

# **PROJECT REPORT**

# **UGANDA**

**July – December 2006**

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## Content

Executive Summary	4
1 Background	5
2 Project goal and objectives	5
3 SAN! project partner organizations	5
4 Activities undertaken during July to December period	5
4.1 Local project group committee meetings	5
4.2 Selection of lead organization	5
4.3 Extending financial support to lead organizations	6
4.4 Support visits to lead organizations	6
4.5 Follow-up visit to participating organizations	6
4.6 Strengthening capacity for workplace policy development	7
4.7 Workplace policy review meetings	7
4.8 Networking with other development partners	7
4.9 Resource mobilization efforts	8
4.10 Joint Oxfam HIV and AIDS mainstreaming regional meeting	8
4.11 Applied research component	8
4.12 Development of the information database system	8
4.13 The International AIDS Conference in Toronto	8
4.14 Discussion with Health Insurance Providers	8
4.15 Monitoring and evaluation framework	9
4.16 Participation in development of budgeting tool	9
4.17 Linkage with the SAN! India project	9
4.18 Planned project activities that were not undertaken	9
5 Plans for the year 2007	10
6 Conclusions	10

## Acronyms

AAA	-	African Air Ambulance
AAR	-	African Air Rescue
ACORD	-	Agency for Cooperation and in Development
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARVs	-	Antiretroviral
ASO	-	AIDS Service Organizations
CDRN	-	Community Development Resource Network
CSOs	-	Civil Society Organizations
FUE	-	Federation of Uganda Employers
FURA	-	Foundation for Urban and Rural Advancement
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GFAMT	-	Global Fund against AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis
HASAP	-	HIV and AIDS Support and Advocacy Program
HIV	-	Human Immune – Deficiency Virus
IEC	-	Information, Education and Communication
ILO	-	International Labor Organization
LPG	-	Local Project Group
M&E	-	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGOs	-	Non-Governmental Organizations
OI	-	Oxfam International
PC	-	Project Coordinator
PLWHAs	-	People Living With HIV/AIDS
SAN!	-	STOP AIDS NOW!
TASO	-	The AIDS Support Organization
TOR	-	Terms of Reference
UAC	-	Uganda AIDS Commission
UN	-	United Nations
VCT	-	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
GIPA	-	Greater Involvement of People Living with AIDS
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
TTP	-	Tripartite Training Program
UCS	-	Uganda Catholic Secretariat

## **Executive Summary**

This report highlights activities undertaken by SAN! project during the months of July to December 2006. The report points out what was done, the objectives, results key challenges and opportunities in the course of implementation. The action plans for 2007 are also included.

The SAN! project initiated in June 2005, has continued to work towards the goal of contributing to the reduced spread and better management of HIV and AIDS in the workplaces among 76 participating organizations in 15 districts of Uganda. Activities accomplished include; selection of lead organization, reviewing draft workplace policies, undertaking support supervision visits, organising LPG committee meetings, strengthening partnerships and networks, building capacity for workplace policy development, first phase of applied research and process for formulation of information data base system, attending International conferences, M&E framework, budgeting tool and linking with the SAN! India project.

Important to note, the capacity building workshops and support supervision efforts have resulted into 34 organizations drafting workplace policies that have been submitted to the project policy review committee and reviewed. The project continues to register support and willingness from the management of participating organizations to address the issues of HIV and AIDS in their workplaces. Though, none has received funding from the donors, some organizations are carrying out activities such as internal HIV and AIDS information sharing, condom promotion and display of IEC materials at the workplaces.

The project also participated in the initial calls for priority areas for funding under the Global Fund against AIDS, Malaria and TB by sending in a concept note. While, Uganda missed out as a beneficiary of the Global Fund, the SAN! project efforts contributed to the issue of workplace policy programs to be included among the priority areas of the Government reflected in the National Strategic Framework. Discussions with different health insurance providers have contributed to the fact that insurers agreed to include HIV and AIDS cover in the health package offered to the NGOs participating in the SAN! initiative. At this moment the premiums are still at the high side for most NGOs to offer to their employees and families.

