



# UN Cares in Action

## The Case of Guyana 2014

**Reaching staff in a duty station with UN Cares learning sessions**

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**MINIMUM STANDARD****NOTES**

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<b>1</b> Information about UN Policies and Benefits	All personnel and their dependents in all locations have access to information about UN system policy, programmes, personnel rights, entitlements and benefits, and their own responsibilities regarding HIV and AIDS in the UN workplace and their associations are consulted about these measures.
<b>2</b> Information about Preventing Transmission of HIV and about Accessing Treatment and Care Service	All personnel and their dependents in all locations have sufficient and appropriate knowledge to make informed decisions to protect themselves from HIV and, those infected or affected by HIV, know where in their duty stations <sup>3</sup> to access good quality care, medical treatment, <sup>4</sup> and support services.
<b>3</b> Learning and training activities on stigma and discrimination	Measures are in place to combat stigma and discrimination, and to increase gender awareness, including learning activities for personnel and their families in all locations.
<b>4</b> Access to male and female condoms	All personnel and their families have access to male and female condoms. When high-quality condoms are not reliably and consistently available from the private sector, access should be simple and discreet at the UN workplace, either free or at low cost.
<b>5</b> Voluntary counseling and testing	All personnel and their families should have access to Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT).
<b>6</b> Insurance covering HIV-related expenses	All staff and recognized dependents, regardless of contract status or agency, have access to insurance coverage, allowing them to access the necessary services required for HIV prevention, treatment and care.
<b>7</b> Confidential handling of personal information	All UN system personnel with access to personal information about personnel maintain confidentiality in the management of personal information (such as HIV status or any other medical condition), including processing of a) all health insurance claims, b) agreements on accommodation in working arrangements, and any other circumstances in which personnel choose to disclose their status.
<b>8</b> First aid using standard precautions	All personnel have access to first aid assistance using standard precautions in UN system workplaces.
<b>9</b> Rapid access to PEP starter kits	All personnel and their family members have access within 72 hours to HIV emergency Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) starter kits and related medical care, counseling, and follow-up treatment in case of potential exposure to HIV because of sexual assault, or occupational accident.
<b>10</b> Managerial commitment	All managers assume leadership on the implementation of UN Cares, in consultation with staff representatives or Associations.

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## Acronyms

ADB:	African Development Bank
AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DPKO:	Department of Peace-keeping Operations
ECLAC:	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICAO:	International Civil Aviation Organization
IEC:	Information, Education and Communication
IFAD:	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO:	International Labour Organization
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
INSTRAW:	United Nations International Research & Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
OCHA:	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
NGO:	Non-governmental Organization
PAHO:	Pan-American Health Organization
PEP:	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
UNAIDS:	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCC:	United Nations Compensation Committee
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS:	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS:	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on AIDS
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNIDO:	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNESCAP:	United Nations Social and Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIFEM:	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIC:	United Nations Information Centre
UNIDO:	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNJMS:	United Nations Joint Medical Services
UNODC:	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNON:	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOPS:	United Nations Office for Project Services
UN Plus:	United Nations System HIV Positive Staff Group
VCT:	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
WB:	World Bank
WFP:	World Food Programme
WHO:	World Health Organization

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## Introduction

This document is part of a compendium of thematic case studies documenting the experience of several countries in implementing UN Cares, the UN system-wide HIV workplace programme. The case studies highlight the successes and challenges of the UN Cares teams and their partners, and cover countries that have succeeded to varying degrees in implementing the UN Cares' 10 Minimum Standards.

Officially launched in 2008, UN Cares is designed to reduce the impact of HIV on the UN workplace by supporting universal access to a comprehensive range of benefits for all UN personnel and their families. These benefits – known as the *UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards* – include information and education, voluntary counseling and testing, access to male and female condoms, and emergency prevention measures in case of accidental exposure, among others. The *Standards* also call for increased measures to stop stigma and discrimination. UN Teams in all countries are required to meet the 10 Minimum Standards.

The compendium of case studies, of which this document forms part, outlines the work of UN Cares teams that have been recognized for excelling in relation to a particular UN Cares priority. The case studies begin by explaining the national HIV context, and providing information on UN presence in the country. All case studies outline the challenges and successes they experienced in implementing UN Cares by addressing issues of funding, senior leadership, key implementers of UN Cares at country-level, efforts to include employee families and dependents, and how the issue of stigma and discrimination is addressed.

The case studies cover countries from all regions of the world with diverse HIV epidemics and different levels of UN presence.

## Background and Context

In Guyana the United Nations is located in the capital city Georgetown. There are eight resident UN agencies at the Georgetown Duty Station. The total number of staff at the Georgetown Duty Station is 102; 19 international and 87 national staff.

Guyana is located on the north-eastern coast of South America. It is the only English speaking country in South America, with historic and cultural links to the English-speaking Caribbean.

**ZERO  
TOLERANCE  
FOR  
HIV  
STIGMA**

*Stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS pose critical barriers to prevention, treatment, care and support programs.*

Guyana is a multiracial society and the (2012) census report indicated a population of 747,884. In recent years, emigration has exceeded the natural population growth, resulting in a 0.04% overall decline in the population. The country is divided in 10 administrative regions with varying population density: the low density and difficult terrain in some region hamper the provision of social services and infrastructure development

The country has an estimated HIV prevalence rate among adults of 1.4%; an estimated new infection rate of <1000 and an estimated treatment coverage of 52% (New persons receiving treatment verses Persons Living with HIV/AIDS; GARPR estimate 2014). However according to (the 2014 ART guidelines) the country's CD4 threshold there is 87% ART coverage of persons who are in need of treatment.

