



# MILDMAY UGANDA OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE PAEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT HIV CARE

Mildmay Uganda, P.O Box 24985, Kampala, Tel. +256 321 210 200, Email: mailbox@mildmay.or.ug, Website: www.mildmay.or.ug

Mildmay Uganda (MUg) is a national Non-Government Organization established in Uganda in 1998 as a Centre of Excellence for provision of comprehensive HIV&AIDS prevention, care, and treatment and training services. Overtime, Mildmay Uganda has evolved and diversified its services specializing in delivery of comprehensive healthcare including Treatment Services; Health Systems Strengthening; Other Complementary Social Services; Health Training and Education; and Research.

Mildmay Uganda's core programmes are concentrated in 16 districts of Central Uganda with support from PEPFAR through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In the new Strategic Plan (2013 -2018), the organization is gradually expanding its program reach in other areas of Uganda.

They pioneered a Family- centred approach to prevention care and treatment. This involves the use of the first family member tested as index client to reach the whole family/household. The Mildmay Uganda family-centred model has been documented. Mildmay Uganda was indeed one of the first organizations in sub Saharan Africa to provide free HIV care to children living with HIV.

Mildmay Uganda uses a multi-disciplinary approach to prevention, care and treatment. This holistic approach focuses on the physical, social, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of a client. The multi-disciplinary team brings together a range of professionals including; Medical, spiritual, nutritionists, social workers, occupational / physiotherapists, to address the needs of our clients.

Mildmay Uganda is one of the three beacon centres in Africa – a Paediatric Palliative Care Training and Clinical Excellence Centre. MUg provides specialized paediatric palliative care and intensive nutritional rehabilitation for positive children. This is the only such facility in Uganda. In order to respond to the growing need of paediatric ART, MUg now offers paediatric palliative care training thus increasing accessibility to ART for the children. According to Dr. Karamagi Yvonne, Director Medical Services at Mildmay Uganda, Mildmay is champion to implementing paediatric and adolescent HIV care in Uganda.

A satellite clinic model was initiated in 2005, which utilizes systems strengthening approaches in improving health services at district health facilities to initiate and strengthen comprehensive HIV service delivery capacity. The satellite clinic approach has been adapted into the MUg Health Systems Strengthening project in 16 districts in central Uganda. MUg has a transitional clinic for young people between 10 - 24 years to bridge the gap between the paediatric and adult services. The clinic has a special focus on empowering young people living with HIV&AIDS to make healthy sexual and reproductive choices.

MUG uses a work-based, student-centered and action learning approaches to training and education. The philosophy is that care and training go hand-in-hand for enhanced learning; students are given access to real patients and situations.

Mildmay Uganda offers a wide range of specialized services with the aim of early detection, prevention and treatment of AIDS Related Conditions (ARC) that may cause serious disabilities among PLHIV or hinder the effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy (ART) which is the most effective palliation for HIV/AIDS.



*Mildmay Uganda Laboratory*

Mildmay Uganda is also committed to ensure that prevention of mother to child transmission works effectively as they have over 1000 children on option B+ which increases chances of having a negative baby.

### **Mildmay Uganda's paediatric and adolescents HIV intervention**

Mildmay Uganda focuses on scaling up comprehensive HIV services, including provider-initiated counseling and testing, integrated tuberculosis and HIV services, care for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), and provision of antiretroviral therapy (ART) for adults and children in 16 districts in Central Uganda.

With direct Technical Assistance (TA) from CDC-Uganda, MUg is currently supporting health systems strengthening efforts in more than 400 health facilities in 16 districts: Nakasongola, Nakaseke, Luwero, Wakiso, Mityana, Mubende, Mpigi, Gomba, Butambala, Lyantonde, Masaka, Sembabule, Kalungu, Bukomamsimbi, Lwengo, and Buikwe.

The MUg district health system strengthening program is aimed at scaling up comprehensive HIV and AIDS service

MUG currently supports more than 99,257 people living with HIV/AIDS (60% women, 10% children); of these 91% are enrolled on ART in the district health facilities and its main site in Lweza. There are over 7,983 Children in Care and over 20,000 children under the OVC.