In order to strengthen the efforts and build on what has been done so far, the project will continue to offer technical support and supervision to partner organization, and especially target those that have not developed workplace policies. Those with policies will be encouraged to work on implementation strategies that will enable them move from policy to practice. The identified three lead organizations will be involved in actively monitoring the development and implementation of workplace policy programs of partners in their respective region. The project will study the recommendations from operation research findings and consider what adjustments to make. The information data base system once in place will improve the level of information sharing and will promote learning at different levels.

## **1 Background**

This report presents the summary of the project activities carried out, the objectives, results, highlights the key observations, challenges noted during the June to December 2006 period and suggests the action plans for 2007.

## **2 Project goal and objectives**

The project continued to pursue the goal for which it was established- to contribute to the reduced spread and better management of HIV and AIDS in the workplaces among 76 participating organizations in Uganda through:

- Building capacity of organizations in increasing understanding, ownership and better practices in managing of HIV and AIDS in the workplace,
- Supporting participating organizations to develop and implement comprehensive HIV and AIDS policies,
- Working with the established local structures to enforce the linking and learning and guide the implementation process.

## **3 SAN! project partner organizations**

Seventy six (76) NGOs, all funded by one of the Dutch Co-Funding Agencies (HIVOS, Cordaid, Oxfam Novib and ICCO) are participating in the SAN! project activities. Though, the partner organisations are at different levels of participation and progress on workplace policy development and implementation due to varying circumstances (to be explored in the research), the project appreciated the commitment and enthusiasm shown so far.

## **4 Activities undertaken during July to December period**

The project undertook the following activities from June to December 2006:

### **4.1 Local project group committee meetings**

Three LPG meetings were held in the months of July, September and November. The objective of these meetings are to update the LPG (decision making organ at the country level) about how the project is being implemented, solicit approval of the project documents and provide an opportunity to carry out an assessment and give feedback on any aspect that require their input. In the meetings we discussed project progress, examined the work plan, wrote a concept proposal to the Global Fund, agreed on workplace policy review committee composition, participated in the development of budgeting tool, developed the project M&E framework and approved work plan and budget for 2007. The committee was joined by two new member staffs from Oxfam GB and Concern Worldwide who replaced the earlier representatives who changed jobs assignments. While there are cases where some committee members have not attended crucial meetings or been able to give timely feedback on project documents, in general there is continued commitment and support to the SAN! project. This gives a sense of ownership, an important pillar in the successful implementation of this project.

### **4.2 Selection of lead organization**

The two organizations selected to represent the Western and North-East region were FURA and Health Need Uganda respectively. The organization to take a lead for the Central Region will be selected by end of January 2007. Their selection was done by organizations themselves based on

willingness, centrality, connectivity and accessibility. The lead organizations are part of a structure that liaises with the coordination office to decentralize the support organizations in workplace policy development and implementation needs. Already, the lead organizations have selected their focal point persons who are participating in support supervision and review of the workplace policies activities. The focal point persons have participated in two and one support supervision activities for Western and North East regions respectively. They have partly been able to be part of the planning meeting and discussions with the participating organizations on workplace policy development issues and how they could be transformed into programs. The challenge though, is to equip the focal point persons with necessary skills and knowledge to enable them undertake the tasks expected of them especially on how to monitor the implementation process.

#### **4.3 Extending financial support to lead organizations**

Each of the two lead organizations received financial support amounting to 3,000,000 Uganda shilling from SAN! project. This facilitation was meant to support the organizations for the period from September to December 2006. In order to ensure clarity and accountability, a memorandum of understanding stipulating what is expected from each party was signed. The financial support covers expenses on communication to organizations within their region, transport, stationary and top up salary for staff undertaking this assignment. The lead organizations have written reports for activity and financial narrative regarding what happened during this period. The key concern presented by the lead organization is that the money advanced for their role did not enable them accomplish their role as they could have wished. The project coordinator needs to explain that this is a financial contribution to the organization that is playing a leading role. The organization should be encouraged to use some of the existing infrastructure in undertaking this additional role. The next quarter reimbursement will be given on presentation of action plan for that quarter.

