HIV/AIDS KMCC

Strengthening Knowledge Management & Communications Capacity

# Policy Brief

## What must change in fishing communities to achieve Millennium Development Goal 6 on combatting HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases in Uganda?

Fishing in Uganda provides jobs and income for over one million people. Fishing landing sites are hubs of dense local and regional sexual networks which can accelerate the spread of HIV into the wider population. The gravity of the problem is demonstrated by Ministry of Health statistics (2012); Kalangala District has an HIV prevalence rate of 37.1% compared to the National prevalence of 7.3%.

There is a need for a much larger and more coordinated effort by a wide range of organisations and stakeholders to develop, resource and implement policies to reduce and counter the effects of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities, and to provide programmes and services. The National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan highlights the need for an aggressive scale up of proven prevention programs for most at risk populations (MARPs) including fishing communities.

Without policies to target individuals with programmes and services to counter HIV/AIDS fishing communities will continue to be hard-hit by the epidemic, with the suffering, loss of life and falling productivity this entails. Consequently, the economy will also miss an important and much needed opportunity for fisheries to contribute to rural economic growth and reduce poverty.

The HIV/AIDS Uganda Country Progress report 2013 recognizes the limited comprehensive programming for key populations and inadequate coverage of MARPs and other key populations with HIV prevention and care services.

## What needs to be addressed?

- Lack of a well-coordinated targeted government response
- Limited national data on fishing communities to inform effective HIV programming and policy
- Lack of standardised research methodologies countrywide implementation models vary, with limited fora to share best practices and/or lessons learned
- Low risk perception of the dangers of HIV among fishing communities
- Limited access to HIV services for fishing communities

## Recommended National Policy actions for the Central Government

- Provide leadership and coordination of HIV/AIDS programmes in fishing communities
- Develop a national framework to guide HIV prevention, care and treatment in fishing communities
- Allocate appropriate funding and resources to HIV services in fishing communities
- Clearly define what a 'fishing community' is
- Undertake a nationwide surveillance system/census that includes fishing communities, to collect data on the size, location and HIV prevalence within communities
- Agree on feasible national indicators and targets for reducing HIV in fishing communities
- Evaluate the effect of HIV prevention, care and treatment services on fishing communities

## Recommended policy actions for Local Government and Implementing Partners

- Take community-led approaches that enable fishing communities and local governments to develop context-specific programmes
- Harmonise all development programmes targeted at fishing communities
- Document programme activities in a format that allows comparison with other programmes
- Conduct regular targeted HIV prevention campaigns through appropriate communication channels
- Identify and develop champions within fishing communities for peer-to-peer education

## About KMCC

The Uganda HIV/AIDS Knowledge Management and Communications Capacity building initiative (KMCC) contributes quality knowledge to the HIV/AIDS sector through comprehensive knowledge syntheses and sharing of this information across all stakeholders. KMCC works with key stakeholders to demonstrate creative communication methods and to encourage a culture of transparency and collaborative working within the sector. KMCC provides best practice guidance and capacity building to partners for a more effective HIV/AIDs prevention response in Uganda. More information is available at www.kmcc.org.ug

Find out more about the KMCC's work with fishing communities

- Email us at: enquiries@kmcc.org.ug
- Visit our website: www.kmcc.org.ug
- Physical offices at: 91 Kiira Road, Bukoto, Kampala
- Telephone us on: +256 (0)312 202 939

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