

# **The Open University of Tanzania**



**POLICY ON HIV/AIDS  
DAR ES SALAAM**

**DECEMBER 2005**

## FOREWORD

Since the early 1980s' the HIV/AIDS epidemic has affected different population groups the world over. As an institution, The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) faces several realities that put members of its community at a high risk of being infected or affected by the pandemic. It is important therefore that concerted efforts are made to ensure that the battle against the pandemic is won.

Clear vision, principles and goals are important to guide strategies, plans and activities that can ensure success. For all these to be attained a policy statement like this one is essential. This Institutional HIV/AIDS policy is a reflection of The Open University of Tanzania's desire to address the battle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As a broad statement of intent the OUT policy on HIV/AIDS is also an expression of the institution's commitment to participate in the battle against the HIV and AIDS.

This Policy presents the background information about the state of HIV/AIDS problem at global level, in Tanzania and at the Open University of Tanzania in particular. It provides the general framework in terms of principles, transmission and prevention, HIV/AIDS testing, care for people living with HIV/AIDS and Orphans, coordination and collaboration, research priorities, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization for HIV/AIDS interventions

It is my hope that the objectives contained in this policy are understood and translated into real activities and actions. The OUT HIV/AIDS policy insists that besides refraining from risk behaviours in our performances and execution of duties and services, OUT community should be empowered with knowledge and competencies to protect themselves and others from HIV/AIDS infections as well as provide care and support to infected and affected individuals.

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**Director Institute of Continuing Education**  
**Open University of Tanzania**

**Dar es Salaam**  
**December, 2005.**

## PREFACE

HIV/AIDS is a disastrous pandemic that poses a serious threat to the survival of human beings. It is a formidable challenge to the entire world, Tanzania and consequently the Open University of Tanzania's community.

Several realities put The Open University of Tanzania at a high risk of facing the threats of HIV/AIDS. These include being spread in 25 regions of the country, having the number of its employees and students' increasing yearly and the fact that it has higher numbers of students' concentration in mostly affected regions like Dar es Salaam, Mbeya, Arusha, Mwanza and Iringa.

According to the OUT Rolling Strategic Plan 2006/07 – 2011/12, The Open University of Tanzania is committed to contribute in addressing and combating HIV/AIDS spread in the country and at the institutional level. It is to be noted that the HIV/AIDS preventive activities at OUT started way back in 2001, when the Technical AIDS Sub-Committee was established. Since then, a number of activities were performed including HIV/AIDS awareness seminars, workshops, training of counsellors and inclusion of some aspects of HIV/AIDS in the OUT Rolling Strategic Plan. All these focused on sensitizing the employees and students so as to be aware of the epidemic and more importantly to work to reduce its impact on The OUT work force. However, these efforts have been going without being guided by a comprehensive institutional framework (i.e. policy) to guide its operations.

It is because of this realization that OUT has decided to develop its Institutional HIV/AIDS policy. On the one hand, the policy will provide a guiding framework in the fight against the epidemic so as to secure academic performance and productivity. On the other hand, it will enhance committed leadership in co-ordinating HIV/AIDS intervention for its employees and surrounding communities.

Second, on behalf of the Open University of Tanzania and on my own behalf I thank the Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) in a very special way for its valuable financial support which facilitated the development of this Policy in a one week workshop held in Morogoro.

The Management of The Open University of Tanzania organized a workshop for OUT Community to reflect and discuss the Policy Draft before the current

version was produced. It is hoped that the Policy will strengthen the Institutional efforts in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

I am deeply thankful to the Institute of Continuing Education and in particular Prof. Yosiah D. M. Bwatwa and other members of the Team for preparing this policy for the Open University of Tanzania.

It is my hope that every OUT community member in different capacities will involve themselves fully and be at the forefront in the war against HIV/AIDS.

