

## **TECHNICAL HIV/AIDS SUB – COMMITTEE (TASC)**

### **Introduction**

HIV/AIDS was declared as a National Disaster by President William Benjamin Mkapa in his New Year Eve Speech to the Nation, on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1999. Henceforth, it was resolved to complement the health sector approach with a multi – sector approach in fighting the pandemic. The latter approach entailed among other measures, the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS interventions in the core roles of both public and private institutions. Consequently, efforts to mainstream preventive HIV and AIDS activities in OUT core roles started in 2001, when the Technical AIDS Sub – Committee (TASC) was established. TASC is a Sub – Committee of the Technical AIDS Committee (TAC), chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Parent Ministry namely Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). Chaired by the VC, TASC reports to TAC and TACAIDS. Besides the DVCs, the Sub – Committee is constituted by the entire Institutional Management Committee including Deans and Directors; Secretary to Council (STC); Representatives of Directors of Regional Centres (DRCs), THTU and OUTSO; Gender Unit and NHIF Coordinators. Since its inception to date, TASC has strived to implement successive National Multi – Sectoral Strategic Frameworks (NMSFs) on HIV/AIDS within the context of the Institutional core roles. The relevant NMSFs include NMSF 1: 2003 – 2007; NMSF II: 2008 – 2012; NMSF III: 2013/14 – 2017/18 and NMSF IV: 2018 – 2023.

Among other activities, the implementation process has included initiation and coordination of HIV and AIDS awareness seminars, workshops, training of counselors, development of Institutional Policy on HIV and AIDS and mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS matters in the Institutional Rolling Strategic Plan, curricula and research agenda.

### **Institutional Policy on HIV and AIDS**

In 2005, TASC launched the Institutional Policy on HIV and AIDS. The Vision of the policy is to “empower employees, students and the surrounding communities with competences to protect themselves and others from HIV and AIDS infections and to provide within the capacity of the Institution, care and support to those infected and affected.” It should, however, be stressed that

it is not easy to realize satisfactorily this vision without mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the core functions of the University.

### **Strategic Objective No. 18**

Strategic Objective No. 18 in the Institutional Rolling Strategic Plan 2008/09 – 2012/13 is on Enhanced HIV/AIDS and Medical Health Service. One of its 10 targets is to mainstream HIV and AIDS within the OUT curricula and research agenda. For this reason, in 2009, TASC registered an important mile stone in its endeavour to fight the pandemic, when it carried out a Situational Analysis of HIV and AIDS at the OUT. The study was designed to set the ground for initiating a comprehensive programme for combating HIV and AIDS, including the training and deployment of peer educators throughout the country. Furthermore, the study explored how students' counselling and guidance services, gender awareness and integrity practices could be strengthened in order to enhance academic institutional performance as well the crusade against HIV and AIDS. The thrust of setting up HIV and AIDS Clubs for staff and students in every Regional Centre in subsequent Institutional HIV and AIDS Action Plans is based on the findings of the study. Morogoro Regional Centre was the first OUT Regional Centre to set up an HIV and AIDS Club for staff and students on May Day 2011.

### **Mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in Teaching, Research and Consultancy Services**

Although limited attempts to integrate HIV and AIDS in teaching, research and consultancy services exist in all Faculties, Institutes and Directorates, they are neither comprehensive nor coordinated or even streamlined with National HIV and AIDS policies particularly the Essential HIV and AIDS Minimum Planning Package for Higher Learning Institutions and the National Multi – Sectoral HIV Prevention Strategy 2009 – 2012. This situation accounts for the limited impact of these efforts in addressing effectively, the biological, behavioural, social and structural drivers of the epidemic. Through mainstreaming, specific interventions e.g. prevention, treatment, impact mitigation and support services, will be integrated into the Institutional Programmes in order to tackle the drivers of the epidemic.

## **The OUT Charter (2007)**

As provided in the OUT Charter (2007), two of the functions of the University are to promote gender equity and mainstreaming, and to address HIV and AIDS pandemic, both in the course of the acquisition, provision and application of higher education. It is essential to resist the temptation of treating gender and HIV and AIDS matters as peripheral issues to institutional core roles of organizing and disseminating higher education in different areas of specialization, due to three important reasons. First, there is close correlation between gender awareness and HIV and AIDS prevalence rates. Where the level of awareness is high, the prevalence rate is low and vice versa. Secondly, the HIV and AIDS pandemic is a threat to optimal performance and gains in every sector in the society including the academia. Without controlling and eventually rolling back this threat, institutional mission of pursuing the truth in teaching, research and public service will be derailed. Thirdly, the National Multi – Sectoral HIV Prevention Strategy (NMHP) 2009 – 2012, has adopted Pre – testing of HIV and AIDS, Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) and Awareness on Gender Issues as strategies which can mitigate effectively HIV and AIDS infection. Similarly, the strategies can effectively pave the way for the pursuit of the UNAIDS Transformative Agenda to leave no one behind by 2020 (90% of PLWHIV know their status; 90% are on ARV therapy, and 90% have undetectable viral load) as well as the three zeros (Zero New Infection, Zero Deaths and Zero Stigma and Discrimination), by 2030. Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the institutional core roles, ensures that relevant International and National targets are accorded commensurate attention. Meanwhile, according to UNAIDS “ in the absence of a cure, preventive measures through educational programmes and information exchanges can significantly control the impact of the disease”. In the same report issued in 1999, it is stressed “the importance of workplace based HIV/AIDS education is increasingly recognised. This is because workers spend 75% of their time at work and HIV and AIDS tend to strike the productive age group”.

