



**CD-ROM and Electronic Poster Publication**

E62 - Decentralization of services

**CDE1252 - Is initiation of quality antiretroviral therapy under the mango tree possible? Experience of the home based care (HBC), Kitovu Mobile AIDS Organisation in Masaka, Uganda**

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**Issues:** Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is initiated mostly from static urban facilities. Many poor people miss ART because of poverty and inaccessibility to HIV services.

**Description:** To bring ART to the poor living far from urban centres Kitovu Mobile is assessing over 4000 registered 'People Living with HIV/AIDS' (PLHA) (F70% M 30%) for ART eligibility. PLHAs are seen at 120 HBC centres deep in rural areas of 5 districts in South West Uganda. Community workers' homes, under mango trees or the back of churches serve as HBC centres.

Preparation for ART includes physical examination, WHO staging, collection of blood specimens for CD4 estimation, Haemoglobin estimation using a portable 'Haemacue' machine and ART education. After one week CD4 results are given to PLHA at the centres and those eligible for ART (CD4 < 250) informed.

Expert Clients (EC) (PLHA with ART training) continue the education. The ART team returns after two weeks with the ARVs and start treatment. Standard regimens are initiated. Clients are reviewed two weeks later and ARVs 'stepped up' where necessary

**Lessons learned:** The following data shows that quality ART can be delivered in the rural areas by a mobile unit:

At the end of 2009, 1003 PLHA (725 F and 278 M) were receiving ART from Kitovu Mobile, 987 (718 F 269 M) on first line regimens and 16 (9 F 7 M) on second line regimens. 35 Children (22 F 13 M) were on first line treatment. Average adherence level was 96.8%.

85 ECs (60 F 25 M) and over 700 community workers (40% F 60% M) assist in coordination.

**Next steps:** Ensuring quality in monitoring the large amount of data from the field. Reaching many more PLHA for ART by expanding the programme but more CD4 facilities are urgently needed and increased financial and material resources.