



SAN/OI Project on Managing HIV/AIDS in the Workplace

Report for the Period June-December 2005

By

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1.0 Executive Summary

This half-year report highlights the project activities undertaken since its inception in June 2005 as well as the opportunities, challenges observed and lessons learnt. The project initiated by STOP AIDS NOW! and Oxfam International works with their counterpart partners in Uganda has generated interest not only to these organizations, but other development partners as well. The project priority is to address HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue among participating organizations with a mission of *“working together towards a world without AIDS”*. The project recognises that HIV and AIDS negatively impacts on all forms of organisations and institutions and this results into staff absenteeism due to illness, attending funerals and caring for sick family members, which ultimately affect productivity.

Since June 2005, the project has been able to accomplish some of the planned activities including; successful meetings for strategic partners and sensitization workshops for directors, establishing the LPG and the coordination office, operation research process and launching the project. In addition, the project coordinator has been involved in advocacy and networking activities including; attending meetings and workshops organised by development partners as well as international conferences on HIV and AIDS. The willingness by organizations to participate in this initiative is very encouraging. Already some organizations that did not have workplace policies have reported their readiness to start on the process and have requested for technical support. The private sector, especially the profit making organizations have already embraced the idea of addressing HIV and AIDS in the workplaces, which could be related to the sensitization initiatives the project has done so far. This is an opportunity that the SAN/OI project should exploit for networking in light of creating a world without AIDS. The project, which is hosted by CORD- HASAP is supported and guided by the Local Project Group whose efforts need to be applauded. So far, there are some noticeable outcomes that can be mentioned including; willingness of many organization to participate in this initiative and some organizations that did not have policies have reported their readiness to start and the project work has attracted the interest of other organization including health care providers who have contacted the project for possible areas of collaboration.

However, not all organizations are on board as earlier expected. We have noticed the failure of some of attend to attend the project meeting and activities. The next phase will see the project embark on the baseline survey to have the basis on which the project will be implemented. The focus will also be on ensuring that organizations start the process of developing workplace policies and srat on their implementation. This process is expected to be arguemented by the planned operation research that will inform the project.

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Acronyms

ACORD	-	Agency for Cooperation and in Development
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMICCALL	-	The Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on
HIV/AIDS in Africa		
ARVs	-	Antiretroviral
ASO	-	AIDS Service Organizations
CDRN	-	Community Development Resource Network
CSOs	-	Civil Society Organizations
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
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
PLWHA	-	People Living With HIV/AIDS
SAN	-	STOP AIDS NOW!
TOR	-	Terms of Reference
UAC	-	Uganda AIDS Commission
UN	-	United Nations
VCT	-	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
GIPA	-	Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS
TTP	-	Tripartite Training Program
UCS	-	Uganda Catholic Secretariat

1.0: Introduction and Context

In recognition of HIV/AIDS as a major workplace issue, development partners STOP AIDS NOW! and Oxfam International, undertook an initiatives with their counterpart partners in Uganda and prioritized to address HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue. SAN! is a partnership between four Dutch Co- funding non governmental organisations – Hivos, ICCO, Memisa (Cordaid) and Novib (Oxfam), and an AIDS specific organization called Aids Fund established in 2000. The mission of this partnership is “*working together towards a world without AIDS*”. Oxfam International (OI) is a confederation of 12 International NGOs, working together with the mission of reducing poverty and social economic injustices. Oxfam GB and Novib are the two Oxfam affiliates working in Uganda. This project was initiated in June 2005 through a series of workshops that brought together over 60 SAN and OI Counter part organizations to discuss the modalities of managing HIV/AIDS in the Workplace with the aim of facilitating them develop and implement comprehensive workplace policies. This report therefore presents the activities, outcomes and challenges that were encountered during the six-month transitional project period.

