Report on World AIDS Day Commemoration

By Alphonse Mwanamwolho

We concluded the celebration of the World AIDS Day in Kiryandongo on 1st Dec 2014. RMF was in charge of preparing and managing this event. Since this commemoration is a big event in the settlement, all agencies, including both operating and implementing partners are engaged. Briefly this is how the event was conducted:

According to the arrangement in the settlement, World AIDS Day lies among the 16 days of activism running from 25th November up to 10th December, the International Day for Human Rights. Within that period of time every agency is assigned an event for which to take the lead depending on the mandate that the Agency has in the settlement.

During the 16 days of activism, RMF’s efforts were directed towards health related activities, specifically stepping up sensitization on HIV/AIDS prevention, encouraging people to turn up for voluntary testing and counseling and conveying health messages. In addition RMF was tasked with encouraging the community to turn up for the commemoration at the youth ground in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement and ensuring that the day is a success.

In order to make the day a success, RMF conducted the following activities:

1. Conducted HIV/AIDS outreach (even on the actual day of the celebration the RMF medical team set up a place for Testing and Counseling whereby over 200 people were tested for HIV/AIDS – this will be shared in detail in the end of month health report)
2. Prepared the venue for the celebration and arranged tents, PA system and chairs and provided drinks for the congregation
3. Mobilized drama groups to entertain the gathering
4. Mobilized the community to turn-up for the celebration
5. Distributed T-shirts to RMF VHTs, RMF staff members and some members from other agencies. The T-shirts where inscribed with the theme of the day: Re-engaging Communities for Effective HIV/AIDS Prevention.

The actual celebration:

The function started with a procession from OPM offices, through the Reception Centre to the youth ground. All Agencies had representatives in the procession. The gathering converged at the youth ground for speeches and entertainment.

OPM’s Robert was the chief guest at the celebration representing government, Prosy (new staff at UNHCR Kiryandongo) delivered the message from Geneva and I represented RMF and all the IPs, offering a word of welcome and thanks to the congregation.
From my assessment the day was successful. OPM’s Robert appreciated the preparation for the day, especially the creativity of bringing the HIV/AIDS testing services to the venue of the celebration.

On 2nd December 2014, before leaving Kiryandongo for Kampala I had a meeting with our team of VHTs. The agenda of the meeting was: to strengthen the team of VHTs, reporting, avoiding being money oriented and listening to joys and challenges of the work.

This meeting was prompted by the fact that I had come to notice through our team leader in Kiryandongo that some VHTs do not bring in their reports, others are passive, others demand additional money for work that is within their job description. All of the issues were ironed out and they promised to bring in reports on time, and become more available for us (they had earlier on demanded for IDs so that day I delivered them). The agreement was, on our side RMF fulfills our promises and the VHTs should do their part.

*RMF staff members preparing for a procession during World AIDS Day commemoration at OPM offices – Kiryandongo*
South Sudan Refugees in their choir attire joining the RMF procession during the World AIDS Day commemoration in Kiryandongo Refugee settlement –Uganda
Preparing the room for HIV/AIDS voluntary testing and counseling during the World AIDS Day commemoration in Kiryandongo.
Young girl carrying her sister watching the excitement of the World AIDS Day commemoration in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.