESIDENCY

The Presidential Fast Track Initiative to end AIDS by 2030 (PFTI) was launched by His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in 2017. The PFTI is a catalyst for fast tracking our national efforts towards ending AIDS by addressing key bottlenecks in the HIV response.

Communication of accurate HIV and AIDS messages to the community is a key component of the PFTI.

A 5-point strategy was devised to implement the PFTI as follows:

1. Engage men in HIV prevention and close the tap on new infections especially among women and young people.
2. Accelerate Test and Treat and achieve the 95-95-95 HIV treatment targets
3. Consolidate the achievements under the Elimination of Maternal to Child Transmission of HIV programme
4. Ensure financial sustainability
5. Ensure institutional effectiveness of the National HIV response

During the World AIDS Day 2022 at the National Commemoration in Rukungiri District and also at the National Address on 20th December 2022, His Excellency has provided continued guidance to Uganda AIDS Commission to scale up dissemination of HIV and AIDS messages through various communication channels.

These messages have been packaged to guide leaders while communicating HIV prevention and control messages.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT HIV IN UGANDA

From January to December 2022

Source: MoF HIV estimates 2022

1,433,000

People living with HIV

858,000

Women



495,000

men



80,000

children



52,000

People newly infected with HIV

30,000

Women



16,000

men



6,000

children



17,000

People died of HIV related illness

6,300

Women



7,100

men



4,000

children



HIV AND AIDS MESSAGES

MESSAGES FOR LEADERS

1. Leaders at all levels should provide clear and accurate information on how to prevent HIV.
2. Motivate young people to stay in school and engage in productive activities.
3. As leaders, it is our mandate to offer support and protection to families whose members are affected by HIV and AIDS.
4. Mobilize communities to fight negative social cultural practices such as child marriages, gender based violence, alcohol and drug abuse and other behaviors that expose people to the risk of HIV.
5. Let us uphold the rights of People Living with HIV.
6. Religious leaders; having HIV is not a sign that someone is immoral or cursed. People Living with HIV need our support.
7. Your HIV negative status expires every time you have unprotected sex with someone whose HIV status you do not know.
8. Ensure inclusion of People Living with HIV in economic empowerment and social protection Programs.
9. Leaders; support domestic resource mobilization efforts to ensure financial sustainability for the HIV response.
10. Local Government leaders: Ensure that 0.1% of the local Government budgets is allocated for HIV and AIDS activities as directed by the MoFPED.
11. Local Government Leaders: Ensure that HIV and AIDS coordination structures meet regularly to discuss HIV and AIDS performance and ensure accountability from HIV and AIDS service providers.
12. Treatment for HIV is available but it does not cure HIV. You have to take the medicines every day for the rest of your life and the medicines have side effects.

MESSAGES FOR PARENTS

1. Spend quality time with your children and set an example for them to follow.
2. Understand and discuss the unique needs of young people especially adolescents such as body changes and attraction to the opposite sex.
3. Create an enabling environment at home for your children to freely discuss body changes and HIV.
4. Support your children to complete school.
5. Be faithful to your partner and keep HIV away.
6. Your HIV negative status expires every time you have unprotected sex with someone whose HIV status you do not know.
7. Test for HIV together with your partner and receive results together
8. If you both test positive, support each other to take your medication as advised by the Health worker
9. If one of you tests positive, accept the results and support each other to take medication. Protect yourselves using condoms.
10. HIV positive women can have HIV negative babies.
11. Treatment for HIV is available but it does not cure HIV. You have to take the medicines every day for the rest of your life and the medicines have side effects.

MESSAGES FOR MEN

1. Remember as a man, you can only achieve your dreams if you are Healthy. Stay safe from HIV.
2. Men you are the champions; Take a lead to end cross generation sex in our communities.
3. Men take Charge; Test for HIV and know your HIV status.
4. Your partner's HIV status is not yours Stop the excuses, Go for HIV testing.
5. Medical circumcision can help decrease your risk of contracting HIV but it's not 100% protective. Circumcision must be used with other prevention methods such as abstinence, faithfulness and condom use.
6. Your HIV negative status expires every time you have unprotected sex with someone whose HIV status you do not know.
7. Even "healthy-looking" people could have HIV.
8. Take your pregnant partner for antenatal care services.
9. Support your partner to deliver at the health facility under skilled care.
10. Support your partner to breastfeed, have adequate healthy meals and take medication as prescribed.
11. To avoid catching HIV, use a condom correctly and consistently.
12. Treatment for HIV is available but it does not cure HIV. You have to take the medicines every day for the rest of your life and the medicines have side effects.