1.1 HIV/AIDS as a Workplace Issue

HIV/AIDS negatively impacts on all forms of organisations and institutions (profit and non-profit) and this may manifests in multiple ways including: staff absenteeism due to illness, attending funerals and caring for sick family members. Employees’ absence from workplaces poses risks of loss of personnel working hours and leads to low productivity. In addition, staffs whose colleagues are infected get equally affected. They have to handle the undone work and feel demoralised by the loss of their colleagues. In the event of one or more staff being chronically ill or dying from AIDS related illnesses, there are risks of increased personnel costs: medical bills, costs related to replacement of personnel and the burial/funeral expenses. This puts strain on limited organizational resources, especially in low-income countries. The loss of trained and experienced personnel means that workplaces face loss of tacit knowledge.

Owing to lack of policies on HIV/AIDS at the workplace, staff living with HIV/AIDS potentially face discrimination and stigma. Some employees suspected of being HIV positive by employers risk being denied promotion, training opportunities and health insurance benefits. Some employers force early retirement and retrenchment to staff living with HIV/AIDS. There is evidence that discrimination and stigmatisation of persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA) deters their access to care and support. Therefore, establishing HIV/AIDS workplace policies in Uganda is thus seen as a timely response to the already demanding situation.

1.2 Project Goal and Objectives

The project goal is to contribute to the reduced spread and better management of HIV/AIDS in the workplaces among participating organizations in Uganda.

The specific objectives are to;

- Build capacity of organizations in increasing understanding, ownership and better practices in managing of HIV/AIDS in the workplace
- Support the participating organizations to develop and implement comprehensive HIV/AIDS policies
- Develop a local structures to enforce the linking and learning and scale up of managing HIV/AIDS in the workplace
- Establish collaboration at a country level in regard to resource mobilization, information sharing and advocacy on key HIV/AIDS workplace policy issues

2.0: Activity Report

Between June- December 2005, the project has been able to accomplish the following activities including;

2.1 Strategic partners meeting

In June 2005, a two days meeting for strategic partners of STOP AIDS NOW! and Oxfam International was held at Muyenga Club. These were partners of Cordaid, Novib, ICCO and HIVOS, together with OI. Thirteen participants representing partners including ACORD, Oxfam GB, TTP, CDRN, UCS, Concern, Health Need Uganda and Oxfam internal attended the meeting. The objective was to create harmony and alignment among the strategic partners of SAN/OI for HIV and AIDS at the workplace initiative. The meeting was able to come up with the terms of reference for the LPG and project coordinator, developed a harmonised position on how to implement the project and agreed on the action plan for the project.

2.2 Sensitization workshop for organizations

In June 2006 three separate workshops each for one-day were organised by ACORD on behalf of SAN/OI project. Representatives of organizations implementing projects funded by SAN partners and OI attended the workshops. The purpose of the meetings was to inform the partners about the initiative on managing HIV/AIDS in the workplace and request their participation in the project. Sixty-three participants attended representing 50 organizations. Participants were sensitized on the basic ingredients of how to formulate a policy for HIV and AIDS at the workplace.

2.3. Recruitment and induction exercise for project coordinator

The LPG on behalf of SAN project mandated ACORD to take a lead in the recruitment of the project coordinator. The recruitment process was duly followed as earlier stated in the terms of reference for the coordinator. The project coordinator was recruited by end of September 2005 and the office is hosted by ACORD.

It was agreed that the PC undergoes an induction exercise to acquaint him with the nature and operations of the project work. The visits were planned to cover the LPG member organizations and selected development partners that focus on health care insurance, social research and capacity

building institutions. The organizations visited included: *ACORD-HASAP*, Uganda Catholic Secretariat, TTP, Concern World wide, Community Development Resource Network, Health Needs Uganda and Oxfam International. Other participating organizations visited outside Kampala were; Teso AIDS project (TAP), Vision Teso Rural Development, COU Soroti diocese, COU Teso diocese planning and development and Soroti Catholic diocese.

During the visits, it was observed that the host organization (*ACORD HASAP*) is very supportive to the project and should be commended for this. Apart from taking a lead in project activities prior the recruitment of the PC, they *ACORD* has continued to offer guidance in addition to administrative responsibilities. There are other organizations with skills and expertise that could be useful to the project. For instance, TTP is already helping to build capacity on workplace policy development for some participating organisations. Organizations with long experience in internal HIV/AIDS mainstreaming and with developed workplace policies (e.g. Concern, *ACORD*, Oxfam BG) should be involved in sharing experiences with other organizations. For instance, Oxfam International has an HIV/AIDS policy in place and it is fully operational. SAN/OI project needs to learn the process they have gone through and the tools they use to monitor, review and evaluate the policy implementation process. SAN/OI project should utilise the skills already existing among the participating organizations. Even organizations that do not have a workplace policy on HIV/AIDS recognise the need to attend to HIV/AIDS among the staff.

