



UGANDA STRATEGY FOR REDUCING THE IMPACT OF HIV AND AIDS ON FISHING COMMUNITIES

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES**

Why is there a need for a HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy in Uganda?

A situation analysis of the impacts of HIV and AIDS on fishing communities in Uganda was carried out in 2004 visiting 21 communities covering Lake Victoria, Lakes George & Edward, Lake Kyoga, Lake Albert and the Albert Nile. The study findings support international evidence of high prevalence rates in fishing communities (more than three times higher than the national average). The study also supports evidence that living and working conditions in these communities contribute to the spread of HIV. People cannot find the kinds of health and other support they need when they become ill.

Fishing communities are a 'hot-spot' for HIV and AIDS

- Many men and women in fishing communities are living alone, away from their families and social norms.
- Fishing is hard and dangerous work, and dominated by men. A traditional reward is to drink and have sex when they return.
- Fishers can be very mobile, moving between landing sites and lakes.
- Lack of savings culture and readily available, daily income.
- Women have limited livelihood opportunities and may resort to selling alcohol and sex.
- Fishing at night and redundancy during the day increases the sexual vulnerability of men and women.
- Living in clusters and isolated locations (e.g. islands and peninsulas) makes it difficult to access for basic service provision;
- Lack of safe water, latrines and health care make people vulnerable to illness.



Fisheries are important to the Ugandan economy

- Fishing communities are the foundation for an important sector of the national economy. Fisheries contribute over 6% to the GDP and some studies calculate the contribution to be as high as 12%.¹
- Fish are a major export commodity for Uganda, and earned \$105 million in 2004. The fisheries sector employs 700,000 people directly; and over 1.2 million households are totally or partially dependent on fishing and related services.
- The fisheries sector contributes significantly to district government through taxes.
- Fisheries have links with industry (fish processing, input manufacture), forestry (timber for boat construction, drying racks) and services (transport).
- Chronic illness and death destroys livelihoods and incomes, undermines the skills base in the fishing workforce, and reduces productivity. This is a threat to sustainable fisheries, poverty elimination and economic growth.

The fisheries sector is highly vulnerable to HIV and AIDS

- In many developing countries fishing communities have HIV prevalence rates which are five to ten times higher than those in the general population.²
- Women in fishing communities play important roles in fish processing and marketing activities. They also usually have responsibility for household food security, health and education expenses. They are particularly vulnerable to HIV and the impact of AIDS.
- The limited surveillance data shows HIV prevalence in fishing communities in Uganda is currently likely to be more than three times higher than the national average.
- 24% of fishers on Lake Albert were HIV-positive in 1992, compared to 4% in nearby agricultural villages.³
- In Kasenyi (Lake George), 81% of the few people who were able to access VCT⁴ in 2004 were found to be HIV-positive.⁵
- Recorded AIDS cases up until the end of 2002 show the highest number of cases are in Districts lying along the shore of Lake Victoria e.g. Masaka (10,507 cases), Mpigi (3,353 cases) and Jinja (2,159 cases).⁶

Access to HIV prevention and AIDS treatment services is limited

- Few of the 700 HIV/AIDS support services operate in fishing communities. A mapping study⁷ found, for example, that the district of Kalangala (Lake Victoria) consistently scored in the lowest ranges for services including condom distribution, VCT services, STI⁸ treatment, PMTCT⁹ services and provision of ARVs.¹⁰
- A study of 21 fishing communities in 2004¹¹ found that, depending on the district only 17% - 35% of communities had health centres. District hospitals were up to 67km away and could take 6 hours to reach.

Fishing communities are under-served by other services, increasing their poverty and vulnerability

- The PEAP calls for equitable provision of services. However, fishing communities are often remote, and poorly served by roads, education, health centres, electricity and safe water.
- None of the communities visited during the situation analysis on lakes Kyoga, George and Edward had access to safe drinking water (the national average is 55%). Only 20% of communities on all the lakes had access to improved sanitation compared to a national average of 79%, and frequent outbreaks of cholera and dysentery were reported.
- There is a lack of savings facilities in fishing communities. These could assist accumulation of assets and poverty alleviation.
- The overall picture is that, while there is variation, fishing communities have a lower quality of life than other livelihood groups. Their living conditions do not lead to a settled, secure and risk-averse existence, and HIV is more likely to spread in this kind of environment.

