

Launch and Dissemination of the Uganda Health Information and Digital Health Strategic Plan



Dr. Atwine joined by stakeholders during the launch of the Health Information and Digital Health Strategic Plan

The Ministry of Health is dedicated to using digital health technologies to enhance healthcare delivery and provide high-quality services to all citizens. To achieve this, MoH developed a Health Information and Digital Health Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, which focuses on utilizing data for decision-making and optimizing health services through digital technologies.

On 8th May 2023, the Ministry of Health, with support from METS, launched and disseminated the strategic plan, aiming to ensure timely access to quality health data, implement digital systems at healthcare facilities, and

strengthen the overall digital health environment by 2025.

The Health Information and Digital Health Strategic Plan was endorsed by Dr. Diana Atwine, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, who emphasized the importance of digitalization for efficient and

cost-effective operations, improved planning, and better access to healthcare data. She called for collective support to advance the objectives of the plan and enhance quality healthcare services through digital transformation.

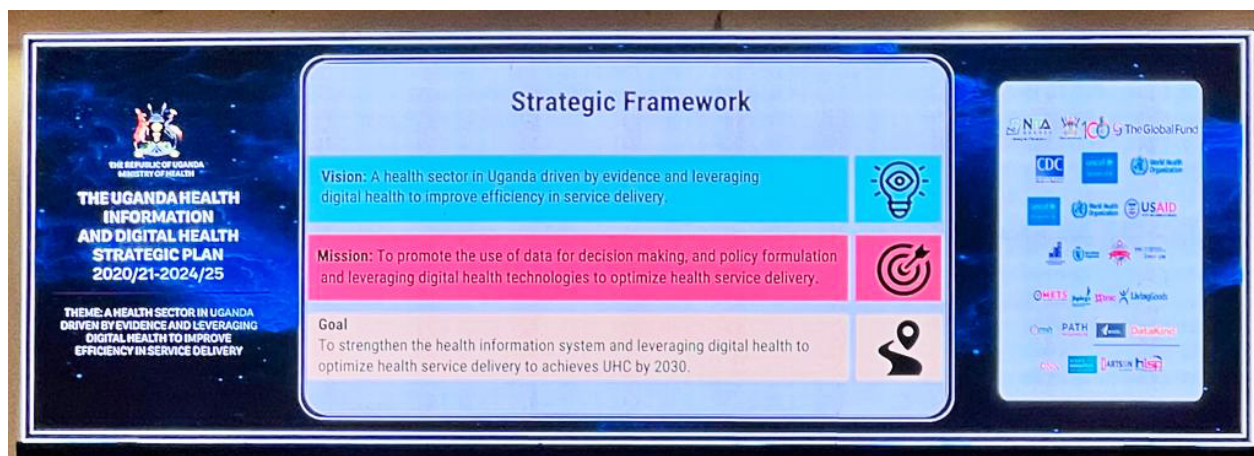


METS team at the launch

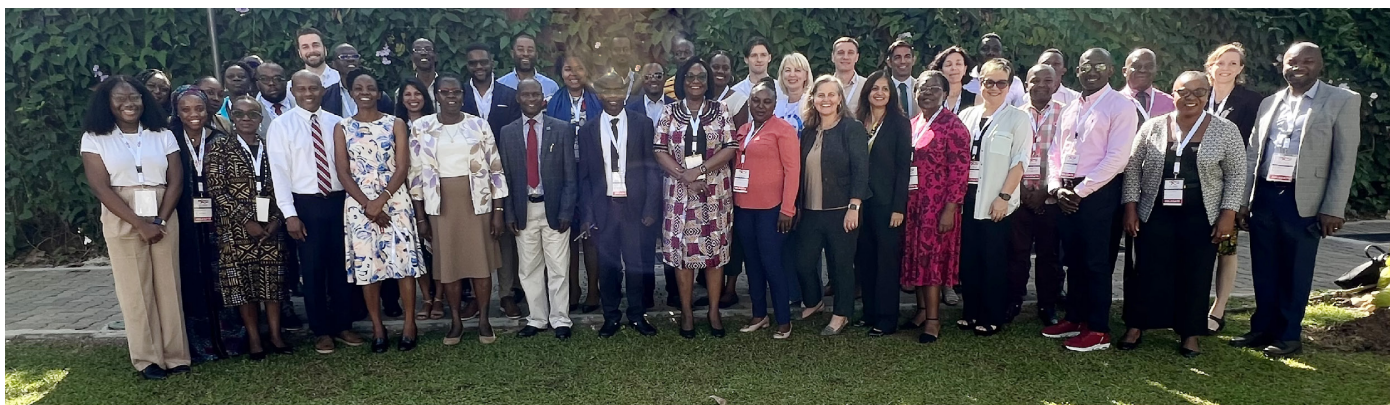
Moments from the launch



Dr. Diana Atwine launching the Strategic Plan



*Ray Ransom, CDC
Uganda representative
speaking during the panel
discussions*



Evaluating the effectiveness of TB preventive treatment

The CDC Foundation, together with the CDC's Centre for Global Health and in partnership with Emory University, and funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, are conducting a project named TB PROTECT, which aims to evaluate the impact of expanding TB preventive treatment (TPT) on TB cases and deaths among people living with HIV (PLHIV). The evaluation is being conducted in 6 countries namely, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Haiti, and Ukraine.

TB is a major cause of illness and death among people living with

HIV, accounting for up to 30% of HIV-related deaths. Although there has been progress in treating HIV globally and there is evidence showing the effectiveness of TPT and antiretroviral therapy (ART) in reducing TB-related illness and deaths, not enough people are receiving TPT.

In 2018, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) pledged to provide TPT to all 14.6 million people living with HIV by the end of 2025. While some progress has been made, we still do not know the overall impact of implementing large scale TPT programs on TB rates and deaths.



Dr. Deus Lukoye the CDC Uganda TB Focal Person talking about Uganda's progress

In Uganda, the TB PROTECT project is being implemented by the Ministry of Health, Makerere University School of Public Health Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support Program (MakSPH/METS) and 17 HIV implementing partners across 54 health facilities.