#### **4.4 Support visits to lead organizations**

The PC visited FURA and HNU in the months of July and October respectively. The purpose was to interact with the focal point persons of the lead organizations, agree on how to work together, clarify on aspects that focal point persons need to emphasize during support supervision visits and draw up action plan for subsequent visits. The visit enabled the lead organization ask for clarifications particularly on how they will be facilitated and how will the new role benefit them. The PC explained that their focal point persons will benefit from capacity building and skill enhancement that will at the end benefit the organization. Secondly, playing the role of leading many organizations under the workplace initiative also improves the profile of the organization. The plans that were agreed upon have formed the basis for reporting and undertaking some activities.

#### **4.5 Follow-up visit to participating organizations**

A three days follow up visit to western region in December 2006 was carried out with the lead organization focal point person. The three organizations that were visited included Karambi Action for Rural Development, North Rwenzori Rural Community, Agriculture and Conservation link and Kabale Diocesan Health Office. The PC was able to carry out an on the spot assessment of activities and actions being undertaken by these organizations to address HIV and AIDS within their workplace. While some organizations mentioned that they are waiting for financial support from their respective funders to start workplace policy activities implementation, it was very impressive to see that there are those including; KALI and FURA who are already carrying out activities to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS within the workplace. They have taken practical steps such as establishing AIDS corner, making condoms available in washrooms and conducting internal sessions on HIV and AIDS information. This has resulted into increased staff awareness and openness to talk about HIV and AIDS. It is hoped that this will contribute to fighting stigma and discrimination in the workplace. However, it was noted that Kabale Diocesan Health department has not practically moved forward in developing workplace policy. While their staff attended a capacity building workshop that shared skills

on how to develop the workplace policy document, there is no draft in place and management feels that they need a go-ahead from the diocese authorities. It is hoped that this will be given after the diocese meeting to take place soon. It is suggested that organizations who have moved at a slow pace be identified and refresher training organized for them. Management of these organizations could be involved in identifying the factors prohibiting the policy development process.

Lastly, the visit provided an opportunity for capacity skills building to the lead organization focal point person. She was able to participate in the visits to organizations and see how technical support and supervision can be offered and the key issues addressed (display of IEC materials, feedback on the WPP document, meeting heads of organizations) given

#### **4.6 Strengthening capacity for workplace policy development**

A two days workshop was held for 24 organizations in the central region. The aim was to develop skills for focal point persons in each organization to develop comprehensive HIV and AIDS workplace policies. The 10 organizations that had already developed draft policies were requested to share their experiences on the process they went through to have the draft in place and challenges encountered. This help to foster learning and improve on networking and sharing skills among participants. Some of the challenges mentioned were; little staff involvement in the workplace policy development process, budgeting and identifying appropriate activities for workplace policy and programs, convincing staff to attend internal HIV and AIDS sessions and resources for initial costs for workplace policy development consultations. The focal point persons were encouraged to always involve staff in the policy development process and to request the coordination office for further technical assistance on how to handle staff and leadership involvement. The health insurance providers like Micro Care Ltd made a presentation on health scheme services they provide, costs involved and willingness to include HIV and AIDS treatment and support services as part of health package they provide. These Experiences and knowledge is hoped to enable focal point persons in reflecting on their organizations' commitments and work out a plan on how to develop workplace policy guidelines.

#### **4.7 Workplace policy review meetings**

Three review meetings were held and 36 workplace policies reviewed by the project policy review committee. The committee has nine members including; the project coordinator, two members of the LPG, member of the PWHLA network, Federation of Uganda Employers and HIV and AIDS officer of the ILO. The workplace policy review is based on developed guidelines that have also been shared with all the participating organization. The guidelines help the committee to identify areas that require focus and emphasis. The feed back of the review meeting is sent to individual organizations to enable them reflect and adjust their policies appropriately. This process is very helpful and ensures quality of the individual organization policy. The key issues that were noted included; inclusion of external mainstreaming activities in the work plans and budgets, lack of staff involvement in policy formulation, relating the ILO code of practice to organizations' policy commitments and consideration for staff dependants. The project coordinator needs to follow up the feedback from the review committee together with the focal point persons in the lead organizations.

