

PROJECT TITLE

ST. CAMILLUS VCT CENTRE

REPORT

PROGRESS REPORT ANNUAL

PERIOD COVERED

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2008



BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

HIV/AIDS is still a life threatening issue all over the world. Many people have lost their lives leaving several dependants parentless and homeless.

Karungu is one of those areas where HIV/AIDS prevalence continues to be among the highest countrywide. Six months ago the prevalence rate scored in Karungu was 50% which was quite alarming this shows that a lot is still to be done.

Despite this highest prevalence, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the entire population along the lake here do not know their HIV status. Through its remarkable efforts to avert the spread of HIV/AIDS, St. Camillus M. Hospital and Italian MAE Project (MAE = Ministero Affari Esteri/Ministry of Foreign Affairs) have embarked on the Mobile Clinic VCT, in hard to reach areas within Karungu Division and its environs. This extension of the service has helped those people in hard to reach areas know their HIV status.

OUR GOALS:

Our main goals are:

- To prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS within Karungu and its environs
- To improve the life of people living with HIV/AIDS by educating them on how to lead a positive life and to have their behavior changed
- VCT is the Centre for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment

OBJECTIVES:

- To avert the spread of HIV/AIDS among individuals and couples by introducing a risk reduction plan during HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT)
- To decrease the number of HIV infection among children by the introduction of mother to child transmission of HIV information during birth and even during breast feeding
- To refer the infected individuals to appropriate support centers and to identify support groups within their villages

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT:

The report gives an actual overview of the project within a period of one year and the efforts undertaken by SCMHS and MAE Project in addressing the HIV issue, staffing, capacity building, challenges, achievements, future plans and clients statistical analysis for the period covered.

INTRODUCTION:

In sub-saharian Africa the HIV has caused a severe and generalized epidemic. Many people are living in fear due to its adverse impacts. It is true that many people are either infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. For this matter, it has become a concern to the stakeholders to address HIV/AIDS issue aimed at prevention, effective care and treatment.

As a result of the introduction of ART Project a few years ago has helped address the issue of treatment to those already infected with HIV/AIDS.

The latest HIV/AIDS surveys done in Kenya however indicate an upward surge in HIV/AIDS prevalence from 6.7% in 2003 to 7.8% in 2008. According to provinces, Nyanza leads the pack with 15.4% prevalence. It is also indicated that out of one hundred couples tested 50% became discordant couples that is according to KAIS (Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey) Report conducted in October 2008. This indicates that a lot is still to be done to address the HIV pandemic

ST. CAMILLUS M. HOSPITAL

Situated in Nyanza province where the HIV/AIDS prevalence is highest among provinces. The hospital and MAE Project have enforced their efforts in ensuring the people around the lake and beyond are saved. Many people living here are peasant farmers with few practicing fishing as a source of income for many dependants. The climatic conditions are not favorable leading to crop failure. Many young women have opted for commercial sex leading to high infection rate. This has prompted the Hospital to start several intervention programs to help combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

VCT as an entry point to health care services has played a very significant role in stemming down the new infections of HIV and control of HIV virus among those already infected. The center has managed to record one of the highest numbers of clients in Migori district.

With HIV prevalence of 45% in Karungu, the hospital through its VCT centre has continued to spread its services in hard to reach areas to enable the inhabitants there access to VCT services and care. MAE Project that has joined in the fight against HIV/AIDS has facilitated the mobile VCT that has become very popular among the local community. It is worth noting that many people have benefited from mobile VCT which has been in operation since June 2008.



Fig. 1 : the VCT counselor makes a HIV test

STAFFING:

The center has two full time counseling staff working in ensuring clients are attended to effectively and proper referrals are affected.

CAPACITY BUILDING:

The two staff working in the VCT department offered workshops that were sponsored by MAE Project, the Hospital and Liverpool of Kisumu respectively.

- Paul Obiero attended a workshop on Trauma counseling and psychological debriefing in Nairobi in May.
- Maurice Awuor attended a workshop on child counseling in July and a Couple VCT training in Kisumu in November

From the workshop the two counselors were able to learn a lot to help them in the daily routine work.

CHALLENGES:

- **Stigma and discrimination.** Many people are still stigmatized due to negative attitude towards HIV/AIDS. Some people still fear to be tested where they are not known.
- **Cultural norms:** there are a number of people who still cling to cultural practices such as wife inheritance which in itself is a way of promoting HIV transmission
- **Disclosure:** disclosure is a process which can even take one year therefore it is not easy for some people to tell their status to their spouse or their relatives.
- **Few couple clients:** despite publicity of VCT services, many people are still unwilling to take their spouses for couple counseling services. This has led to many being suspicious of their partners and in itself has caused misunderstanding in many households.
- **Myths and misconceptual** ideas that surround HIV/AIDS. Many people still believe in myths such as curses or taboos.



Fig. 2 : mobile clinic

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Introduction of mobile VCT, many people in the interior parts of Karungu are currently able to access mobile VCT services, care and treatment monthly.
- Due to the workshops attended by the two counselors in the site, our clients are benefiting the services.
- Confidentiality within the centre has helped reduce stigma at the work place leading to a number of people willing to know their HIV status within the work place.
- Reduced mortality and morbidity rate: through VCT, any people once tested and referred are able to access the ARVs within our ART project. This has greatly reduced the death rates within our surrounding.
- The site has been accredited by NASCOP team

FUTURE PLANS:

- To intensify mobile VCT services in hard to reach areas and to enable many people access VCT services, care and treatments.
- To maintain and improve quantity of services to clients attending VCT services
- To initiate child counseling and disclosure for affected and infected children.
- To introduce a youth center within the institution and at the VCT site to enable youth clients access to full information on HIV/AIDS.
- To implement and initiate VCT services to the entire Karungu Community and its environs and bring about behavior change within the society
- To organize and promote quality assurance exercise within the site.



Fig. 3 : positive and negative results of HIV tests

The table below gives a summary of the VCT clients from January to December 2008

	MALE			FEMALE					
MONTH	N. TESTED	N. POSITIVE	N. NEGATIVE	N. TESTED	N. POSITIVE	N. NEGATIVE	TOTAL TESTED	TOTAL POSITIVE	PERCENT POSITIVE
JAN	35	25	10	41	31	10	76	56	73%
FEB	41	31	13	71	45	26	112	76	66%
MARCH	47	22	25	52	33	19	99	55	56%
APRIL	44	27	17	75	50	25	119	77	65%
MAY	64	31	33	74	53	21	138	84	60%
JUNE	83	41	42	113	53	60	196	94	48%
JULY	100	46	54	118	68	50	218	114	52%
AUG	79	26	53	81	35	46	160	61	42%
SEP	101	40	61	96	50	46	197	90	46%
OCT	65	23	42	87	39	48	152	62	41%
NOV	139	28	111	150	44	106	289	72	25%
DEC	107	26	81	93	33	60	200	59	29%
TOTAL	908	366	542	1051	534	517	1959	900	45%

**Compiled and reported by Maurice Awuor
VCT counselor in charge**