**Prof. Tolly S. A. Mbwette**  
**Vice Chancellor**

**November, 2005**  
**Dar es Salaam**

## ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AMREF	African Medical Research Foundation
ARVs	Anti-Retrovirals
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IEC	Information Education and Communication
MHEST	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
NACP	National AIDS Control Programme
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OUT	The Open University of Tanzania
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
POLWHA	People Openly Living With HIV/AIDS
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TACAIDS	Tanzania Commission for AIDS
WHO	World Health Organisation

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## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

HIV/AIDS is a pandemic that poses a great challenge to the world, the Tanzanian nation and the Open University of Tanzania Community. Statistics available show that several countries have been affected by the problem and the cases reported have been increasing yearly.

In 2002 the number of HIV infected people worldwide was 42 million. But the number is expected to increase to 87 million by the year 2010. While the Sub-Saharan prevalence rate continues to increase, the magnitude of the problem varies from one country to another.

In Tanzania, the first three AIDS cases were reported in 1983, and by 1986 all regions in Tanzania mainland had reported AIDS cases. In 2002, around 2 million people were living with HIV/AIDS in the country and 80% of them were in the productive age group of 20 – 44 years. Nationally, HIV/AIDS is described as a national disaster which calls for more concerted efforts and initiatives at various levels including institutions of higher learning.

The Open University of Tanzania had a population of 224 employees (by December, 2005) out of which 133 were males and 91 were females and in 2005, it had a student population of 20457 of which 16092 were males and 4365 females. The University is said to have had 1 or 2 HIV/AIDS cases and this number is expected to increase. The institution had until November, 2005 done some activities geared at control of HIV/AIDS. These included seminars and workshops on creating awareness to employees and students, training HIV/AIDS counselors as well as including some aspects of HIV/AIDS preventive measures in the OUT Strategic Plan.

## **2.0 JUSTIFICATION OF HIV/AIDS POLICY FOR OUT**

OUT operates in all the 25 regions with each having a regional centre. Again, the number of employees and students enrolled is increasing yearly. HIV/AIDS Intervention activities since 2001 have been limited. The HIV/AIDS institute of Continuing Education was assigned the coordination responsibility to assist to prevent and mitigate the impact of the epidemic by sensitization of employees and students through

education and information. However, the response to HIV/AIDS at OUT has been to some extent constrained by the absence of an institutional HIV/AIDS policy to guide its interventions.

Existence of HIV/AIDS policy at OUT will enhance committed leadership in coordinating HIV/AIDS intervention for its employees, students and the surrounding communities.

OUT is operating in all regions of Tanzania, therefore a policy on HIV/AIDS has had to be put in place to guide on the principles, objectives, interventions, set up for prevention, care, support, research and medical treatment so as to ensure sustained academic performance and productivity of staff and students.

### **3.0 OUT SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW**

Preventive HIV/AIDS activities at OUT started way back in 2001, when the Technical AIDS Sub-Committee was established. Thereafter, a number of activities were undertaken including HIV/AIDS awareness seminars, workshops, training of counsellors and inclusion of some aspects of HIV/AIDS in the OUT Rolling Strategic Plan.

### **4.0 PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE POLICY**

OUT initiatives against HIV/AIDS pandemic shall be guided by the following principles that will be mainstreamed in all institutional plans, programmes, projects and action plans:

- i) OUT employees, students and community are individually and collectively responsible for protecting themselves and others against HIV/AIDS and for providing care and support to the infected and affected.
- ii) OUT employees and students shall promote awareness of HIV/AIDS and related issues so as to prevent transmission of infection and to promote appropriate behavioural change.
- iii) The support and commitment of the OUT leadership is vital for sustainable and effective interventions against HIV/AIDS.
- iv) OUT employees, students and the community can protect themselves from infection by strictly adhering to the ABC



principle: A- Abstain from sexual intercourse, B- Be faithful to one sexual partner who is safe from infection, C- Condom use.

- v) HIV/AIDS institutional plans and programmes shall be collectively coordinated, initiated and managed by the OUT employees and students and they will be facilitated accordingly.
- vi) Free access to pre, window and post counseling to all OUT employee and students.
- vii) Gender equality and the empowerment of women are vital to the successful prevention of HIV infection and coping with HIV/AIDS.
- viii) Provision of cost effective quality counseling, health care and social support to People Openly Living With HIV/AIDS.
- ix) Legal rights of employees and students infected or affected with HIV/AIDS shall be fully protected.
- x) All OUT employees, students and the surrounding community will fight all forms of stigma against HIV/AIDS.

