



10-10-10: USING SOCIAL ENABLERS TO CREATE SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

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UGANDA : HIV EPIDEMIC AND RESPONSE

- Uganda was one of the first African countries to experience a severe HIV/AIDS epidemic, with prevalence rates peaking in the early 1990s.
- Uganda's experience with HIV/AIDS has evolved significantly and great efforts have led to a significant breakthroughs
- These efforts contributed to a decline in HIV prevalence and improved access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), which now reaches over 1.2 million people.
- Despite progress, stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key populations remain pervasive. This stigma is a major barrier to accessing health services and achieving the 10-10-10 targets.

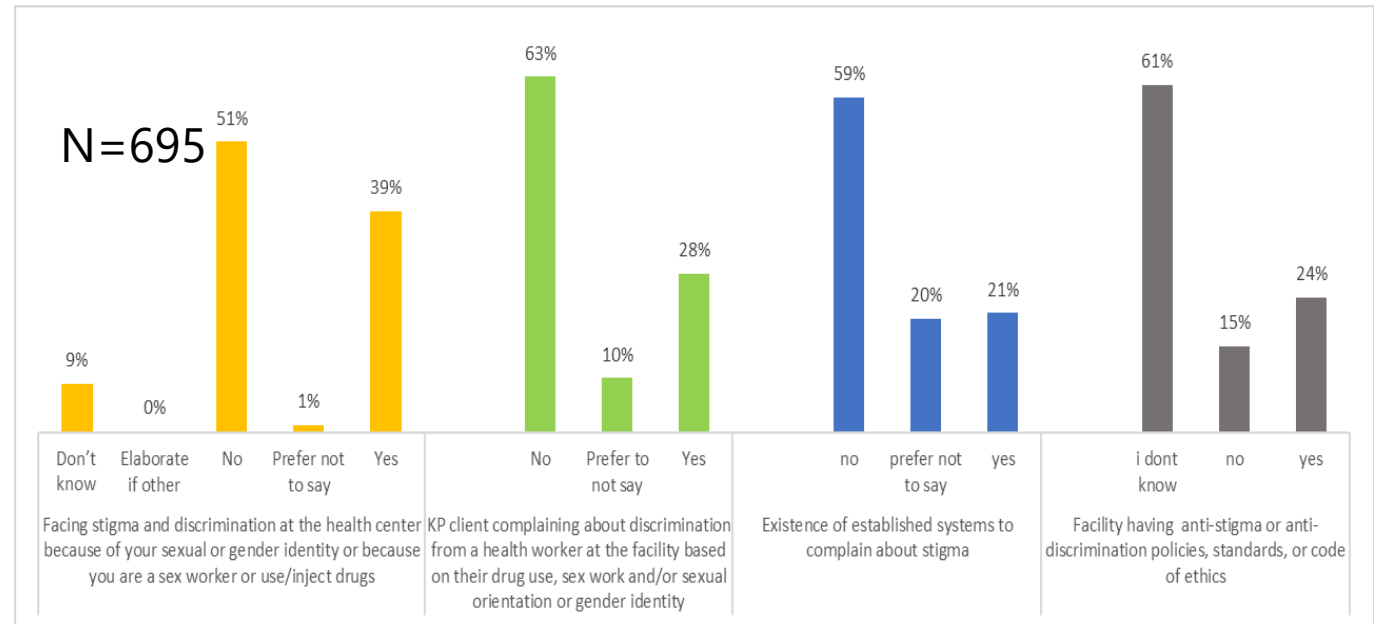
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS IN UGANDA

- Uganda's cultural context influences health behaviors and access to services, particularly regarding HIV.
- Cultural beliefs and norms often intersect with stigma, shaping perceptions of HIV and influencing health-seeking behaviors.
- In some communities, stigma associated with HIV may be linked to spiritual or moral judgments, leading individuals to delay testing or avoid disclosure due to fear of social ostracization.
- Moreover, gender norms and roles can dictate access to healthcare, with women often facing barriers in decision-making regarding their health, including HIV prevention and treatment.