2.4 Building partnerships and networks

In order to share the project updates, plans and identify future opportunities for net working, the PC and project officer-SAN visited other development partners. These included; Federation of Uganda employers, Micro care Uganda, UNAIDS, The Emerging Markets Group, Makerere University Institute of Social Research and The Netherlands Embassy. The SAN/OI project is financed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. It was important to establish a link with the embassy here in Uganda since it represents the interests of the Netherlands Government. Already the discussions we held with some of these organizations have yielded results. For instance, FUE with support from the global fund has already met costs for the sensitization workshop on HIV/AIDS workplace policy and peer education. Also, Micro Care which is in the process of developing an HIV/AIDS insurance cover costing model based on their experience agreed to share with the SAN project some of their findings once the study is completed. UNAIDS shared with the SAN project the HIV/AIDS competence tool they development and gave reference to other development partners who could be useful contact for support. Some of these organizations like SNV and UNASO, have experience of working on HIV/AIDS work-based programs involving workplace policy formulation and implementation.

2.5 Conference for the directors

This was a one day consultative follow up workshop of the stakeholders on critical issues of Managing HIV/AIDS at the workplace Initiative held on the 8th September 2005 at Hotel Africana, Kampala,

Uganda. It was attended by representatives of SAN, OI, Director General - Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) and members of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from all over the country. The workshop objectives were: to create an understanding about the rationale of having a HIV/AIDS workplace policy, learn about the basic ingredients on developing and implementing an HIV/AIDS workplace policy, strengthen commitment from executives and board members towards the SAN/OI Managing HIV/AIDS at the Workplace Initiative and explore strategic linkages between SAN and partner organizations and other stakeholders (National Government, Local Government, PLWHA organizations, AIDS Service Organization (ASO), Federation of employers, Private sector and UN Agencies. The outcome of the conference were that the directors or representatives of participating organizations reaffirmed their commitment to the project objectives and were willing to continue participating in the subsequent activities.

2.5 Monthly LPG meetings

Five LPG meetings, all held at Muyenga club- Kampala were organized between June- December 2005. The LPG has a mandate to review and develop policy guidelines and reports written by the project coordinator. During this period, the LPG has been very instrumental in reviewing the following aspects including:

- The Log frame; Members were able to review the draft log frame for the project and it is now ready for use. This was done during the monthly meetings and corrections made by the PC
- Project activity plan; the LPG came up with the activity plan for the transitional period, and later approved the January-June 2006 work plan.
- Approved the request by the Federation of Uganda Employers to offer a training on workplace policies and peer education for the SAN/OI project participating organisations. This was very useful since peer education is a communication strategy that provides important support to staff.
- Agreed on the terms of reference for baseline survey as presented by the project Coordinator. Members emphasized a need to look at the findings of the baseline and consider how to plan the peer education model. The baseline results may affect the decision as to whether this should be institutional or drawn from the organization staff.
- Project Document; the LPG and the PC took a central role in coming up with the draft project document. This was very important to ensure that the right quality work is produced since they know the project better than a hired consultant.

2.5 Joint Oxfam HIV/AIDS mainstreaming regional meeting

The project coordinator attended the Regional Oxfam HIV/AIDS mainstreaming workshop for East and Central Africa in Bujumbura. The three days meeting culminated into the SAN/OI project being a member of Joint Oxfam HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming Team affiliate. It was an opportunity to meet the Oxfam country coordinators and affiliates from Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Congo. The information shared focused on HIV/AIDS internal mainstreaming strategies, advocacy and lobby techniques, fighting stigma and discrimination in the workplace and strategies for establishing the

regional link to address the emerging problems resulting from HIV/AIDS. This is very relevant to the SAN project since reduction of stigma and discrimination in the workplace is a major focus.