#### **4.0 VISION**

OUT aspires to become a committed institution of higher learning, in empowering its employees, students and the surrounding communities with competencies to protect themselves and others from HIV/AIDS infections and shall provide care and support to those infected and affected within its capacity.

#### **5.0 MISSION**

To combat HIV/AIDS pandemic at the OUT through response programmes of protection, care and support that will be collectively initiated, supported and implemented by OUT leadership, employees, students and communities.

#### **6.0 GOAL**

The major goal of the OUT HIV/AIDS policy is to first of all stem the rise in the rate of infection. Next, OUT will seek reduction in the rate and ultimately eliminate infection. This will salvage manpower from dissipation. This endeavour will be facilitated by research and the establishment of a requisite legal framework.

## **7.0 OBJECTIVES**

- i) To raise awareness against HIV/AIDS infection through information education and effective use of technology.
- ii) To reduce the prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS amongst OUT employees, students and the surrounding community.
- iii) To discourage risky practices in the guise of culture, such as inheritance of widows, unsafe sex and the use of unsterilized sharp objects.
- iv) To promote effective treatment of STIs and other HIV related infections.
- v) To ensure early diagnosis of HIV infection through voluntary counseling and testing.
- vi) To provide counseling and social support services for the infected and the affected.
- vii) To encourage the spirit of community involvement in HIV/AIDS preventive activities such as their implementation and fund raising.
- viii) To conduct research on HIV/AIDS and to disseminate the findings.
- ix) To network with other institutions of higher learning through the Sectoral Committee on HIV/AIDS of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MHEST).
- x) To enhance gender equity by recognising the rights of women to access safer sexual practices and reproductive health education.

## **9.0 TRANSMISSION AND PREVENTION**

### **9.1 Transmission**

In Tanzania the leading mode of HIV/AIDS transmission is through heterosexual intercourse, which accounts for about 90% of all HIV/AIDS infections. The other mode of transmission is blood-to-blood contact with someone who is HIV positive. Such situation occurs through unscreened or blood product transfusion, organ transplant, shared needles, skin contact with an open sour or blood, sharing tooth brushes, razor blades or other accessories that might have traces of blood on them. Transmission can also be from mother/parent with HIV/AIDS infection to child.

At OUT the most likely way of transmitting HIV/AIDS to students and employees is through heterosexual intercourse among themselves or with members of the larger community.

## **9.2 Risks of HIV Infection**

HIV/AIDS at the OUT is a multi-sectoral issue and employees, students, spouses and other members of the community are likely to be infected. Hence, HIV infection is likely to be a result of social interaction.

## **9.3 HIV/AIDS Sexual Transmission**

- i) Sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS can be prevented using the following strategies; the use of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) in order to create awareness among staff and students. The IEC strategy can assist to determine preventive measures of practising abstinence, being faithful to one sexual partner, correct and consistent use of condoms, in that order.
- ii) Procurement and distribution of condoms at OUT headquarters and regional centres can also be one of the strategies to curb HIV/AIDS sexual transmission.
- iii) OUT shall use trained counselors at different levels in faculties and regional centres. Training of counselors can enable OUT to establish counseling centres/units for counseling services.

## **9.4 HIV/AIDS Prevention**

- i) It has been acknowledged and proved that condoms are an important, efficient and effective means of protection against HIV infection. OUT shall procure, provide and distribute good quality condoms and make them easily available to its employees, students and regional centres and surrounding communities. It shall ensure that all its employees and students possess skills of how to effectively use condoms.
- ii) Given that STIs are a major factor in facilitating HIV infection OUT shall provide its employees with a conducive environment for early detection, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of STIs. It shall also ensure that treatment of STIs is accessible and affordable through its medical service provider(s). Public information and awareness of symptoms, partner notification and counseling shall be done by OUT counselors on a regular basis so that employees and students are able to take measures and seek early treatment.