KEY POPULATIONS

- Stigma remains a pervasive barrier to health equity in Uganda, particularly concerning HIV/AIDS and marginalized groups such as MSM, sex workers, and transgender individuals.
- Stigmatizing attitudes are rooted in societal perceptions, misinformation, and moral judgments surrounding sexuality and HIV transmission.
- Individuals who are perceived as deviating from social norms, including those living with HIV or identifying as LGBTIQ, often face discrimination in various facets of life, including healthcare settings.

EXPERIENCES OF STIGMA REPORTED



- At least **39%** KPs we have spoken to while assessing stigma and discrimination have reported being discriminated because of their sexual orientation at health facilities,
- **28%** have heard another KP complain about stigma,
- while on the other hand **59%** have reported that there are no established systems to report when they face stigma and **61%** do not know about anti-stigma policies that health facilities are following

THE ANTI-HOMOSEXUALITY ACT (AHA) 2023

- The Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 criminalizes same-sex relations and imposes severe penalties, including life imprisonment and the death penalty for aggravated cases.
- The Act was passed by the Ugandan Parliament in March 2023 and signed into law by the President in May 2023, amid international condemnation and domestic support.
- The Act has led to increased discrimination, violence, and human rights violations against LGBTQ+ individuals, creating a climate of fear and oppression.

IMPACT OF AHA ON LGBTIQ+ UGANDANS

Between september 2024 to May 2024;

| Category | Number of Cases |
|--|-----------------|
| Evictions and banishment from premises | 434 |
| Violence against LGBTQ+ persons | |
| - Physical violence | 92 |
| - Threatening violence and verbal attacks | 87 |
| - Public outing and exposure | 59 |
| - Cyber and online attacks | 41 |
| - Police raids and summoning | 15 |
| - Blackmail and extortion | 15 |
| TOTAL | 309 |
| Family rejection | 51 |
| Termination and loss of employment | 35 |
| Exclusion from social services | 21 |
| Denial of a passport | 1 |
| Mental and physical health issues | 92 |
| Arrests | |
| - Arrests under the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) | 47 |
| - Arrests without charges | 22 |
| TOTAL | 69 |
| Charges under the AHA | |
| - Homosexuality | 31 |
| - Aggravated homosexuality | 11 |
| - Attempted homosexuality | 3 |
| - Promotion of homosexuality | 2 |

IMPACT OF AHA ON HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

- The criminalization under the Anti-Homosexuality Act has instilled fear in the LGBTQ+ community, leading to reluctance in seeking healthcare services.
- Reports indicate a significant drop in visits to healthcare facilities by LGBTQ+ individuals, fearing arrest and persecution.
- The Act has severely impacted HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs, with many individuals avoiding clinics and outreach services due to fear of exposure and legal repercussions.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Across the continent, several nations have shown positive developments in their HIV response;

- **South Africa:** Has progressive laws protecting the rights of the LGBTIQ community and has integrated HIV services with broader health services, reducing stigma.
- **Botswana:** Decriminalized same-sex relationships in 2019, which has improved access to health services for the LGBTIQ community.
- **Nigeria:** Like Uganda, Nigeria faces considerable challenges in its HIV response, exacerbated by punitive laws and societal stigma against key populations. services and perpetuate discrimination.
- **Tanzania:** Recent crackdowns on LGBTIQ individuals in Tanzania have heightened concerns about human rights violations and access to healthcare

CONCLUSION

- The enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act stands in the way of Uganda's journey towards achieving the UNAIDS 10-10-10 targets
- The path forward demands bold action and unwavering commitment. It necessitates not only policy reforms and robust health infrastructure investments but also a fundamental shift in societal attitudes towards inclusivity and human rights.
- By prioritizing health equity and embracing diversity, Africa can accelerate progress towards the 10-10-10 targets and pave the way for a future where HIV/AIDS no longer divides but unites in the pursuit of health and dignity for all.