MESSAGES FOR PERSONS LIVING WITH HIV

1. The day you test HIV positive, begin taking your ARVs.
2. Take your ARVs daily as advised by the health worker.
3. ARVs prolong life and enable one to be a productive member of society.
4. Do you know your viral load? Testing for viral load helps you know if your ARVs are working well. Ask your Health worker for a viral load test when due.
5. Treatment is free and available in Uganda.
6. One can live a healthy and productive life if they adhere to HIV treatment.
7. It's your right and responsibility to seek for HIV/AIDS services.
8. Let's champion the fight against HIV and AIDS related Stigma and Discrimination.

MESSAGES FOR ADOLESCENTS

1. Avoid alcohol and drug abuse in order to avoid getting HIV. Alcohol and drugs impair your judgement and may lead you to risky sexual behavior.
2. Stay safe; abstain from sex until you are ready for its consequences.
3. Avoid peer pressure. Consequences of sex are not shared by your friends. Just because your friends are talking about and having sex does not mean you should also have it.
4. Your HIV negative status expires every time you have unprotected sex with someone whose HIV status you do not know.
5. Concentrate on your studies and your future.
6. Take an HIV test and know your status.
7. Even “healthy-looking” people could have HIV.
8. Male medical circumcision can help decrease your risk of contracting HIV but it’s not 100% protective. Circumcision must be used with other prevention methods such as abstinence, faithfulness and condom use.
9. Treatment for HIV is available but it does not cure HIV. You have to take the medicines every day for the rest of your life and the medicines have side effects.

MESSAGES FOR THE COMMUNITY

1. Avoid alcohol and drug abuse in order to avoid getting HIV. Alcohol and drugs impair your judgement and may lead you to risky sexual behavior.
2. It is our responsibility to Support People Living with HIV to adhere to treatment.
3. Your partner’s HIV status is not yours. Stop the excuses, Go for HIV testing.
4. Testing is the only way to know your HIV status.
5. HIV testing is beneficial, it allows you to seek treatment if you are HIV positive, and to seek ways of maintaining your HIV negative status if you do not have HIV.
6. Even “healthy-looking” people could have HIV.
7. Health is wealth; help Uganda become prosperous by remaining healthy.
8. HIV still exists. It can be prevented through Abstinence, Faithfulness and Correct and Consistent Condom use.
9. HIV is mainly spread through unsafe sex. You won’t get HIV by touching, sharing utensils or mosquito bites. Say no to unsafe Sex Always.
10. Your HIV negative status expires every time you have unprotected sex with someone whose HIV status you do not know.
11. One can live a productive life if they adhere to HIV treatment.
12. Let’s work together to fight HIV and AIDS related Stigma and Discrimination.
13. Treatment for HIV is available but it does not cure HIV. You have to take the medicines every day for the rest of your life and the medicines have side effects.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

Implementation:

Resident District Commissioners and Resident City Commissioners, their deputies and other leaders will endeavour to communicate the HIV and AIDS messages in languages that the communities understand. In doing this, they will mobilise and work with technical staff in the districts and cities. These include the District/City Health Officers, District Health Educators, District Education Officers, District Community Development officers etc.

Persons living with HIV will in particular be invited to participate in these sessions in order to address issues of HIV Stigma and discrimination. HIV implementing partners, HIV related NGO leaders, and religious leaders should also be mobilised to join the discussions.

The RDCs and RCCs will utilize the government sponsored air time on radios and TVs to communicate on HIV and AIDS messages. RDCs are required to disseminate these messages in at least 4 of their routine radio/TV programs every month. One of the 4 sessions should be entirely dedicated to HIV messages. At each of these sessions, a topic for discussion will be chosen for discussion and messages disseminated to the respective target audience.

RDCs also will utilise all other opportunities such as meetings and community gatherings to pass on HIV and AIDS messages.

Reporting:

The RDC/RCC will report on the indicators below and submit reports to the Office of the President using the existing reporting system. The indicators have been incorporated in the system.

1. Number of Radio/TV talk shows conducted on which HIV messages are disseminated (The target is at least 4 shows per month).
2. Number of District AIDS Coordination committee meetings held in the quarter. (The target is at least one meeting per quarter) .
3. Allocation of 0.1% budget for HIV mainstreaming this quarter (Yes or No)
4. Number of NGOs/CBOs doing HIV work in their locality.

The District/City HIV/AIDS focal persons will assist the RDCS/RCCs to prepare for and conduct the talk shows including mobilisation of the other facilitators mentioned above.

The technical staff will provide district HIV and AIDS data to the RDCs/RCCs. They will also participate in radio and other programs concerning the Presidential directive.

UAC Mandate

To Provide Oversight and Coordination of HIV and AIDS
related activities in the Country



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