## **9.5 Drug Substance Abusers**

Some employees and students might be involved in drug substance abuse. The commonly used drug substance includes alcohol, which can put the user at risk of HIV/AIDS infection. In order to assist substance abusers who become addicts, OUT will devise IEC and provide counseling services to alleviate the suffering. Referrals to appropriate institutions shall also be devised to assist drug abusers.

## **9.6 People Openly Living With HIV/AIDS [POLWHA]**

- i) In order for the OUT to assist POLWHA, it shall have to perform some roles, to the infected and affected. This will be done by providing adequate treatment and medical care, counseling and social support services for POLWHA and their families; in combating stigma and strengthening the concept of living positively.
- ii) The OUT and its medical service providers shall set up or participate in voluntary counseling and testing as well as facilitating access to ARVs for its community.

## **10.0 HIV/AIDS TESTING**

- i) OUT shall initiate and continuously provide access to testing facilities to its employees, family members and students at Headquarters and Regional Centres.
- ii) The testing shall be voluntary, through pre window and post counseling to employees, students and the surrounding communities.
- iii) OUT shall support those who are HIV/AIDS negative through awareness campaigns, counseling, training and provision of protective measures like condoms.
- iv) OUT shall provide and ensure adequate number of counselors at Headquarters and in its Regional Centres.
- v) OUT positive HIV/AIDS employees shall be provided with treatment and counseling services.

## **10.1 Confidentiality**

OUT shall abide by the rule of confidentiality at all its HIV/AIDS testing and counseling facilities in accordance with the medical professional ethics.

## **10.2 Informed Consent**

OUT employees/students HIV/AIDS status shall not be communicated to OUT management or other staff or students without the consent of the person concerned. However, management shall provide whatever support possible when informed of the status of its employees, students and the surrounding community.

- i) OUT medical service both at the Headquarters and Regional Centres shall provide proper and adequate counseling procedures on HIV/AIDS testing and counseling to its community.
- ii) OUT medical service providers shall not notify anybody else of the results of HIV/AIDS testing without the consent of the individual concerned.

## **10.3 Partner Notification**

OUT medical service providers shall not notify the employee's/student partner on the HIV/AIDS status of ----- . It shall be the responsibility of the employee/student to inform his/her partner on the same.

OUT's married couples shall be encouraged to undergo HIV/AIDS testing together and voluntarily after professional counseling.

## **10.4 Willful Spread of HIV/AIDS Infection**

OUT shall effectively use existing Tanzanian laws against willful spread of HIV/AIDS among its employees/students and the surrounding community.

## **11.0 CARE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS**

- i) OUT employees who are living with HIV/AIDS shall be able to access holistic health care including medical treatment, counseling and social welfare services.
- ii) They shall participate fully in the activities organized by OUT and receive care without discrimination.
- iii) Complementary home and hospital based care shall be encouraged by OUT.

### **11.1 Protection of Health Care Employees**

Health care employees are at risk of contracting HIV infection from patients in the course of their work. In consultation with its medical service providers (at the Headquarters and the Regional Centres), the

OUT shall ensure that health care employees are provided with the necessary gear in accordance with the principles of universal safety precautions against infectious diseases and substances. These may include the following:

- i) Training in self-protection against HIV/AIDS transmission during handling of blood, body fluids, tissues and organs.
- ii) Equipping with protective gear, all health care providers in the designated health facilities as well as in the home-based care.
- iii) Provision of support and counseling services necessary for managing the infected and the affected.

### **11.2 Support Services**

HIV/AIDS is not an isolated health problem of individuals. It is a critical social, cultural, legal and gender problem that has human rights implications in relation to the social welfare of the large numbers of the infected and affected people. The main objective of support services shall be to provide the legal and social framework for the promotion of care and support for the infected widows and orphans. It is therefore stipulated as follows:

- i) The OUT leadership, employees, students and the community shall be sensitized on their obligations to protect their rights and ensure care and support of widows, orphans, POLWHA and PLWHA.
- ii) Through multi-sectoral efforts, OUT will provide support and protection to orphans in specific institutions as well as widows, PLWHA and POLWHA.
- iii) An orphan is hereby recognized to be a child between the age of 0 and 18 years who has lost both parents.