Youth friendly centers to provide adolescent friendly services, Sexual and Reproductive health services, life skills, and access to Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART). To date, Mildmay Uganda has established over 50 adolescent centers in 16 districts. The centres provide quality

and safe health services with special focus on confidential HIV care for the young people.

**Capacity building of health workers:** Mildmay Uganda has trained up to 1,200 health workers in the 16 districts to manage paediatric HIV.

**Infrastructure:** Increased service delivery through improved infrastructure at the facility e.g. improved 14 hubs to provide comprehensive counseling and testing, viral load testing, CD4 testing and Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) to ensure early enrollment into care.

Mildmay Uganda has Recruited professional counselors in selected public and private not for profit facilities to reach out to mothers/ parents to bring their children and reach out to adolescents.

Through training and mentorships supported by Mildmay Uganda, health workers at facilities have been empowered to perform forecasting and quantification for adequate stock on ARVs to ensure that there is continuous access by the clients. Mental health (psychiatry) service with depression as the commonly treated ailment in this clinic.

Eye clinic assesses for, treats and prevents eye complications associated with HIV/AIDS so as to improve the individual patient's quality of life.

Dental care. At Mildmay Uganda for only children because of the cost implications of adult dental care with dental caries being the commonest diagnosis at the clinic.

### **General clinic (private services)**

Due to increasing demand, Mildmay Uganda recently opened up a private clinic offering high quality general health care services to the general public irrespective of one's HIV status. Through the private clinic services at the main site in Lweza on Entebbe Road, members of the general public, corporates can now access these services at reasonable cost. Clients who may not be able to visit the centre during the MUg designated days or those that have missed their normal visits can also utilize Wednesdays. Appointments can also be made.

### **In-patient services for adults and children**

Mildmay Uganda offers inpatient services for both adults and children who need close monitoring by our professional multi - disciplinary team. This service is free of charge to all our children in care however it is also available at a reasonable cost to the members of the general public who may require it. Contact us for further details.

The research teams at Mildmay Uganda focus their energies in conducting research and evaluations to inform policy, training and practice for integrated prevention, care and treatment of HIV and emerging health priorities in resource limited settings.

The research undertaken by Mildmay Uganda and in collaborations with other organizations has led to the generation of evidence-based information that has supported the operations of the organizations and other partner institutions.



*Part of the front view of Bethany Clinic*

In doing this, ensuring Programme quality service delivery, efficiency, effectiveness and sharing best practices of Mildmay Uganda was realized. Our work involves generation and dissemination of research, evaluation findings and abstracts. We also undertake research collaborations all over the world. A Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee is functional to review research and evaluations policies.

### **Way forward**

According to Dr. Karamagi, Paediatric and Adolescent HIV is a critical area that will reduce HIV infection more especially among the young people and also provide quality HIV Care to young people living with HIV. The program can be beefed up through:

- Increase targeted provision of adolescent friendly HIV prevention, care and treatment services to prevent new HIV infections amongst adolescents (10-19 years).
- Increase retention of children, adolescent and pregnant and lactating women on ART.
- Increase male involvement.
- Advocate National level harmonization to increase Paediatric/ Adolescent/ EID ART coverage to 100%.
- Create Linkages and Referral mechanisms support/ financing for sustainability.
- Establish Data accuracies in systems to support policy implementation, and planning
- Create Integrated Early Childhood development programs (beyond preschool, health, nutrition, child protection)
- Strengthen Social protection (access to social legal services; cultural and gender norm barriers; Gender Based Violence welfare systems to address child poverty: fuel HIV epidemic especially I adolescent age group.
- Strengthen Inter-sectoral collaborations: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and other sectors like Agriculture, Trade & industry and ICT linked efforts for effective empowerment schemes more especially to adolescents.
- Encourage couples to voluntary access HIV counseling and Testing services.