#### **4.8 Networking with other development partners**

The project with support from SAN! Netherlands continued to share the progress with development partners including DFID, UNASO, ILO, SNV, Actionaid, TASO, Dutch Embassy and other organization in the country. The objective is to identify the technical support and lobby for the inclusion of workplace policy issues in the development agenda and call upon these organizations to lobby for financial resources for workplace policy activities. Some organizations have shown interest in sharing their skills and IEC materials with the project. Others, for example, Federation of Uganda Employers have been the main facilitator together with the project coordinator at the capacity building workshops, and the ILO has offered technical support to the policy review committee that has twice reviewed the policies sent to the SAN project. The SAN! project has also been invited to participate in civil society

meetings organized by network of PLHAs and Federation of Uganda Employers.

#### **4.9 Resource mobilization efforts**

In June 2006, the LPG on behalf of the participating organizations responded to a call for concept proposals to access the Global Fund in Uganda. Though, Uganda did not succeed in the round six application, but this attempt showed that the LPG can be instrumental in identifying and lobbying for access to resources to further support workplace policies at the country level. These efforts will continue next year when the civil society basket funding is established.

#### **4.10 Joint Oxfam HIV and AIDS mainstreaming regional meeting**

The project coordinator attended the JOHMET meeting in Kigali- Rwanda as a member of the regional team. The main purpose was to develop an M&E for the joint Oxfam International HIV and AIDS program for 2006 to 2010. Key outcome was agreeing on indicators to measure and how the program could be extended to the horn of Africa. The next meeting for JOHMET will be in Uganda in April 2007 and focus on how to use the M&E framework to follow up the programs in different country programs. This would also be a learning experience for SAN! project on how to use the project M&E that has been developed

#### **4.11 Applied research component**

The first phase of applied research component is to be finalized by end of December 2006. The key activities included building on main issues generated by baseline survey, carried out further in-depth interviews with staff and management and conducting case studies among selected organizations. The case studies involved 16 participating organizations. The project coordinator participated in some of the field visits when case studies and interview were being conducted. The end of the first phase report will contain recommendations that will help the project implementation process.

#### **4.12 Development of the information database system**

Two consultants; one in Uganda and another in Netherlands have been identified and they have commenced on this assignment following the signing of contact. This is a very important component because it will enable the project improve on information sharing mechanisms at different project levels and keeping of data will be improved.

#### **4.13 The International AIDS Conference in Toronto**

The project coordinator attended the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto in August 2006. The conference covered a number of program activities presented in plenary sessions, poster discussions, poster exhibitions, skills building workshops and satellite meetings. SAN! Netherlands organized two activities including; poster presentation and a satellite meeting. One of our LPG members presented during the satellite session. The presentations generated interest among the donors and NGOs on how best they can use these guidelines to open dialogue in their own situation. This was one way to contribute to the process of lobbying donors at the conference to reflect about their position on supporting organizations that request to start workplace policy programs. Some of the issues that emerged from the conference and could be relevant to the project were; recognition of linking treatment to prevention efforts, greater involvement of people living with HIV and AIDS in program interventions, fighting stigma and discrimination in work places and nutrition support in HIV and AIDS management.

#### **4.14 Discussion with Health Insurance Providers**

During this period, the SAN! project coordinator together with SAN! Netherlands project coordinator

had various discussions with three companies including; Micro Care Uganda Ltd, IAA and AAR on how best they can provide health cover to the SAN! partner organizations participating in the project. The main focus was on how to provide a cover that includes HIV and AIDS treatment at a low premium given the numbers. All the three companies have written their proposals and are willing to provide health cover that includes; ARVs, VCT, staff information sharing and sensitization, inpatient and outpatient care. However, the project has noted that the costs quoted ranging from US \$ 120-160 per person annually is still high side. The plan to continue the negotiations and based on the big numbers, it is hoped that it may come down to US \$ 90.