### **11.3 Clinical and Community Based Care**

Comprehensive responses to HIV/AIDS are quite effective in the control of HIV/AIDS pandemic. These include prevention, care and support to the infected in the communities including home based care. However, caring for an AIDS patient at household level is very costly in human, time and financial terms. Hence, the need for community based care and support services will be as follows.

- i) Through multi-sectoral efforts and linkages, OUT shall sensitise the infected, widows and orphans to access community based care and support services.

- ii) As part of holistic care, besides clinical, medical and social welfare care, OUT shall collaborate with religious and societal communities in facilitating spiritual care for the infected.
- iii) Traditional and modern remedies including ARVs or their successors approved by relevant government agencies shall be availed to the infected who may be advised to access them.
- iv) The OUT shall establish a special fund to complement community initiatives in supporting and caring for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

## **12.0 CARE FOR ORPHANS**

OUT HIV prevalence is likely to increase at the headquarters and its regional centres unless the infections are dramatically reduced or completely arrested. This situation is likely to produce orphans. Therefore, OUT shall have mechanisms and procedures to care for employees' orphans.

- i) OUT shall pay final benefits of the deceased employees according to existing legal stipulations.
- ii) OUT shall ensure that its employees' subscriptions to social security schemes are remitted accordingly.
- iii) OUT shall strive to provide care and support to its employees' orphans, widows and widowers.
- iv) Provision of an environment where orphans can access information and acquire life skills to overcome risks and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS infection and living positively with HIV for those already infected.

## **13.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS**

OUT is likely to have more PLWHA, in future and shall make an affordable medical plan for treatment while safeguarding the treatment of employees with terminal illness as well. In this case:

- i) OUT shall collaborate with other bodies like NACP, TACAIDS, and various NGOs and CBOs in updating and observing the rights of PLWHA.
- ii) All OUT employees shall be entitled to legal, civil and human rights without discrimination based on their HIV/AIDS status or gender.
- iii) OUT shall not discriminate against HIV/AIDS affected employees in matters related to further education, training opportunities, professional and long-term training, employment and social services.

- iv) OUT current employees and those aspiring to be employed shall not be subjected to HIV screening and testing as a pre-requisite for employment.
- v) OUT employees/students who have HIV/AIDS and are admitted into private or public health facilities, shall be entitled to all social benefits like other HIV/AIDS negative employees/students.
- vi) OUT shall ensure that all its employees/students at headquarters and regional centres are protected from HIV/AIDS transmission by providing information, education and interventions so as to change behaviour.
- vii) OUT shall hold the right of accountability from its employees living with HIV/AIDS who have received counseling, treatment services and prevention of infection.
- viii) OUT shall endeavour to ensure that human rights concerns on HIV/AIDS are adhered to and this will include:
  - a) Privacy and freedom of association,
  - b) Freedom of expression of opinion, freely receiving and imparting information to oneself and others,
  - c) Work, marriage and family access to education and on-job training,
  - d) Social welfare security at work, proper and adequate standards of living,
  - e) Sharing of research results, scientific discoveries and related benefits,
  - f) Freedom from political and illness-related pressure and punishment,
  - g) Equal protection and equality within the framework of OUT's rules and regulations and Tanzanian laws.

#### **14.0 CO-ORDINATION AND COLLABORATION**

- i) HIV/AIDS activities at OUT shall be co-coordinated by the HIV/AIDS Technical Sub Committee [See Appendix.1].
- ii) OUT shall collaborate with the Ministry of Health, TACAIDS, NACP and other bodies dealing with HIV/AIDS.

