

HIV – AIDS STRATEGY IN NYARUGENGE DISTRICT

Dealing with HIV/AIDS in our District was a hard task, we initially did not have the budget allocated to deal with the issue of HIV/AIDS, and Nyarugenge District has a very high prevalence Of HIV/AIDS statistics reveal approximately 500people are HIV+ in the population of about 1000. Before the launch of the Nyarugenge District HIV/AIDS strategy, the response to HIV/AIDS in the District was largely un coordinated, with little co-operation between Local Government and Civil Society agencies.

However the District is so blessed to have a rich diversity of Civil society organizations engaged with AIDS related issues, these organizations range from NGOS, Faith based organizations and CBOS.

The District strategy that was adopted in 2002, was launched with the support of the San Francisco project, World Vision and ALBEF.

The Districts AIDS strategy is built around three main areas:

1. Education, awareness and prevention

The major goal here is to reduce infection rate through education, promotion of condom use and changed behaviors.

2. Treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)

Provision of Antiretroviral drugs o HIV+ people, voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), and Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT). Support is also given to HIV+ people at different stages of the disease, food support, nutrition training and emergency food parcels.

3. Care for the vulnerable children including orphans

The District ensures that the infected and affected children receive appropriate food, shelter, schooling, care and support.

The strategy has made great achievements since it was initiated in the year 2002.

- The HIV/AIDS strategy has been incorporated into the Districts Development plan among the major priorities of the District.
- Funds have been accessed from different NGOS especially the San Francisco project
- The District has set up an aids fund for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- The District now has Counselors at all the eight sectors in the District
- The Strategy has helped bring about coordination between local government and non-government organizations and has given opportunities to CBOS to engage in issues of HIV/AIDS.
- Association of people living with HIV/AIDS have been set up
- Small income generating projects have been set up to assist people living with HIV/AIDS.

However the strategy has faced some challenges that include;

1. Financial resources; the strategy relies heavily on the support of NGOs, a situation they may not be able to sustain without their help. The strategy also relies heavily on the District resourcing hence the District facing increasing demands on its resources.
2. Currently the strategy is only able to reach a small proportion of the people living with HIV/AIDS in the District
3. Some Local Authorities do not have the will to integrate the aids strategy into the work of their departments.

Local Government Authorities intend to address these gaps by:

- Having the will to tackle AIDS and LGA championing the strategy
- Including a wide range of groups of organizations and sectors as possible
- Allocating more funds to the District Aids fund that will assist the strategy be dynamic and be able to respond to the changing environment
- Having strong partnerships and commitment to working together with non-government organizations working in the AIDS field so as to achieve a common goal.