

**Twenty years of HIV/AIDS in the world:**

**Evolution Of The Epidemic And Response In Uganda**

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## **Evolution of the epidemic**

- 1982 First AIDS cases identified in Uganda
- 1988 A National Sero-survey conducted to assess the magnitude of the epidemic among the adult population. The average prevalence rate was at 9%.
- 1992 Peak of infections in hard hit areas with some urban sites registering a prevalence rate of over 30%
- 1995 Uganda announces confirmed declining HIV prevalence trends beginning 1992
- 2000 The average national prevalence rates among the adult population noted to have declined from around 18.5% in 1995, to 14.7% in 1997, 9.5% in 1998 to 8.3% at the end of 1999.
- 2001
- An estimated cumulative total of 2.2 m people have been infected with HIV since its onset in the country.
  - About 800,000 people are estimated to have died of AIDS since the onset
  - 1.4m people are currently estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS
  - Over 1.7 million children have been orphaned by AIDS.

## **Highlights of key events and activities**

- 1982 Uganda medical doctors identify first AIDS cases on the shores of Lake Victoria in Rakai district, Southern Uganda
- 1982-86 The epidemic largely handled by the health sector with spontaneous community initiatives to care for the infected and affected
- 1986 Uganda's Health Minister of the new NRM government announces the existence of HIV/AIDS in Uganda during the World Health Assembly in Geneva. This marked the beginning of political

- openness about the epidemic that created a conducive environment for mass campaigns spearheaded by President Y K Museveni
- 1986 The first AIDS Control Programme established in the Ministry of Health. Priority focused on safe blood, prevention of HIV infection in health care settings, information, education and communication. This marked the first government-structured effort to address the epidemic
- 1987 An AIDS Control Programme established in the Ministry of Defence to respond to the special need in the armed forces
- 1987-91 Consultations on the multisectoral approach to the control of AIDS. The government recognized that the impact of the epidemic went beyond the health sector, thus the need to plan and implement relevant activities in other sectors
- 1987 Establishment of The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) to provide much needed psychosocial support for the infected and affected
- 1990 Formation of the AIDS Information Centre (AIC) for voluntary testing and counselling services.
- 1992 The Government adopts the Multisectoral Approach to the Control of AIDS (MACA) as a policy and strategy for responding to the epidemic
- 1992 The Uganda AIDS Commission is established by Act of Parliament to coordinate the multisectoral efforts so as to unify the response
- 1993 UAC leads and coordinates the development of the first multisectoral National Operational Plan (NOP) for HIV/AIDS/STD Activities 1994-1998. This reflected the priority needs and the sectors to take the lead in addressing the epidemic
- 1994 -95 More AIDS Control Programme Units are established in the Ministries of Gender, Education, Agriculture, Internal Affairs

(Police and Prisons), Justice, Finance, Public Service and Local Government

- 1994 Government borrows a \$75m soft loan from the World Bank to fight the epidemic. This was executed by the Ministry of Health through the Sexually Transmitted Infections Project (STIP) 1995-2000
- 1995 Uganda successfully hosts and organizes the International Conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa (ICASA). Uganda announces the observed declining trends in HIV prevalence
- 1996 Uganda receives the first UNAIDS Country Programme Adviser (CPA)
- 1996 The country begins Vaccine trials after thorough consultations with all key stakeholders.
- 1997 Participation in the study for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV using anti-retroviral drugs
- 1997 A Comprehensive review of HIV/AIDS activities in Uganda is conducted by partners, supported by UNAIDS, to assess coordination and implementation of HIV/AIDS activities
- 1997 Uganda observes a shift from the traditional observance of World AIDS Day (WAD) to the annual World AIDS Campaign (WAC) which culminates into WAD of every year. WAC has since become a major advocacy activity in the country.
- 1997 Development of the 1998-2002 National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV/AIDS Activities with consensus from partners from various sectors at national and district levels.
- 1997 Initial research on the District Response Initiative (DRI) in Kabarole District. The DRI concept and framework has since been developed and agreed on by partners. Implementation began 2001.
- 1998 An excellence prize awarded to Uganda for results obtained in combating STDs and AIDS by the Society of AIDS in Africa, the

African Union Against Sexually Transmitted Infections and Bristol-Myers Squibb

- 1998 Establishment of the Drug Access Initiative to advocate for reduced prices for Anti Retroviral (ARV) drugs and support the establishment of proper infrastructure for administering these drugs
- 2000 Revision of the 1998-2002 NSF and development of the 2000/1-2005/6 NSF which puts the HIV/AIDS problems into the broader context of national development goals.
- 2000 Recognizing the impact of HIV/AIDS on development, the Government embarked on the process of mainstreaming HIV/AIDS issues in the country's Poverty Eradication Action Plan while targeting integration in the government sector budgeting exercise
- 2000 The UNAIDS Executive Director, Dr Peter Piot pays a visit to Uganda in recognition of the excellent work undertaken by the country in response to HIV/AIDS
- 2001 Accomplishment of the preparation of the Uganda AIDS Control Project prepared under the aegis of Multi-country AIDS Project (MAP) of the World Bank. A \$50m loan has been secured to support HIV/AIDS activities in all sectors at national, district and community levels

Uganda's efforts against HIV/AIDS have been financially and materially supported by the government and several development partners. These include: the UNAIDS Secretariat and its cosponsors particularly UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNFPA; USAID, European Union, DFID, DANIDA, SIDA, the French Government, the Japanese Government among others. Various international NGOs have also funded and implemented several programmes and activities.