Network Support Agents - Uganda

Peninah Kyalimpa- Nyimbwa Multi-Purpose Self Help Group
Expanding the Role of the Networks.

- Three-year USAID funded project implemented by the Alliance between 2006 and 2009.

- 1,300 network support agents operated in 40 districts in Uganda to link community to health services.

- 1.3 million people accessed HIV services and 19,832 vulnerable children were referred for services as a result of the work of the network support agents.

- In one district PMTCT services increased from 1,264 in 2008 to 15,892 in 2009
Becoming a Network Support Agent.

- I tested positive for HIV in 1991 while I was pregnant. I delivered my child but she later died.

- From then on I was openly sharing my experience with other HIV + mothers.

- I was elected for training for the programme Expanding the Role of People Living with HIV in 2009 while I was receiving treatment at Bomba Hospital.
The way we work in the clinic and the community

- Network Support Agents spend 2 days at the clinic and 3 in the community.

- I work with 98 people and 20 families

- The clinic staff are now very positive about our work as NSAs because we are able to work with HIV positive people more easily than they do.
Strengths of the Network Support Agents

- Being HIV positive makes a difference, we are role models for the community.

- NSAs are open about their own HIV status in the community but keep the HIV status of families they work with confidential.

- We work together as NSAs to make sure women do not get lost, we make sure we follow them back in the community.

- Through this model the NSAs are able to link the community and people living with HIV with health workers and government bodies.
Barriers to our work

- Many women fear going to the hospital due to stigma, many are stopped by their husbands. Sometimes they cannot afford transport to health centres and they don’t have money to buy Mama Kits.

- The funding for equipment, transport and food for NSAs is not available yet reaching people in the community is still key.
Looking to the future

- Funding has ended now but we continue to work. Many NSAs have their own families but are unable to look after them very well without support.

- We work to support other people who are HIV positive and support ourselves as PLHIV not to lose hope, because our families still need us. We are very important to our families and our country as well.