What is in the HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy?

The HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy was drafted in October 2004 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Department of Fisheries Resources (DFR). It followed a situation analysis undertaken in 2004 and stakeholder consultations.

The strategy is action-orientated, multi-sectoral and covers multi-stakeholder interests.

It covers three main areas:

1. Reducing HIV transmission in fishing communities as a direct response to the threat it poses to the productivity and sustainability of fisheries resources;
2. Mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector through prevention, provision of health care, social services, improved fisheries management and alternative livelihood options;
3. Ensuring a multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS including the provision of micro-finance and savings support, health, education, water and sanitation and road networks. These all have an impact on susceptibility and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and to mitigating factors such as access to information, care, treatment and livelihood security. They will also help increase the sector's economic strength.



¹Banks R. (2003): Business Plan for the Uganda Fisheries Authority.
²FAO (2005) Impact of HIV/AIDS on Fishing Communities: Policies to Support Livelihoods, Rural Development and Public Health
³Ibid
⁴Voluntary Counselling and Testing
⁵Situation Analysis (2004): The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Fishing Communities in Uganda

⁶STD/ HIV/ AIDS Uganda Surveillance Report, June 2003
⁷Uganda Aids Commission (2005) National HIV/AIDS Mapping Report
⁸Sexually Transmitted Diseases
⁹Prevention of Mother - Child - Transmission
¹⁰Antiretroviral
¹¹Situation Analysis (2004): The Impact of HIV/ AIDS on Fishing Communities in Uganda

The key objectives of the Strategy are illustrated below, along with examples of required activities.

Goals	Objectives
Goal 1: To reduce HIV prevalence in fishing communities Sensitisation & education on safer sex, HIV/AIDS, treatment and ARVs . Ideally provided by trained permanent members of communities	Objective 1.1: Promote safe sexual behaviour among fishing communities
	Objective 1.2: Reduce the risk of blood-borne transmission in fishing communities and workplaces
	Objective 1.3: Reduce the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections in fishing communities
	Objective 1.4: Reduce the risk of MTCT ¹² in fishing communities
Goal 2: To mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS in the fisheries sector and community Rapid and large scale improvements in the quality of people's lives including equitable distribution of housing, health, water, sanitation, education and transport services	Goal 2a: Mitigate the health effects of HIV/AIDS and improve the quality of life of PHAs ¹³ in or from fishing communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2a.1: Increase and expand access to comprehensive health care and support for PHAs
	Goal 2b: Mitigate the psychosocial and economic effects of HIV/AIDS in fishing communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2b.1: Reduce HIV/AIDS related vulnerability through protection against violation of rights Objective 2b.2: Promote and provide psychosocial and economic support to OVCs¹⁴, PHAs and affected families in fishing communities
	Goal 2.c: Mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on the development of the fisheries sector
Goal 3: To strengthen national capacity to coordinate and manage the multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS including in fishing communities	Objective 3.1: Strengthen coordination of the multisectoral response at national, local government and community levels
	Objective 3.2: Strengthen capacity to coordinate & undertake research related to HIV/AIDS in relation to fisheries and fishing communities
	Objective 3.3: to promote and strengthen capacity to manage strategic information for HIV/AIDS related to fishing communities

Improve access to health care, VCT treatment services, & home-based care. These are currently difficult for remote and mobile communities to access.

Fisheries policies and management that reduce the vulnerability of fishing communities

Increased income generating opportunities and access to 'beach bank' savings and credit systems

For a copy of the Strategy and Implementation Plan please see the contacts and further information at the end of this document.