To assess the implementation status of the project, METS hosted this year's TPT PROTECT Workshop with the main objective of reviewing progress across the implementing countries.

The 3-day workshop (15-17 May 2023) created a platform to share overviews on country TB/HIV programs, findings from Data Quality Assessments, complexities encountered in implementation of the programs as well as insights into best practices.



Other areas of focus included evaluating the completeness and quality of country Electronic Medical Records (EMR) data to understand potential gaps and determine how these can be addressed, discuss key challenges for TPT scale-up and consider strategies for a meta-analysis of data from countries.

The workshop was officially opened

by Dr. Lisa Nelson, the CDC Country Director and was attended by Makerere University School of Public Health Dean, Professor Rhoda Wanyenze, Dr. Prossy Namuwenge from the National TB Program at the Ministry of Health.

The delegates participated in site visits to Kisenyi HCIV and Makerere University Hospital where they visited

TB treatment clinics, laboratory, Electronic Medical Records, and records section.

The project's next steps include determining clear timelines for data analysis and discussions on dissemination plans for country stakeholders and the global community and developing timelines for capacity building activities.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is determined to enhance the quality of services provided to People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and ensure that every individual receives decent care and support. To achieve this goal, the MoH has placed great emphasis on promoting a client-centered care approach.

As part of this initiative, the MoH recognizes the importance of client audit tools such as Children and adolescents living with HIV (CALHIV), Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), and Adult audit tools in assessing and evaluating services delivered to PLHIV. However, the current manual versions of these tools have posed challenges, resulting in a slower uptake than expected.

To overcome these challenges, the MoH has collaborated with RHITES-N-Acholi/ USAID UHA, METS, and SITES to automate these audit tools into the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system. This digitalization effort is in its final stages, with a nationwide rollout of the audit tool about to be implemented. The automation of these audit tools will streamline processes, improve efficiency, and facilitate better data management for improved client-centered care.

Despite the initial hurdles, some sites have demonstrated exceptional performance in implementing the audit tools

Advancing Client-Centered Care: Automating Audit Tools For Improved HIV Services' Quality



Dr. Flavia Nakanwagi from METS illustrates a case during the PMTCT mini harvest, held at Silver Springs Hotel

effectively. Acknowledging the value of their experiences, a mini harvest meeting was organized to allow these sites to share their experiences. This knowledge sharing exercise aims to scale up best practices, reinforce PMTCT

indicators, and encourage broader adoption of the audit tool during the national rollout.