2.6 Sensitization workshop on workplace policy and peer education

The SAN/OI Project coordination office organized a one-day training workshop at Nobview Hotel Ntinda on the 4th October 2005. The workshop focused on HIV and AIDS workplace policy development and peer education. It was attended by twenty-five participating organizations in Kampala and Wakiso district. The main objective was to sensitise participants about HIV/AIDS and its impact on the workplace, and let them recognise the importance of peer education in the fight against HIV and AIDS at their places of work.

The main training focus was on HIV/AIDS internal mainstreaming - sensitizing on the need for peer education and how to formulate workplace policies to address HIV and AIDS. Because of support from the Global fund, FUE was able to avail trainers, financial logistics and training materials for the one-day workshop. This training arrangement came as a result of a request by SAN/OI project coordinator to FUE to offer capacity building to the SAN/OI participating organizations. Some of the lessons learnt were that it is possible to look out for such partnership in capacity building for peer education and workplace policy training. The project coordinator will continue to explore such opportunities for local fundraising in to add to the project budget in the coming implementation phase.

2.7 Applied research component

A researcher from Makerere Institute of Social Research was contacted and visited to discuss the modalities of how to work as a consultant on the process of proposal write up. The consultant has completed the proposal write up assignment and it has been agreed by STOP AIDS NOW to proceed with preparations of the next implementation phase. The applied research will run along the project on workplace policy development and the results will help to inform the project.

2.8 Project launching

The project was officially launched on 7th November 2005 at Hotel Africana.. This was preceded by a series of workshops, conferences, meetings and consultations that brought together directors and staff of partner organizations to discuss the modalities of managing HIV/AIDS in the Workplace and how the initiative could be operationalized. The guest of honour was Mr. Claudius Mary Olwenyi (Director of Labour and Industrial Relations) who represented the Minister of Gender, Labor and Social Development. Others in attendance included; the Director of SAN, SAN Project Officer, the UNAIDS Country Coordinator and representatives from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Uganda, Uganda AIDS Commission, members of participating organizations, development partners, the media, students of Makerere University and general public.

The guest of honour pointed out that no doubt HIV/AIDS has had devastating impact on organizations both private and public. Organizations have lost staff to HIV/AIDS and many more continue to get

infected. The timely intervention is in line with the national HIV/AIDS policy plan on openness. He hoped that the launch of this initiative has contributed to breaking the silence against HIV/AIDS. The director-STOP AIDS NOW who reiterated the commitment to supporting this initiative highlighted the similar view.

Other key launching activities included: procession lead by the Uganda Police Band with marchers dressed in T-shirts, caps and carrying banners and placards with messages focusing on care and support to employees living with HIV/AIDS, fighting stigma and discrimination in the work place and promoting access to treatment for staff living with HIV and AIDS. There was also entertainment by Cultural Group; Nkwazi Performers (a local cultural group based in Kampala) who called upon the participants to join hands and fight stigma and discrimination at the workplace and provide treatment to the staff living with HIV and AIDS.

2.8 The 14th ICASA conference

The project coordinator together with the SAN project officer attended the ICASA conference in Nigeria, and participated in the poster presentation. The presentation highlighted the project process and the lessons learnt. It captured the interest of a number of organizations who asked questions related to the process and challenges the project has experience so far. It was applauded as an all-involving initiative that focuses on addressing stigma and discrimination at place of work. This was an opportunity for project advocacy and sharing experiences with other development organizations involved in managing HIV and AIDS, which should be encouraged in other future conferences.

2.9 Good donorship guidelines meeting

The PC attended a good donorship guidelines meeting with the directors of SAN at Novib offices in the Netherlands. Good donorship is about the way in which the CFAs implement their relationship with the partner organizations in the south. It defines the role of the donor in times of HIV and AIDS in relation to the funding of development interventions. Good donorship is not only about financial aspects, but also about aspects of partnership and solidarity. The guidelines that were developed by the consultant are to be pre-tested in Uganda along side the project implementation phase. Therefore, this meeting made it possible for the PC to meet the project officers representing the Dutch Co-funding organizations. The key output was that the meeting resulted into the donors agreeing to sign the donorship guidelines and pledged their commitment to fully support the HIV and AIDS workplace policies of the SAN/OI participating organizations.

