



HIV/AIDS WORKPLACE POLICY

JUNE 2020

Presented by :

on this 10th day of February 2020

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on this 10th day of February 2020

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HIV/AIDS WORKPLACE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

UPDN is a local Non-Governmental Organization, and has been working in the field of social development work in Uganda since 2016. UPDN aims at supporting and working with local communities, Civil Society Organizations and government to foster the road safety, driver welfare, health promotion and knowledge management.

UPDN is a non-governmental organization registered under the Uganda NGO Registration Act and operating in Uganda. The organisation is also registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee and Not Having Share Capital under The Companies Act No. 1 of 2012, accompanied with Articles of Association (registered in 2016), which actually form the organisation's constitution.

- **Vision**

To be a center of excellence in development of professional driving industry in Uganda

- **Mission**

Professional driving industry for improved road safety

- **Core Values**

1. Professionalism
2. Accountability
3. Team work
4. Non - discrimination

2.0 BACKGROUND



UPDN is an equal opportunity employer and shall support all staff to perform their jobs to their full potential irrespective of their HIV/AIDS status. In responding to the realities of HIV and AIDS, and with reference to the Stop AIDS Now (SAN!) project, UPDN developed an organizational HIV and AIDS workplace policy (2019) with the involvement of all the staff.

The purpose of the policy is to support a non-discriminatory and conducive working environment in which all staff irrespective of their HIV/AIDS status, are supported by the organization's own and outsourced resources to face courageously the realities of the scourge.

This policy expresses the organisation's stand on the topic of HIV/AIDS and sets a framework for action for UPDN. It will be used and implemented by staff and other relevant stakeholders within the organisation, in order to have the desired impact on all aspects of the organisation's work.

This policy shall apply to all UPDN staff and their families, and forms part of the wider HR Policy of the organization. The policy shall be part of UPDN's orientation package to staff and Board Members.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY



UPDN HIV/AIDS policy aims at:

- i. Offering a non-discriminatory, conducive working environment for all the staff irrespective of their HIV/ AIDS status.
- ii. Promote awareness about HIV/AIDS, and provide opportunities for prevention against the spread of HIV and AIDS.
- iii. Provide care and support to all staff affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.
- iv. Protect the rights and confidentiality of staff and their dependants on their medical status and any other related information.

- Vision of Policy: 'An organization where all staff are supported to perform their tasks to their full potential irrespective of their HIV/AIDS status.'
- **Mission Statement:** To offer a non-discriminatory and conducive work environment in which all staff irrespective of their HIV/AIDS status are supported by the organization's own, as well as outsourced resources to courageously face the realities of the scourge.
- **Values:** The core values of the policy are: Love, Care, and Compassion.

4.0 RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

UPDN shall strive to minimize the impact of HIV/AIDS on the operations of the organisation because we are aware that:

- People with HIV/AIDS have the right to work and are often in a position to perform their work normally if they are provided the support they need. No person shall, therefore, be dismissed from employment purely on the ground of his HIV/AIDS status if they are still productive and capable of making their contribution like any other staff. UPDN does not discriminate against individuals with regards to advancement, promotion, compensation, discharge or any other terms, HIV positive, whether symptomatic or not.
- To achieve this goal, UPDN ensures that all employees even those who have HIV/AIDS have the same terms and conditions, including employee benefits, as all other employees.
- UPDN does not consider mandatory HIV testing of employees to be necessary or desirable. Therefore, no staff member is forced to take an HIV antibody test against his or her will, and testing shall not be used as an employment – screening device. If an employee has been tested for HIV antibodies, he or she has no obligation to inform anyone in the organization of his or her HIV status.
- UPDN practices compassion and solidarity in lieu of judgment in our interactions with those infected and affected, among our staff, and encourages voluntary counselling and testing. Continued employment provides those with HIV/AIDS a sense of value and belonging in the community. However, HIV illness as is common with other chronic diseases is progressive. In due course, the illness

may make it impossible for the infected individual to be as effective and productive as expected.

- v. The policy also opens space for employees who are incapacitated from the performance of their duties due to HIV/AIDS to various considerations such as seeking sick leave to regain their health and to allow recuperation, under the Terms and Conditions stipulated in the Human Resources Management Policy.
- vi. UPDN protects the human rights and dignity of those who have HIV/AIDS by preventing harassment and discrimination and promotes a spirit of fairness, equity, and social tolerance in the organization.

5.0 PRINCIPLES

In pursuit of this mission, UPDN and its staff commit to the following principles:

- i. Commit to align the policy with the ILO Code of conduct.
- ii. Treat the affected and infected staff with respect and dignity.
- iii. Non-discrimination in the provision of benefits and services.
- iv. Promote a work environment that minimizes discrimination and stigmatization.
- v. Handle information pertaining to such staff in utmost confidence and with their prior consent.
- vi. Uphold the Individual rights and responsibilities of such staff.
- vii. Forge strategic partnerships with external service organisations that facilitate access to essential services for care and treatment of HIV/AIDS.
- viii. Continuously monitor the work environment and conditions pertaining to affected staff and ensure sensitivity.