#### **15.0 RESEARCH**

- i) OUT shall realize, respect and adhere to its own research ethics and those of Tanzania and the world at large.
- ii) The HIV/AIDS research agenda shall be included in the OUT research plans in each faculty/institute,
- iii) OUT will liaise with other organizations, both local and international in doing research on HIV/AIDS matters. Emphasis shall be given to HIV/AIDS research in the social, epidemiological and clinical studies,



- iv) OUT shall encourage its employees to participate in local and international workshops, conferences and seminars in order to broaden their knowledge on HIV/AIDS including participation in short-term training in related areas to strengthen research capacity supported with adequate funding from OUT, collaborative partners and the national institutions,
- v) Initiate further research whose results could be used for PLWHA and POLWHA, as well as those who are HIV/AIDS negative,
- vi) Plan and design a Data Bank on HIV/AIDS issues including interventions. Publish and disseminate the research findings to relevant sources.

## **16.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

### **16.1: Monitoring**

- i) OUT through its HIV/AIDS technical sub-committee shall ensure that there is progress in the implementation of HIV/AIDS policy through proper tracking of the utilization of the available human, material and financial resources.
- ii) OUT shall ensure that all regional centres are well equipped with resources for promoting HIV/AIDS activities such as interventions and monitoring.
- iii) OUT shall ensure that all employees/students at the regional centres are actively involved in HIV/AIDS activities.

### **16.2: Evaluation**

- i) OUT shall from time to time critically assess and appraise the outcome of its HIV/AIDS activities. This will enable the HIV/AIDS technical sub-committee to establish weaknesses/challenges in the policy implementation and to take appropriate actions.
- ii) OUT shall involve organisations dealing with HIV/AIDS in the evaluation of its HIV/AIDS activities in order to acquire new knowledge and skills. Such organizations will include TACAIDS, NACP, AMREF and WHO and others.

## **17.0 RESOURCE MOBILISATION FOR HIV/AIDS INTERVENTIONS**

- i) OUT, through the HIV/AIDS Technical Sub-committee, shall mobilize resources from various sources for HIV/AIDS interventions. These will include financial, physical and human resources. The resources will be

- mobilized internally as well as externally. This will include OUT funds and grants received through its parent Ministry, MHEST.
- ii) OUT's medical budget shall be increased to cater for the HIV/AIDS related activities
  - iii) OUT shall collaborate with the Ministry of Health, NACP, TACAIDS, WHO and other local and international organizations which might contribute, assist and participate on HIV/AIDS related costs.
  - iv) OUT shall involve its employees/students and their families in meeting HIV/AIDS related costs
  - v) OUT shall organize fund raising campaigns to support people living with HIV/AIDS.
  - vi) OUT shall ensure and adherence to financial rules and regulations in accounting for the funds related to HIV/AIDS activities.

**OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA HIV/AIDS TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE**

**1.1: Composition**

The OUT Technical Sub-Committee on HIV/AIDS is composed of the following members:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Vice Chancellor	- Chairman
2. Deputy Vice Chancellor	- Member
3. Registrar	- Member
4. Deans	- Members (5)
5. Directors	- Members (2)
6. Dean of Students	- Member
7. Student representatives [male & female]	- Members (2)
8. Trade union Representatives [males & female]	- Member
9. Medical Doctor	- Member
<b>Total</b>	<b>-16 Members</b>

**1.2 Rationale**

The Vice Chancellor is the chief accounting officer of the University thus strengthening the status of the Technical Sub-Committee on HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the HIV/AIDS Technical Sub-Committee shall:

- Ensure the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS activities in the OUT faculties and institutes. And these include:
  - i. Academic programmes with HIV/AIDS courses.
  - ii. Research:
    - HIV/AIDS can be included in the research agenda particularly in the social behavioural, epidemiological and clinical studies.
  - iii. Community services
    - This can appropriately be undertaken in the activities and interventions in the communities surrounding OUT.

**1.3: Functions:**

The main function of the Committee is to co-ordinate HIV/AIDS day-to-day activities in the Open University of Tanzania.

**1.4: Actualisation:**

In order to make its meetings statutory, the Technical Sub-Committee is included in the OUT almanac.

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