

Bringing sexual health to the workplace, Uganda

FACTSHEET MAY 2013



Reaching small scale industries in Kawempe

Kawempe in Kampala district of Uganda is home to many small scale industries. Most workers here are employed on a casual basis on very low wages. They have limited access to services like voluntary HIV counselling and testing (VCT) and prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A lack of awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) adversely impacts their ability to make empowered decisions relating to safer sex practices, relationships and lifestyles. There is a huge unmet need for SRHR, HIV and STIs services among employees in these settings.



Couples are encouraged to undergo HIV counselling and testing

Using unique approaches to reach industry workers

By employing a multifaceted, strategic approach Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), supported by the IPPF Japan Trust Fund (JTF), explored a unique solution to cater for sexual health needs for this group. This included an initial needs assessment and creating a tailored response to the needs of industry workers in the area. RHU used innovative methods to reach the group, such as outreach visits at factory sites, establishing condom banks for condom distribution and education efforts amongst local sex workers. RHU also undertook a peer educator training programme. They worked in collaboration with industrial managers to increase sustainability of the initiative.

This project increased knowledge and promoted skill building for safer sex and SRHR choices through different approaches tailored to meet audience needs. Specific knowledge among the targeted group on HIV prevention increased from 52% at baseline to 79% at the end of the project. General HIV awareness increased to 100%. Skills on condom negotiation increased by 11% and condom use in last encounter increased from 45% to 54%.

continued overleaf

Uganda

Population: 34.51 million (2011)
Life expectancy: 54 yrs (2011)
Adult HIV prevalence rate: 6.5% (2011)
No. of people living with HIV: 1200,000 (2011)
No. of people on HIV treatment: 313.1 thousand (2011)
(References overleaf)

Project Facts

Organisation: Reproductive Health Uganda
Donor: IPPF Japan Trust Fund Project for HIV and Reproductive Health
Location: Kampala district-Kawempe Division
Objective: This project aimed to increase access to SRH and HIV and AIDS related information and services to small scale industries of Kawempe Industrial Area.
Period: 2009-2011

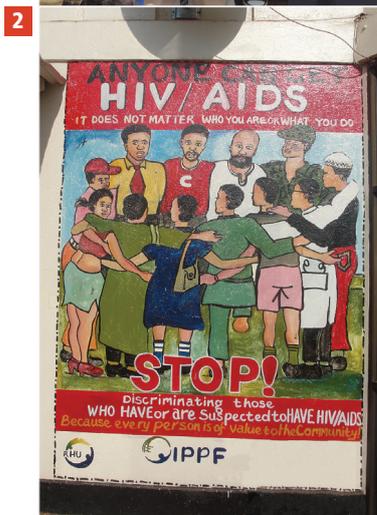
Project Service Statistics

911 men and 613 women received voluntary HIV counselling and testing
942 men and 780 women accessed SRH services
64,000 male condoms distributed
11,251 female condoms distributed
14 condom banks established
42 family planning charts developed

“Before the project, I was afraid to test for HIV, but now I do it very freely. I have gained a lot of confidence...”, adding that her boyfriend works in Rwanda and can be away for as long as six months. “Whenever he comes back, I always ensure that we first get tested for HIV together, before we have sex.”

Janet N*, 23, a casual worker at Kwera Ltd in Bwaise

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Photos

1. Flip charts being used for a community sexual health education session.
2. Mural promoting positive messages related to HIV stigma and discrimination.

Photos:
RFU/Alex Kiwanuka/Uganda
Front cover and mural:
RFU/James Tumusiime/Uganda

The project also increased the overall use of family planning (FP) methods and subsequent couple years of protection due to an overall shift from use of short acting methods like pills, condoms and injections (during the baseline) to more long acting methods such as intra-uterine devices, implants and sterilization. While 36% employees reported that they were not using any FP method during the baseline survey, this proportion reduced to 14% at the end of the project. Condoms (63%) were used more than any other FP method, possibly because of the easy accessibility and availability through the condom banks, outreach services and peer educators. Increased use and acceptability of the condom is a clear sign of the intensive sensitization by the project and the fact that employees could now protect themselves against both unintended pregnancies and HIV and STIs.

Case study

The project has influenced the way people make decisions about their sexuality and fertility.

Esther L*, a machine operator at Kwera factory in Kawempe explains: "I have one child and I wanted a good FP method to avoid having a second. I had no time to go to the health centre because it could take almost a whole day to be seen by the health staff. When this project brought the services right to our factory, they taught us about FP. After seeing the condom use demonstrations and learning about its advantages, I felt it

was the right thing for me. I talked to my partner and he agreed. I am now using condoms to avoid pregnancy and also to prevent HIV and STIs. I can now face a man and negotiate that he uses a condom. I can even offer to assist him to put it on properly if he does not know. I don't need to fear anymore because I know how to protect myself".

From the workplace to the wider community

RHU recognizes that the ultimate success of the project depends on the wider dissemination of safer sex messages to the community. By working with employees, families were indirectly reached. Further, by training peer educators and working with industry management, an element of sustainability was built into the project from the outset. A good referral mechanism with a wide network of organizations complemented and enhanced co-operation across similar groups working in the project sites.

This IPPF JTF-funded project provided an opportunity for RHU staff to enhance the capacity in areas such as conducting needs assessment surveys, documenting and reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. It has also enabled staff to update their knowledge related to HIV counselling and laboratory testing.

* name changed to protect confidentiality

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Uganda country information

World Bank Country Datasets – Uganda (2011).
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The IPPF Japan Trust Fund for HIV and Reproductive Health was set up by the Government of Japan in 2000, to increase access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services for women, young people and key populations in developing countries. Since its establishment, it has supported more than 117 projects in 46 countries.