2.10 Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders Workshop

The SAN/OI project was invited to participate in the two days workshop on HIV and AIDS for the alliance of mayors and municipal leaders in Africa. The workshop that attracted 50 participants from different districts of Uganda, enabled the PC to get a picture of the interest and concern the management of HIV and AIDS in the workplace has generated. There are a number of aspects that SAN project can share with the AMICAL project.

3.0: Project Outcomes

Though the report is for the transitional period, there are some noticeable outcomes that need to be mentioned. The number of organizations that are willing to participate in this initiative is very encouraging and so far 68 organizations are on board. Organizations that did not have any policies in place have reported their readiness to start on the process and some have already forwarded their policies to the coordination office for action. There are plans to have a committee to review these policies and give a feed back to organizations on what to do. However, this is awaiting the finalization of the good donorship guidelines that will provide further clarification on this process.

The debate about a need for HIV and AIDS workplace policies has attracted other organizations outside the initiative especially the health insurance companies like Micro Care to recognise the need to think about possible ways on how to cost HIV and AIDS treatment. Some other health care providers (e.g. AAR) has contacted the coordination office inquiring the possibility of working on the joint effort to provide treatment for staff living with HIV and AIDS among the partner organizations. Of course this will be looked at after the good donorship guidelines are in place and organizations have already internalised this process.

Capacity building organizations like FUE have already shown interest in supporting the SAN peer education training efforts and have requested that our organizations be encouraged to buy membership. Other organizations have started ore are willing to share information and skills on how to develop workplace policies that are organization specific. Also, the good donor guidelines developed and accepted by the donors show the support available for managing HIV/AIDS in the workplace. However, some organizations are worried that they may not have the technical competences to develop the workplace policies. This is a basis for the project intervention in capacity building among individual organizations.

3.1 Lessons Learnt

It has been observed that some of the participating organizations are implementing plans to respond to HIV/AIDS in the Workplace, though are at different levels of operation. it is observed that managing HIV/AIDS in the workplace is a process that covers policy development, ensuring learning among staff and implementation. Secondly, workplace policies are not necessarily costly. Organizations need to establish a supportive environment to staff and urgently involve top management in policy formulation and implementation. In Uganda, there is already an opportunity where the health insurance providers have agreed to include HIV/AIDS treatment in the package they provide. However, there is generally lack of ARV treatment literacy..

3.2: Financial Information

The total budget of UG Shs. 208,933,804 was approved to run activities for the transitional phase. Out of the total budget, 141,245,892/= was spent, with the remaining balance of 67,687,912/= . While it is noted that the project spent less than what was budgeted on all activities, it should be noted that

some major activities like baseline survey and training were not conducted during this phase (Refer to the budget report) as earlier planned. The project wishes to acknowledge and thank the SAN co-funding agencies in the Netherlands and OI for the financial support extended to the project during this first phase. The audited books of accounts for this phase are now available and the budget for the next phase total to UG SHS 225,870,904.

4.0: Conclusion

In view of the momentum the project has generated and activities accomplished so far, the implementation process is progressing well. The appeal and reception the project has received should be an opportunity to build future steps for project intervention through advocacy and networking. The observations so far are that there is willingness among the local project group organizations and development partners to support the SAN/OI project. Secondly, developing and implementing comprehensive workplace policies for organizations is possible and can best be achieved through building effective collaboration and networking among actors. Although this ultimately pays off for all parties involved, the process calls for transparency and accountability among the key players involved.

Considering the fact that organizations consider HIV/AIDS as a serious workplace issue and that majority do not have written and operational policies, there is need to seek for and share our experience with other development partners including ILO and UNAIDS during the implementation process. Also, since the members seconded to the LPG committee are not necessarily the directors of their organizations, there is need to plan quarterly update meetings with the directors and share the project progress. This would minimize the likely fears that at some point, the supervisors may not appreciate the time their staff spends on the SAN/OI project work. The next phase will see the project embark on the baseline survey to have the basis on which the project will be implemented.