



# Uganda Workplace HIV/AIDS Prevention Project (WAPP)

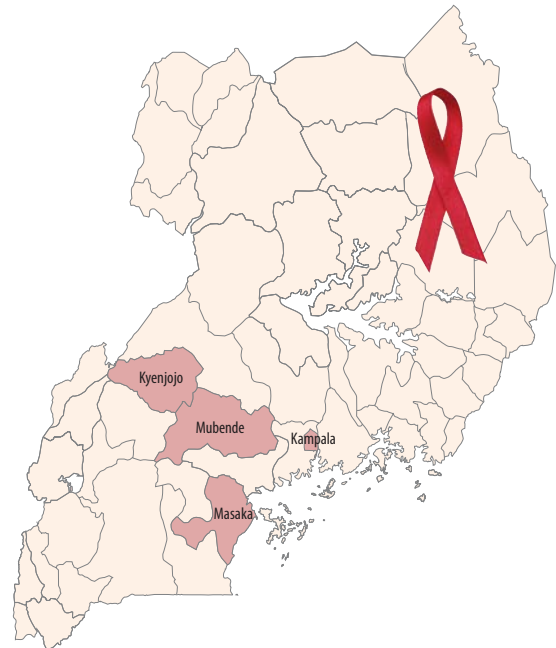
RTI International is implementing a 4-year (2003–2007) HIV prevention and impact mitigation project that seeks to stem HIV infections in Ugandan informal-sector workplaces. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, the program provides support for approaches that include

- “ABC” (abstinence, being faithful, condom use) HIV prevention methods
- Prevention of mother-to-child transmission
- Reduction of HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination at the workplace
- Mitigation of the impact of HIV/AIDS among informal-sector workers and their families.

## Collaboration

We collaborate closely with the government, national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community- and faith-based organizations (CBOs and FBOs). The program strengthens the ability of CBOs and FBOs to better implement HIV/AIDS activities locally.

Operating in Kampala, Kyenjojo, Masaka, and Mubende/Mityana districts, RTI’s approach is to reach a large number of informal-sector workers with HIV prevention and mitigation messages through cost-effective and efficient mechanisms.



## Accomplishments to date

During the past 2 years, RTI has reached nearly 530,000 people through project-supported programs. Informal-sector workers reached include market vendors, boda boda (motorcycle and bicycle) transporters, carpenters, fishermen and fish processors, taxi operators, food vendors and attendants, bar and lodge attendants, shop attendants, shoe shiners, and tea harvesters. Project-supported activities include the following:

## Group education on HIV/AIDS

With its partner FBOs and CBOs, RTI has successfully organized 850 HIV/AIDS education and awareness campaigns for informal-sector workers that include health talks, drama, and testimonies from persons living with HIV/AIDS, combined with dialogue sessions where participants are encouraged to ask questions and offer their own perspectives on HIV prevention. Each activity is organized in close consultation with the targeted informal workers and is conducted in the vicinity of their workplace, such as a market, fishing village, or transporters’ stage to encourage their participation. With an average attendance of 40 to 70 participants, WAPP reaches a large number of workers at one time.

Topics discussed at these meetings are varied and include:

- transmission mechanisms of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- signs and symptoms of STIs in men and women, the difference between HIV/AIDS
- implications of stigma denial and discrimination in the spread of HIV,



HIV/AIDS education meeting with members of Masaka Taxi Operators and Drivers Association. [Photo: Chris Ssentongo]

(continued)



Community health meeting with Kanyanya market vendors, Kampala district. [Photo: Chris Ssentongo]



HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness campaign at Kaziru fishing village, Masaka district. [Photo: Chris Ssentongo]

- prevention of mother-to child transmission of HIV
- the “ABC” approaches to HIV prevention
- voluntary counseling and testing, discordant partners, referrals for HIV/AIDS services
- the importance of early treatment, partner notification, and prevention against STIs.

#### Peer education activities

In addition to health education campaigns, RTI has successfully selected and trained peer educators from the targeted informal-sector workplaces. Once trained, peer educators provide HIV/AIDS outreach to their fellow workers (typically on a one-on-one basis). This method has proven efficient and cost-effective, and has the potential for sustainability since the trained peer educators volunteer for the activities and are part of the targeted workforce. A total of 409 peer educators have been trained in the four districts (Kampala, Kyenjojo, Masaka, and Mubende). To guide their activities, all peer educators are given a reference handbook in Luganda, Lutooro, or English. Each peer educator speaks with 20 people per month—typically fellow workers, customers, and neighborhood residents—and makes about 3 to 5 referrals for HIV/AIDS and STI services per month. Between May 2004 and March 2006, peer educators reached 367,822 people with HIV/AIDS prevention messages and referred 14,965 people to health facilities for services. Peer educators also receive annual refresher training from project staff; every 3 months, they also participate in a group meeting with other peer educators to share and learn from each other’s experiences.

#### Small grants and capacity building for CBOs and FBOs

Out of 379 eligible applicants, 46 grassroots CBOs/FBOs have used small grants of \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year for 2 to 3 years to widen their scope of project activities and to improve their capacity to conduct such activities among informal-sector workers. In each district, organizations with successful track records were selected by a panel composed of project staff; representatives from the district or local government; and in the case of Kampala, partner NGOs. The organizations receiving support include drama groups, market vendors’ associations, community self-help projects, persons living with HIV/AIDS groups, associations for persons with disabilities, faith-based health centers, traditional healers associations, and taxi drivers associations. This support enhances their capacity to carry out various types of HIV prevention activities for informal-sector groups in the focus districts. RTI focuses on the following critical areas of need for each organization:

- Providing training or support to scale-up HIV prevention activities
- Conducting program evaluations and impact assessments
- Providing report writing and accounting services
- Strengthening partnerships between the informal sector and the government.

To enhance sustainability and minimize the effects of staff attrition, each organization is represented by 2 to 3 participants in the training sessions. WAPP project staff also visit each organization every 3 months to assess its performance.

*“People in this community are very happy with RTI activities. Although HIV/AIDS has been in Uganda for many years, this project is the first to target informal-sector workers in our community.”*

—Peer educator from Ggaba

*“This project has done good work by reaching us, the plantation workers, because we spend most of our time working and we miss sensitization in the villages. But now we can get this information from our fellow workers at work and in the camps.”*

—Tea plantation worker from Kakonde tea factory

*“With funds from this project, we have been able to enlighten our fellow disabled women about HIV/AIDS and how to avoid risky behaviors at their workplaces.”*

—Grantee representative for the Association of Disabled Workers in Kawempe

*“We have used some of the project support to develop a revolving fund. This has assisted some of our fellow members to continue with their business of food vending.”*

—Grantee representative of the Nakasero Market Women Group

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#### For more information about the project, please contact

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