¹²Mother to Child Transmission

¹³People living with HIV and AIDS

¹⁴Prevention of Mother - Child - Transmission

¹⁵Opharms and Vulnerable Children

What are the implications of NOT implementing the HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy?

- **HIV and AIDS will affect the availability of fish and fishery products.** The fisheries sector produces affordable fish products that support food security for 17 million people annually in Uganda and accounts for 50% of animal protein consumption. HIV and AIDS have the potential to reduce the availability of fish as people become too weak to fish and fishing skills are lost.
- **Production from the fisheries sector will decline:** The productivity of the fisheries sector, currently contributing up to 12% to the GDP and nearly 20% of total exports, may fall with the impacts of HIV and AIDS.
- **HIV and AIDS may reduce the sustainability of fish stocks.** There is a reported increase of fishing in shallow waters as people become too weak to fish in deep-water. Fish breed in shallow areas. If these are heavily targeted it has considerable implications for the long-term state of the fish stock. A sick fishing labour force will negate sustainable fishing and will incrementally use destructive fishing gears and methods to meet current needs;
- **HIV will spread from fishing communities.** There is a high degree of mobility within fishing communities. Women and men who are too ill to work frequently return to their 'home' communities, increasing the risk of HIV spreading to other areas.



How does the HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy support other policy initiatives?

The HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy is consistent with key government policies and strategic frameworks.

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) refers to the importance of HIV/AIDS in the fishing sector and the need to tackle its prevalence and impacts in fishing communities. The Strategy reduces the threat of HIV/AIDS to export led growth, consolidates the contribution of the fisheries sector to the economy, and addresses the aim of reducing the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty.

The National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS (NSF) recognises the need to take a multi-sectoral approach to the reduction of HIV and AIDS. The Fisheries Strategy contributes to the Goals of the NSF on prevalence reduction, impact mitigation and coordinating and managing the national response.

The Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) and the **MAAIF AIDS Strategy** highlight the effect of AIDS on labour for production, and the sale of assets to meet medical and funeral costs. The fisheries strategy responds to this by preventing the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS on development, modernisation and income growth within the fisheries sector.

The National Fisheries Policy (NFP) and the **Fisheries Sector Strategic Plan (FSSP)** seek to include approaches to reduce transmission of HIV and mitigate the impacts of AIDS. Beach Management Units and Lake Management Organisations provide entry points and increased social cohesion for implementing activities within fishing communities.



Who does the HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy involve?

Both the fisheries sector and the national response to HIV/AIDS involve a large number of stakeholders. Implementing this Strategy requires partnership among many organisations and groups.

Business interests include fishers, boat owners, artisanal fish processors, small traders, dealers, transporters, fish market vendors, sex workers, fisheries workers and export processing companies. It is important to protect livelihoods and income in all aspects of the fisheries sector. There is currently low awareness of the potential impacts of AIDS on the work force and productivity.

Fisheries management structures including Beach Management Units, Lake Management Organisations, District Fisheries Officers and the Department of Fisheries Resources (DFR) are concerned with the productivity of the sector, the well being of the work-force and the sustainability of the fish stocks, which may be damaged by the impacts of AIDS.

Central government authorities are concerned with fisheries development and management of the economy. This includes the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF). Other line ministries have an interest the provision of physical and social infrastructure including health centres, housing, roads, water and sanitation. This involves the Ministry of Water, Lands and the Environment; Ministry of Works, Housing and Communications; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development; and Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry.

Local government have an interest in maintaining the sector's contribution to the local economies through tax revenue. They also have an interest in the welfare and economic development of district communities.

