

Isolated. There is still a challenge of people living with HIV/Aids not to be recruited into the police and army.

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Although the early days of HIV/Aids in Uganda saw a number of employees who suffered from the disease stigmatised while others lost their jobs, the situation has since changed with several government interventions.

Government has since come up with a policy intended to prevent discriminations of victims at their places of work, especially those in the private sector.

In 2012, the Ministry of East African Affairs came up with an HIV/Aids workplace policy requiring employers to among other things provide antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) as a means of providing patients a conducive working environment.

This, according to the ministry would help to avert the negative impact of the disease on the productivity of the employees as well as the loss of skilled labour that were already losing their jobs due to poor performance resulting from stigma.

"Sick leave shall be granted in accordance with the service regulations on recommendation of a medical doctor and allocation of lighter schedules may be granted for specified periods," the policy states in part.

The policy also directs employers against denying the victims opportunities in form of deployment or promotion based on their HIV/Aids status. This is in line with the principles of non-discrimination, confidentiality, and equal rights.

Other ministries and government agencies including, the Uganda Aids Commission, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Public Service, Uganda Association of People Living with HIV/Aids (NAFOPHANU) and Uganda Joint Clinical Research Centre were involved to ensure the effectiveness of the policy.

Other workers' associations have also come up with interventions to defend the rights of employees living with HIV/Aids and fight stigma at work places.

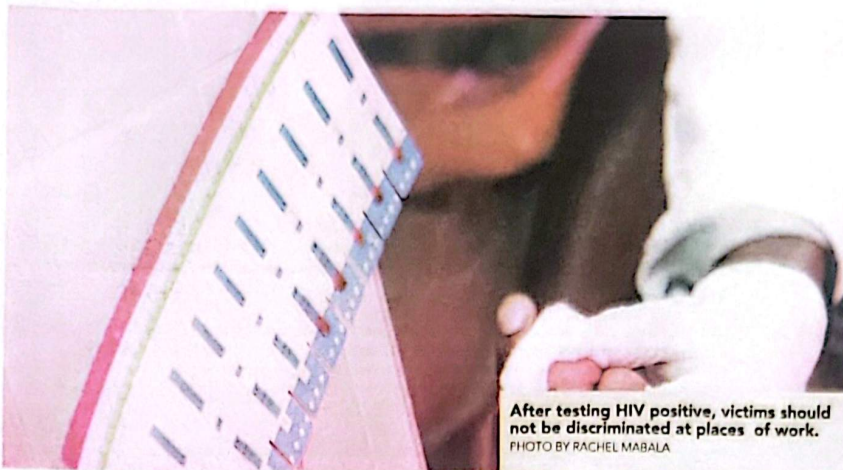
The Federation of Ugandan Employers (FUE) has also initiated various programmes intended to educate employers, especially those in the formal sectors about the best ways of treating HIV/Aids positive employees.

Mr George Tamale, the private sector advisor on HIV/Aids at FUE, says through holding sensitisation sessions with both employers and employees, they have been able to sensitise against stigma resulting from their status.

"We also help companies where we go to sensitise to implement such policies," Mr Tamale says, adding that the same sessions have been held with populations at fishing sites which are more exposed to the disease.

However, there is still a challenge of people living with HIV/Aids not to be recruited into the police and army contrary to the guidelines by national policy that all Ugandans are eligible for any job.

Fighting HIV stigma at workplace yielding tangible results



After testing HIV positive, victims should not be discriminated at places of work.
PHOTO BY RACHEL MABALA

The police and army have, however, defended themselves that the kind of training they undergo requires one who is physically fit whose life won't deteriorate due to the training.

They say, their trainings, are hectic and require a lot of energy.

To further stamp out stigma at work places, private sector organisations have been involved in funding the fight against HIV/Aids through the one dollar initiative, which was launched this year.

Spearheaded by the private sector alliance, the initiative intends to mobilise organisations and companies to join the struggle against the scourge and end it in 2030.

Under the initiative, an amount of not less than one dollar is collected from corporate bodies, business associations, and individuals, NGOs, embassies and foundations intends to establish sustainable contributions and reduce on donor funding.

The proprietors would then use the funds to provide, technology,

learning services, supplies and networks through the private sector to spur and influence resources as a

way of averting the perennial challenge of drug stock outs.

Fishermen and commercial prostitutes

Scientists from the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) in 2015 through a study dubbed the "Sexual networks in a fishing community and an urban cohort of women and men involved in multiple sexual relationships" revealed that the prevalence was still among the fishing communities in Uganda.

The study attributed the 29 per cent prevalence rate among the fishing communities to their lifestyle of having multiple partners among people in the fishing communities because they can die any time while they are on the lake.

As such, government has continued making several efforts to prioritise fishing communities and commercial in its different programmes that aim to end the HIV/Aids scourge as a move to curb its occurrence in the private sector.

Through partnerships with non-government organisations and other development partners, the Ministry of Health has initiated several outreaches campaigns on the use of condoms, safe male circumcision, testing and treating among the populations.

Similarly, government has also partnered with other development partners to roll out, the Moonlight HIV/Aids testing campaign to reach out to people with risky lifestyles and occupations such as the fishing community, long distance truck drivers, uniformed men and women, among others.



SPECTRUM UGANDA INITIATIVE INCORPORATED WORLD AIDS DAY-1ST -12-2017

As we celebrate this year's World Aids Day under the theme; "Reaching Men, Boys, Girls and Young Women to reduce new HIV infections" Spectrum Uganda Initiatives a non-governmental organization that advocates for human and health rights of sexual minorities and provides health services to key populations groups / communities in Uganda

Spectrum Uganda continues to support sexual minorities /Key populations HIV/AIDS programmes through awareness campaigns on social media platforms, health outreaches, dissemination of information and educative materials, online counseling, distribution of health consumables, orientation of health care service providers, trainings on attitude change to reduce stigma and discrimination of key populations, building strong partnerships, information on PEP and PREP, creating a strong and cohesive health referral system, follow up, nutritional support to HIV positive members to insure adherence on treatment.

Despite some legal, social, economic, cultural, religious challenges, Spectrum Uganda Initiatives Inc, reiterates its commitment to support the National HIV/AIDS programs to reduce new HIV infections in order to achieve the UNAIDS HIV epidemic targets of 90/ 90/ 90 by 2020.

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