UN Cares was first implemented at the Georgetown Duty Station in 2004 following the regional facilitators training in the Dominican Republic. There was however a lapse in the implementation of UN Cares activities following the departure of the trained facilitators.

In 2009, a second Regional Facilitators Training was held in Trinidad and Tobago after which UN Cares Guyana was re-launched in 2010 with a Red Ribbon and Tea Affair for UN personnel and their family members.

## Structure of UN Cares in Guyana

Activities undertaken to raise HIV awareness among UN personnel were demonstrations of condom use, distribution of male and female condoms through UNFPA, 'Light for Right' and 'Stigma Fuel HIV' Campaigns, information dissemination on the ten UN Cares minimum standards and approved Voluntary Counselling and Testing sites, and learning sessions on HIV stigma and discrimination in the work place.

The UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Khadija Musa is committed to the implementation of UN Cares in Guyana and the UN Cares team enjoys full managerial commitment, leadership, support and participation for all its activities. The Team is coordinated by the two trained facilitators from UNAIDS and PAHO/WHO and it is comprised of focal points from UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, FAO, IOM, and the RC Office. As part of the UN Delivering as One process, UN Cares is one of the thematic Groups that reports directly to the UNCT. It is also one of the eight areas in the Joint UN HIV/AIDS Programmes of Support.

In order to ensure workflow consistent with the conditions of the personnel at the duty station, an annual work plan is developed and approved by the UNCT. The team meets quarterly and updates on the implementation of the work plan are submitted to the Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS and the UNCT.

## Funding

Funding for UN Cares has been largely provided primarily by the UNAIDS office in Guyana. Some additional financial support is now provided for the joint all staff activities by the office of the Resident Coordinator Office.

## Objectives and Implementation of UN Cares

The target population for UN Cares in Guyana is the UN personnel at the Duty Station. The goal is to provide at least two UN Cares learning opportunities on Stigma & Discrimination at the UN work place based on HIV status, Sexual orientation and Gender; along with access to male & female condoms, information on Post exposure Prophylaxis Kit (PEP Kit) and approved HIV testing and counselling sites.

The Guyana UN Cares team, in keeping with the Resident Coordinator's vision to obtain input and feedback from UN personnel on the implementation of UN Cares, hosted a Management Staff Dialogue on the 5th December, 2012 to commemorate World AIDS Day.

The dialogue was an innovative approach that provided a unique opportunity for management and staff to discuss UN Cares in an informal and non-threatening setting. The dialogue took the format of presentations on the Joint UN Programme of Support and UN Cares, the ten minimum standards and work plan. This was followed by discussions, brainstorming on how to improve the implementation of UN Cares and the 10 minimum standards at the duty station.



The workshops were promoted by the focal points, the Heads of Agencies and the RC Office.

Details of upcoming activities

were sent by the RC Office to the Heads of Agency urging them to encourage their staff to participate. Information on the workshop was also shared at agencies staff meetings and follow up was done by the focal points. Each focal point prepared a list of staff from their agency who would participate in the workshops.

Participation in the UN Cares workshops were treated as learning time and it was recorded on staff performance evaluation. The sessions included information sharing, small group discussions and reporting on real HIV stigma and discrimination scenarios in the workplace, and a video on stigma and discrimination in the UN workplace that tells a story of a UN colleague. Certificates of attendance were distributed by the Resident Coordinator and the UNAIDS Country Director and a written evaluation was conducted.

## External Partnerships

The workshops were facilitated by an external facilitator Ms. Desiree Edghill, Executive Director, Artistes In Direct Support (AIDS), a local NGO that provides HIV/AIDS education through the performing arts, along with training, counselling, care, treatment and support services for Persons Living with and Affected by HIV/AIDS and Men who have sex with men (MSM).

## Monitoring and evaluation

Expectations of the organisers of the event were surpassed, as the staff in attendance at the learning sessions expressed active interest in the topics of discussion and in sharing their personal experiences. Staff shared how their prejudices caused them to stigmatize and discriminate against others based on the gender, HIV status, sexual orientation and appearance. Conclusions were derived on how to interact with perceived vulnerable persons without evoking feelings of stigma or discrimination through speech and body language.

## Accomplishments

- Participation and support of the UN Resident Coordinator, Heads of Agencies and other senior management personnel of the participating agencies at the duty station was an effective tool for mobilizing other staff members.
- Importantly, attendance of the event surpassed 60% for the staff at the duty station and there was 100% participation by the agencies present at the duty station.

## Future projects

- In line with the UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards, the duty station aims to extend the reach of UN Cares to the family members of UN personnel, especially their adolescent children.
- Continued implementation of learning initiatives will be achieved through the hosting of a retreat for adolescents which will be coordinated by UNICEF and UNFPA. In addition, an awareness campaign highlighting 10 Minimum Standards will take place at the duty station.
- Additional information will be provided with regard to the PEP kit protocol and approved VCT sites.
- To ensure successful utilization of the knowledge acquired by the staff and family members, the duty station will continue providing male and female condoms with support of the UNFPA. Condom demonstration sessions will be held to increase the effectiveness of the UN Cares initiatives.

## Advice to other country teams

- The involvement and support of senior membership is a crucial to the success of UN Cares and staff participation. Continued viability of UN Cares activities hinges on having a sustainability plan and commitments from all UN agencies.
- Engagement of local NGOs and other potential external partners may bring innovative solutions and expertise to the table.

- Promotion of human rights and raising awareness on issues relating to HIV, sexual orientation and Gender Based Violence can be addressed through discussing possible workplace situations with the participants of learning sessions. Such exercises engage the staff to consider the experiences of colleagues that face discrimination.