

AFRICA LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTION FORUM (ALGAF IV)

NAME OF PROJECT: ***PROJECT A***

***A report for an outside donor – World Bank for financing a Local
Government response to HIV/AIDS in the Asikuma-Odoben
Brakwa District***

COURSE NAME: ALGAF IV: Local Government responses to
HIV/AIDS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Asiakuma-Odoben-Brakwa district is a rural district with about 65% of projected population of about 67,550 living in the rural areas. The three major towns Asiakuma, Odoben and Brakwa serve as nodal points of social and economic activities in the district.

The Development Plan of 1996-2000 points to a seemingly distressed district with the characteristics that include high school drop-out rates, high erosion rates rendering the conditions of the roads very poor, local agricultural production, low services delivery with about 53% of people depending on streams.

There is also lack of medium and large scale enterprises with about 74% of the local people below the poverty line. The result is low revenue base of the District Assembly.

In terms of health, there is also inadequate infrastructure, staff and logistics, high maternal and child mortality rates coupled with low nutritional levels. The District has one main Catholic Hospital and two clinics in Asiakuma, Odoben and Brakwa respectively. Traditional healers are extensively used for health care delivery.

Housing is poor without kitchens, drains, toilets and baths, with 90% of settlements pit

latrines and defecating on rubbish dump sites.

The major occupation of the people is farming on small plots and petty trading in agricultural products mainly and some industrial products. There are several polygamous marriages and very high teenage pregnancy rates. There is high level of superstitious beliefs buttressed by low educational levels, with hostile attitudes towards the use of condoms. Even in this age and the level of development some people still believe that HIV/AIDS is brought about by witches.

From all indications, a number of people seemed to have heard about the disease (HIV/AIDS) but they still believe that the mode of transmission is only through sex. The detrimental impacts of HIV/AIDS does not seem to be evident yet looking at the lifestyles of the youth and some adults, Hairdressers and barbers, it seems that there is a dire need for constant awareness creation because they live as if AIDS scare is not a bother to them. Owing to the stigma attached to the source of infection of the disease people, people do not come out when they contract the disease. Counseling and testing are practically out due to the absence of the facility, the low educational level coupled with low income level. Male dominance is very pronounced so a woman does not complain when a man take on several sex partners and also do not dare refuse sexual advances from their partners.

Any epidemic will be of very serious consequences. Although there are about 9 HIV/AIDS sponsored programmes in the area, an interview in the District Assembly yielded no information since no one was willing to -----

The active working group will be wiped out leading to decrease in labour productivity,

increase in demand for services, greater household vulnerability and increase in numbers of absolute poor people. The climate for development will suffer and the already poor revenue base of Local Government will be worsened.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To help prevent people of Aiakuma-Odoben-Brakwa District from contracting HIV/AIDS
2. To control the spread of HIV/AIDS in the District.
3. To create an enabling environment for People Living With HIV/AIDS to come out openly.
4. To assist the people of the District particularly, the youth to acquire healthy and productive lifestyles on sustainable basis.

The objective of this Report is to source for funds for the programme.

4. STRATEGIES: Main elements of the Programme

1. Setting Priorities
2. Assessing the strengths of the Local Government Authorities (LGA)
3. Mapping out areas that have already been addressed by the LGA and the geographical distribution of LGA HIV/AIDS Activity Areas (AA)
4. Identifying Partner Activity Areas.
5. Carrying out a baseline/mapping study for:
 - a. Providing the youth in- and out- of school with HIV/AIDS Awareness, Prevention and Control measures.
 - b. Providing the hairdressers and barbers with education on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control of spread---Targeted Interventions.

- c. Fighting the stigma relating to HIV/AIDS---Community Sensitization.

The Target Groups are Youth in- and out- of school, Hairdressers and Barbers and the Community.

5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The District has been zoned into 8 Area Councils (ACs)

- a. *Institutional arrangements*

- i Nomination of Focal Point Person—District AIDS Coordinator.
- ii Setting up of Task Force Team (TFT) OF 55 members. Membership is made up of 6 members from each AC (48 for the 8 Area Councils) plus 7 members from the LG office staff.