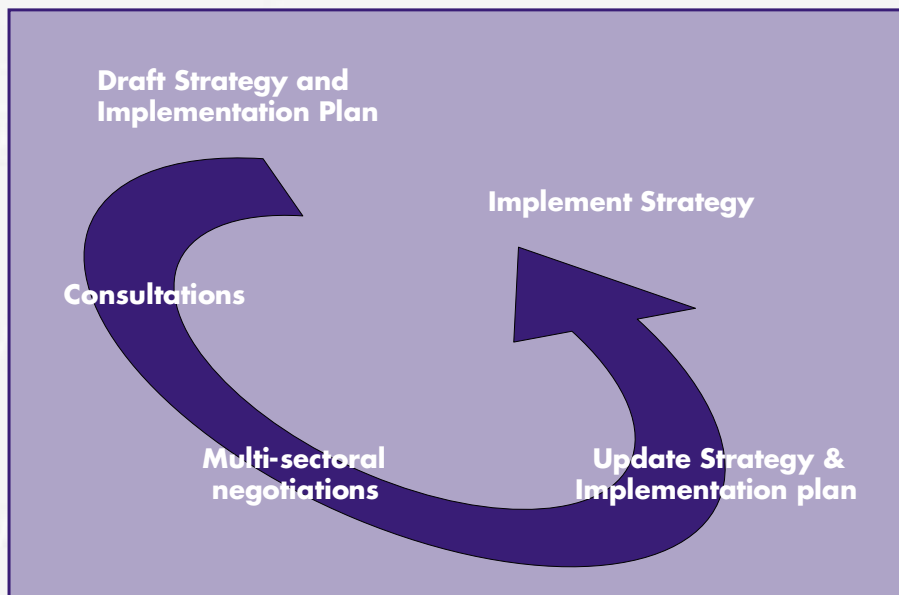
International donors, development NGOs and civil society organisations are concerned with the promotion of human development through health, welfare, education, community development and improving women's participation in community-level management structures.

Potential Stakeholder involvement in the Strategy

Strategy objectives	DFR/MAAIF	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development	Ministry of Health	District Government	Multi sectoral Ministries (Water, Sanitation, Education, Transport etc)	Beach Management Units	Lake Management Organisations	HIV/AIDS Civil Society Groups	Fisheries Civil Society Groups	Private Sector	Donors
Reduce HIV prevalence			✓	✓				✓		✓	✓
Mitigate impacts of HIV/AIDS	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Multi-sectoral response		✓			✓				✓		✓

What are the next steps?

MAAIF, DFR and the Uganda Aids Commission (UAC) are now taking the fisheries strategy forward and developing an Implementation Plan in consultation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders including government ministries, NGOs, donors and the private sector.



Consultations: on the draft Strategy and Implementation Plan are taking place through a national level seminar and district level workshops involving major stakeholders from the public and private sectors and civil society.

Policy revision: The HIV/AIDS and Fisheries Strategy is being incorporated within relevant policies and processes, such as the Fisheries Sector Strategic Plan and other sectors' plans and budgets based on the outcomes of discussions on roles and responsibilities.



What can you or your organisation do in relation to the HIV/AIDS and Fisheries National Strategy?

Implementation

1. Be aware of the actual and potential impact of HIV and AIDS in the fisheries sector on your work or interests;
2. Assess where your community, organisation, group or sector can contribute to implementation of the Strategy;
3. Initiate Implementation Plan activities.
4. Bring attention to the Strategy during budget and planning processes in your sector, organisation or level of government.

Raise awareness

Increase awareness and understanding of:

- The impacts of HIV and AIDS on fishing communities and concerned stakeholders;
- The relevance of the fisheries sector to the national economy, national development plans and Millennium Development Goals;
- The need for, and benefits of, HIV and AIDS specific interventions in fishing communities;
- The need to reduce vulnerability within fishing communities by providing HIV and AIDS services but also improved water, sanitation, health services, housing and roads;
- Approaches to fisheries management that can support communities to reduce transmission rates and cope with the impact of HIV and AIDS.



Further Sources of Information

- 1. Situation Analysis (2004):** The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Fishing Communities in Uganda
- 2. Strategy for Reducing the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Fishing Communities (30th October 2004):** Third Draft for Consultation
- 3. Draft Implementation Plan (2005):** Draft for Consultation

Reports can be requested from the contacts above or downloaded from the UAC website.

Web address: http://www.aidsuganda.org/response/govt_sectors/moaif.htm
<http://www.agriculture.go.ug>



Contacts

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