## **TASC Secretariat**

### **General Duties**

The HIV/AIDS Coordination Unit in the VC’s Office, serves as the Secretariat of the Technical HIV/AIDS Sub – Committee (TASC). Besides facilitating contacts and communication links between TASC Chairman and Members, it coordinates the basic functions of the Committee.

The basic functions of TASC are to plan, initiate and co-ordinate HIV/AIDS activities at the OUT in line with the National Policy Frameworks and the Institutional HIV/AIDS Policy, in order to:

- (i) Sensitize and raise the awareness of staff, students and the surrounding communities on relevant matters on HIV/AIDS. These include:
  - Impact of HIV/AIDS at the OUT.
  - Response of the OUT to the pandemic.
  - Measures which staff, students and the surrounding communities can take in order to control infection and mitigate the impact of the pandemic.
  - Institutional plans to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on the National labour market.
- (ii) Mainstream HIV/AIDS activities in the OUT Faculties, Directorates and Institutes in the core areas of:
  - Teaching and learning.
  - Research.
  - Public service.
- (iii) Provide care and management services to the infected and the affected.
- (iv) Devise strategies with which the OUT can collaborate with other Institutions in tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Tanzania.
- (v) Develop and implement Action Plans for HIV/AIDS activities in Regional Centres, Faculties, Directorates, Institutes and OUTSO.
- (vi) Ensure sensitization on HIV/AIDS in communities around the OUT and Regional Centres is done annually, with a view to promoting VCT uptake.
- (vii) Network and collaborate with TACAIDS, NACP, NGOs and other agencies in promoting the campaign to achieve the three “0” rates by 2030:
  - “0” rate new HIV infection.
  - “0” rate deaths from AIDS.
  - “0” rate stigma and discrimination;as well as UNAIDS Transformative Agenda to leave no one behind by 2020:
  - 90% of PLWHIV know their status.

- 90% are on ARV therapy.
- 90% have undetectable viral load.

- (viii) Develop and disseminate information and behaviour change communication materials on HIV/AIDS.
- (ix) Evaluate and share experiences at Regional, National and International levels on a regular basis.
- (x) Present and discuss relevant matters on HIV/AIDS in Institutional Strategic Plans Review Workshops; Staff, Faculties’/Institutes’ Board, Regional Advisory Committees’ and OUTSO Meetings; Orientation and Face to Face Sessions and Sports Bonanza.
- (xi) Promote gender mainstreaming, students’ counseling and guidance and integrity practices in improving Institutional performance and response to HIV/AIDS.
- (xii) Discuss and resolve on relevant HIV/AIDS matters in regular meetings to be held at least every three months.

**Specific duties**

The HIV/AIDS Coordination Unit will:

- (i) Develop Annual HIV/AIDS Action Plans for approval and subsequent implementation by TASC.
- (ii) Coordinate advocacy work on HIV/AIDS through seminars, workshops, meetings and HIV/AIDS Clubs.
- (iii) Prepare and submit progress reports on the implementation of Annual HIV/AIDS Action Plans as directed by TASC Chairman.
- (iv) Represent OUT in Meetings, Workshops and Seminars as directed by TASC Chairman.
- (v) Organize and keep records of proceedings of TASC Meetings.
- (vi) Follow up on matters arising from the proceedings of TASC Meetings.
- (vii) Any other duties assigned by TASC Chairman.

**TASC ALMANAC**

**2017/2018 ACADEMIC YEAR**

| <b>S/N</b> | <b>MEETING</b>   | <b>DATE</b>                   | <b>RESPONSIBLE</b> |
|------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.         | 20 <sup>th</sup> | 23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2017  | VC                 |
| 2.         | 21 <sup>st</sup> | 7 <sup>th</sup> February 2018 | VC                 |
| 3.         | 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2018     | VC                 |
| 4.         | 23 <sup>rd</sup> | 22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2018  | VC                 |