6.0 ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY



The elements of the policy shall include:

i. Non-discriminatory organizational policies

UPDN believes in providing all form of support in the fight against the spread of HIV, and therefore subscribes to, and enforces good workplace practices that help to minimise or even eliminate any existing and potential discrimination against UPDN staff and members of their families living with HIV/AIDS, through the development and implementation of clearly defined, non-discriminatory workplace HIV/AIDS policies and

practices as well as education and training. The Human Resources policy shall include a section on HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

ii. Programme interventions

UPDN will make a deliberate effort to incorporate interventions into their country programme being that they particularly focus on women, orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as the accompanying budgets.

iii. Awareness raising and prevention

UPDN aims at creating awareness and prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS among the staff and their dependants. UPDN will endeavour to provide relevant, up-to-date information on HIV/ AIDS to enhance staff awareness and ability to protect themselves and others, particularly their dependants and our clients. Such information will focus on a wide range of areas including the channels of infection, the impact of HIV/AIDS, prevention, counselling, and testing, and living positively with HIV and AIDS, the latest information on treatment and application of Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) and others. The organization will plan regular awareness-raising sessions about HIV transmission, information on prevalence in the country, as well as care and support for our regular meetings.

iv. Care and Support

UPDN will provide psychosocial support to the infected and affected staff to help them cope with the physical, social and psychological effects of HIV/AIDS. It will facilitate access to testing and treatment services for both opportunistic infections and ART through its existing healthcare scheme and partnerships with the relevant HIV/AIDS support service providers. UPDN will continue to work closely with the already existing health facilities that offer counselling, testing, and treatment in different regions where the organisation operates for the benefit of all staff and members of their families under the UPDN health scheme. The list of such facilities is appended to this policy document. UPDN will continue to access, build and maintain strategic alliances with local and international authorities, and relevant HIV/AIDS support service providers in implementing the HIV/AIDS Policy and program.



v. Staff Protection and Empowerment

UPDN will ensure all necessary safety precautions to protect staff from infection while at work and provide the necessary information to help affected staff on managing any adverse effects of HIV/AIDS, including mother-to-child prevention for pregnant women and others. It will provide both protective gears, as well as counselling and emotional support services, that will include but not limited to:

- Avail male and female condoms in discreet locations, as well as information on their usage, storage, and disposal.
- Access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) including emergency pills and ARVs.
- Provide protective gear in the event of an accident including helmets for motorcycle riders; gloves for cleaners.
- Counselling and emotional support to all staff and their families that require it. This may be obtained from within our organisation or outside our organization.
- Skills in writing wills and *memory scribbling* for the benefit of the staff family.

vi. Tolerance

UPDN will maintain a workplace environment that accommodates and proactively responds to HIV/AIDS issues in a reasonable, responsible, knowledgeable, responsive and business-like manner. If an employee becomes weak and he is unable to perform his work as efficiently as he did before, his supervisor shall take all reasonable steps to support the employee to meet the established performance criteria.

UPDN shall give careful consideration to doing the following in support of infected staff, among others:

- Flexible working schedules, including the possibility of part-time work and relating terms, as well as allowing for leave of absence for resting and seeking treatment.
- Special consideration shall be given for affected staff to take a loan and salary advance beyond what is stipulated in the Human Resources Management policy, aimed at setting up income generating activities.
- Restructure the employee's work and consider another assignment following agreement with the staff concerned or hiring a stand-in relief worker for the concerned staff depending on the nature of work involved.

- Voluntary retirement with a package worked out basing on the organisation's gratuity and other aspects of the HR policy, plus any other considerations, including the length of service.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES



- i. The Board shall be ultimately responsible for compliance to the policy.
- ii. The Executive Director shall be responsible for the implementation of the HIV/AIDS policy.
- iii. The Programme Manager shall be responsible for the enforcement, daily working and implementation of this policy.

8.0 ENFORCEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HIV/AIDS POLICY

UPDN shall do the following in support of implementation of the HIV-AIDS policy:

- i. Consider the harassment, victimization or stigmatisation of an employee who is or thought to be HIV positive by a supervisor as an offence, and appropriate disciplinary measures taken on the person perpetuating such harassment. This will also apply to employees who deliberately refuse to work with people (including employees and clients) infected or affected by HIV.
- ii. Protect any one staff that is victimized, harassed, or discriminated against because of his or her HIV status through the normal grievance procedures.
- iii. Ensure that all employees are informed in confidence about where assistance can be found.
- iv. Provide needed awareness, and orientation to staff supervisors, Project Officers and wider staff on the policy, also informing them about the role of the Programme Manager in providing support related to the policy.
- v. Respond to the needs of individual employees on various aspects of HIV/AIDS by availing counsellor services. Information on an employee's health condition shall be treated as private and confidential by the Programme Manager and staff supervisors or other persons who may gain such information in the process of providing support to staff. Managers are particularly expected to take careful

precautions to protect the confidentiality of information regarding any employee's health condition.

- vi. Though UPDN shall put no obligation on any employee infected with HIV/AIDS to disclose her/ his status to a manager or any other employee, it will be important for staff to provide some basic information in order to gain UPDN's support in relation to its HIV/AIDS policy.
- vii. UPDN endeavours to follow progress on any medical research related to HIV/AIDS e.g. the development of a vaccine etc., and to avail any new developments.

9.0 STRATEGIES TO OPERATIONALISE THE HIV-AIDS POLICY



- i. Avail HIV/AIDS related information to all staff, their families and UPDN programme beneficiaries.
- ii. Mobilize resources to undertake activities aimed at managing HIV/ AIDS in the workplace.
- iii. Organize awareness sessions for all the staff.
- iv. Collaborate with government and other development partners who have HIV/AIDS programs for referral and benchmarking purposes.
- v. Support national and community-based HIV/AIDS programmes such as Youth groups, Post-test clubs and other relevant support structures in the areas where UPDN operates, and likewise, support all initiatives on the work of HIV/AIDS.

10.0 REVIEW OF THE HIV-AIDS POLICY

The HIV/AIDS policy shall be reviewed at least once every three (3) years in order to upgrade it, and bring in new and more contemporary practices relating to the current needs of UPDN.

