



UGANDA
KEY POPULATIONS
CONSORTIUM

World AIDS Day 2025 Statement

Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response

1 December 2025 – Kampala, Uganda. On this year's World AIDS Day, the Uganda Key Populations Consortium (UKPC) stands with our communities and partners across the country to mark both progress made and an alarming reversal now threatening to undermine years of gains in the HIV response.

Uganda has reduced new HIV infections nationally over the last two decades and has become a model country across the world. Yet today, that progress is at serious risk, especially for Key Populations (KPs) including Sex Workers, Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), Transgender persons (TGs), People Who Use and Inject Drugs (PWUIDs), fisherfolk communities, Truck Drivers, people in prisons, and their partners.

According to recent UNAIDS reporting, while Key Populations constitute less than 5% of Uganda's total population, they account for over 30% of new HIV infections. HIV prevalence among Gay and Bisexual men remains at 13-18%, and Sex Workers at 28-34%, while Transgender women face prevalence levels that in some hotspot districts exceed 40% – rates three to six times higher than the general adult population.¹

At the same time, global HIV financing across the spectrum is shrinking. Major donors are scaling down or withdrawing support, bilateral assistance has sharply reduced, and financing priorities are shifting away from community-led services. In Uganda, these cuts are already being felt on the ground:



Drop-in centres have closed or reduced operating hours, limiting access to HIV testing Services (HTS), PrEP, PEP, condoms, lubricants, mental-health support, and peer navigation.



Community outreach teams have been laid off, leaving mobile populations unreached.



Legal aid and emergency response services have slowed, even as stigma, arrests, violence, and displacement increase under the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA).



Treatment interruptions and delayed linkage to care have increased as supported community referral pathways and follow-up visits have reduced.

UKPC's Integrated Key Populations Information System (IKIS) has recorded mounting evidence of the consequences, including rising clinic disengagement among KPs, increased vulnerability to violence and homelessness, and delayed detection of new HIV infections, particularly among young people aged 18–29 from KP communities.

This revelation is deeply concerning because many donors are now pulling the plug amid new global funding shifts. Funding withdrawals do not just reduce program budgets; they erase lifelines and risk undoing a generation of community-built trust that has brought thousands into prevention and treatment for the first time.

Yet even in this crisis, our communities are not retreating.

Across Uganda, KPs are fighting back with courage, innovation, and solidarity:



Peer educators continue to operate voluntarily, ensuring people stay on treatment even when programs lose funding.



Community safe spaces are sustained through shared resources, mutual aid, and partner networks.



Local groups are expanding income-generation activities and small-business cooperatives to protect community members from economic vulnerability that fuels HIV risk.



Human-rights defenders maintain emergency hotlines, document violations, and provide safe referrals despite shrinking protection resources.

UKPC's national coalition of over **140 community organisations** continues coordinating service continuity, data reporting, policy advocacy, and legal response through the IKIS platform.

This is what resilience looks like: communities refusing to be erased when funding retreats.

However, resilience cannot replace investment.

HIV cannot be defeated without reaching those most affected first. Programs cannot succeed when the very communities driving progress are starved of resources.

On this World AIDS Day, UKPC calls on:

The Government of Uganda



To protect and expand domestic financing for KP-inclusive HIV services.



To ensure health-sector integration does not exclude key populations and community-led delivery models.



To uphold human rights protections essential to public health outcomes.

Global Donors and funding mechanisms



To reverse disinvestment in community-led HIV responses.



To protect funding for KP prevention, treatment, legal support, and stigma-reduction programs proven to deliver impact.



To invest in community data systems, such as IKIS, that ensure accountability and targeted interventions.

Development partners and civil society



To strengthen collaborative advocacy protecting the gains made under PEPFAR, Global Fund grants, and bilateral partnerships.



To elevate community voices in decision-making spaces shaping future funding priorities.



Our message is clear:

“No country can end AIDS while abandoning the communities carrying the highest burden.



No funding realignment should come at the cost of human lives.

This World AIDS Day, UKPC honours the strength of key populations across Uganda who continue to protect one another, demand dignity, and lead the fight against HIV, even when resources fade.

Our communities built this response.

Our communities will forward it.

With sustained investment, political will, and true partnership, the promise of an AIDS-free generation remains possible, but only if key populations are kept at the centre.



UGANDA
KEY POPULATIONS
CONSORTIUM