#### **4.15 Monitoring and evaluation framework**

The process for developing a monitoring and evaluation framework document has been going on, and working draft was completed in December. The process involved the LPG committee, project coordinator, SAN! Netherlands, participating organizations and external resource person. The M&E draft can be helpful in its current form to guide the implementation process, the final version need to be agreed upon with SAN! Netherlands.

#### **4.16 Participation in development of budgeting tool**

It was noted that participating organizations were finding difficulties in developing quality and agreeable budgets for the implementation of workplace policy programs. In order to address this problem and improve competences in this area, the development of a budgeting tool was initiated by SAN! Netherlands. A consultation workshop was organized in November in Uganda to enable the researcher Sue Holden (Independent Consultant) to generate ideas on how to develop this document that would guide organizations, workplace policy review committee and project officers in drafting and judging budgets. It was attended by members of LPG, focal point persons from the two lead agencies, program officers from Cordaid and Hivos, project coordinator, SAN! Netherlands, applied research team and few invited members of participating organizations. Participants were able to contribute to questions that an organization should ask when drafting a workplace policy program, contents of the budget, key elements not to ignore while budgeting, costs that organizations can meet on their own and the need for coordination and service referrals on VCT and ART.

#### **4.17 Linkage with the SAN! India project**

The project coordinator participated in the India workshop that set pace for the India SAN! project. The SAN! project Uganda experience, achievements and lessons learnt were shared and this was very helpful for the participants to see what structure they can use and what they need to avoid. The outcomes were that a local project group was formed, terms of reference made for project coordinator and host organization. Sharing the SAN! project experience is a form of lobby and advocacy for workplace policies.

#### **4.18 Planned project activities that were not undertaken**

During this period, there were some activities that were planned, but were not implemented due to time constraint and other considerations. Some of these activities are educating participating organizations about Good Donorship Guidelines, finalizing the strategic project document, capacity building for lead organizations and their focal point persons and finalizing on a comparison fact sheet on health insurance packages and premiums offered by the three Health Insurance Providers to be distributed among participating organisations.

## **5 Plans for the year 2007**

The project implementation will proceed as per work plan. The interventions are geared towards developing the workplace policies and ensuring that they are translated into programs. Next year, the project will focus on continued capacity building and technical support (visits) including the organizations that are moving slowly, technical support and monitoring visits, policy documents review meetings, strengthening the established decentralised support structures, implementation of information data base, active promotion of VCT, offer a directory on HIV and AIDS related services available in the country and networking with national stakeholders and development partners.

### **Key observations**

- Discussions need to be concluded especially on the premium offer to enable organizations choose which option to undertake for HIV and AIDS cover for staff and their dependants. The comparison fact sheet with the package and premiums needs to be finalized and distributed amongst participating organizations.
- There is too little understanding of Good Donorship Guidelines. The use needs to be stimulated by project coordinator when developing workplace policies programs by the organizations.
- Focal point persons of the lead organizations need training on the technical aspects of developing and implementation of workplace policies to be able to carry out support-supervision visits to participating organizations in the region
- Lack of capacity to budget for workplace policies has slowed down the pace for completing the development and implementation of workplace policies programs.
- The local structure continued to give the project guidance and creates local ownership and involvement in SAN! initiative.
- The project M&E framework has formed the basis for implementation and follow up plans.
- The LPG can be involved and take an upper hand not only in identifying and lobbying for accessing resources at the national level, but to ensure that workplace policies and programs become priority areas.
- The changes of jobs for the focal point persons in some organizations continue to affect the project progress.

## **6 Conclusions**

The interest of organization and the leadership of management to participate in the HIV and AIDS workplace activities is a resource to project implementation. The process takes time , but has enabled the development of various local structures, ownership, guiding documents and positive confidence that will propel the development and implementation of workplace policies and programs. Already, the need to address HIV and AIDS at the workplace has been identified as one of the priority issues in the National Strategic Framework and this will help to boost the advocacy plans for workplace policy programs. The year 2007 will focus on finalizing the development of workplace policies and stimulate participating organizations to come up with visible implementation or action plans integrated into their regular financial cycle with their respective donors.