

## TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO AIDS IN UGANDA



Uganda has made significant progress combating its HIV epidemic, but numerous challenges remain: HIV and sexually transmitted infection services are not uniformly available; and continuous access to services is difficult due to poor roads and transport, distance from centres, ongoing political instability in the North and limited leadership and human resource capacity. In districts with available services, they are often limited to towns, with often only a few outreach and referral mechanisms in place. Nearly every district has an insufficient number of trained people to handle the wide range of medical and social needs of people living with the consequences of HIV and AIDS.

The AIDS/HIV Integrated Model Programme (AIM) works with District HIV/AIDS Committees (DHACs) to address these challenges. Funded by USAID and CDC, and implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), in partnership with World Education and World Learning, AIM takes an integrated approach to prevention, care, and support across the lifespan of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. The disease affects all aspects of society and cannot be stemmed without a comprehensive approach. AIM integrates its HIV activities not only with other health concerns, including tuberculosis and family planning, but also with social support and orphan care, education, and youth-appropriate programs. AIM's ultimate goal is that the men, women, and children in selected districts in Uganda will be able to access and utilise appropriate, available, affordable, and high-quality HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support services.



The AIM Programme supports organizations like the Teso AIDS Project in Soroti. This woman, Joyce Margaret Igoru, has become a resource for her community since she joined the Teso Board as its community representative in 1995.

Started in 2001, AIM's approach to meeting and scaling up Uganda's current needs in HIV/AIDS prevention and care is based on two broad goals:

- To support selected districts to plan, implement and monitor high-quality decentralized prevention, care and support services and strengthen and implement a variety of ancillary services for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- To strengthen the capacity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to manage, plan and provide essential quality HIV support services at the national, district, and sub-district level.



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As part of this initiative, when the Ministry of Health recognized the need to revise current training materials to respond to the changing epidemic and the populations at risk in Uganda, it requested assistance from AIM to develop a comprehensive curriculum for use nationally. The most urgent need was for a revised HIV voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) curriculum that would address standard training needs as well as emerging needs such as couples counseling and HIV testing for adolescents and young children. AIM brought together public and NGO sector stakeholders to revise the current curriculum to develop a more user-oriented VCT curriculum. The completed manual was produced by the MOH early in 2003 and is available from AIM or JSI/World Education. This approach has been repeated to develop training manuals for the management of opportunistic illness for people living with HIV, prevention of mother to child transmission (pMTCT) and sexually transmitted infections.

*The impact of the HIV epidemic in Uganda is most often seen in the faces of children who have lost one or both parents to the disease. In order to address the challenges and support models of service delivery, AIM provides support to AIDchild, a program that offers a full range of medical, educational, and social services to HIV-positive orphan children. Specifically the program provides a home and supportive family environment to HIV-positive orphans, including clinical care, offers educational and vocational training, and explores income-generating activities to help sustain the AIDchild program. AIDchild is one of more than 120 NGOs benefiting from AIM support and technical assistance.*

**For more information about JSI and World Education projects that address the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Uganda and elsewhere, please go to [www.jsi.com](http://www.jsi.com), [www.worlded.org](http://www.worlded.org) or contact:**

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