During the harvest meetings, collaborative efforts were focused on developing change packages

targeting two critical areas. Firstly, strategies were formulated to address maternal retesting of HIV-negative mothers at various stages, including Antenatal Care (ANC), Maternity, and Postnatal Care (PNC). This change package seeks to ensure comprehensive testing and support for mothers, prioritizing the health and well-being of both mothers and their children.

Secondly, a change package was designed to encompass the provision of all services related to Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) and Comprehensive Adolescent and Adult HIV Care (CALHIV). This holistic approach aims to strengthen the quality of care and support offered to PLHIV, addressing their unique needs throughout their healthcare journey.

By automating audit tools and implementing the change packages developed through the mini harvest meeting, the MoH expects major improvements in PMTCT indicators and an overall enhancement of the client-centered care experience. These efforts mark a crucial step forward in achieving the MoH's vision of providing high-quality HIV services to all PLHIV.



Learning/ mini-harvest meeting on maternal retesting and provision of all services to CALHIV and PMTCT mothers services provision using audit tools

GALLERY



Tools distribution for Regional Referral Hospitals

METS distributed 49 HMIS tool variations (facility data capture registers, laboratory logs and client cards) to 38 Implementing Partners. The tools will aide data capture and contribute to collection of clean data that allows for informed decision making in over 136 districts.

TPT PROTECT Team Site Visits

TPT PROTECT workshop delegated during a site learning visit to benchmark best practices. The team also visited the Laboratory - GeneXpert machine that is used for testing for TB (takes 90 minutes to get result). Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) were cited as a key intervention to collect clean data and access to analytics for program guidance.



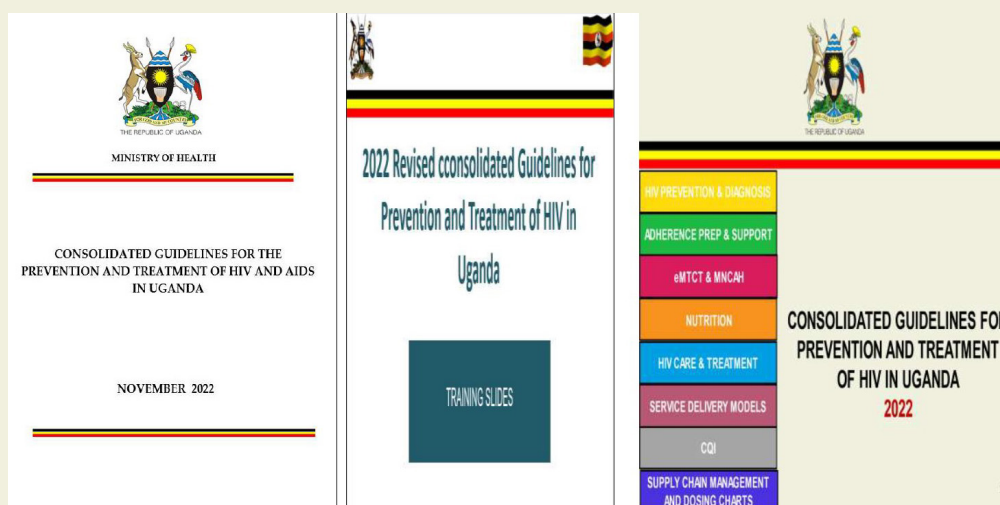
Dr. Douglas Tuhumwire (R), the HIV Clinic Team Lead welcoming delegates to Kisenyi HCIV

Launch of the consolidated guidelines for the prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS

The Ministry of Health in Uganda, in collaboration with development partners, has reviewed and updated guidelines for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment based on the 2022 guidance from the World Health Organization.

These guidelines were approved and shared nationwide in April 2023. Subsequently, a training of trainers (TOT) took place from May 9th to 11th, 2023, at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Kampala.

The national trainers who participated in the TOT will enhance the capacity



Key documents that will guide the regional trainings

of facility-level trainings throughout Uganda by cascading their knowledge and skills acquired during the TOT. This initiative aims to strengthen the overall response to HIV/AIDS in the country

and ensure that high-quality care and support are provided at all levels. METS continues to offer technical support and supports the printing of the guidelines.

Data Warehousing Updates



CDC, JHPIEGO, METS visited MoH to inspect data center sites proposed for data warehouses

TDYer visit on the Recency Infection Surveillance



The team provided technical assistance on data management and continuous quality improvement for recency and comprised of a team from UCSF headquarters and METS. The visit was held at the METS office in Kololo on 20 April 2023.

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