

HUMAN RESOURCE HIV/AIDS POLICY FOR AWAKENING SMILES INITIATIVE (ASI)

1.0 Introduction

This Policy guideline, may be cited as the AWAKENING SMILES INITIATIVE (ASI), HIV/AIDS Policy (LAST UPDATED AUGUST 2019).

This policy will constitute the **Awakening Smiles Initiative's** policy framework in dealing with issues related to HIV/AIDS at workplace and will complement and be read together with all other policies and procedures in force. They will also be read together with the **Awakening Smiles Initiative's** Constitution and of, the Financial Institutions Act, National Policy on HIV/AIDS and all other relevant Laws of Uganda that may be in force at any given time.

This policy, duly approved by the Board of Directors will apply uniformly to all employees appointed to the service of the **Awakening Smiles Initiative**, and will be interpreted and administered in the first place by the Executive director or his delegate.

If any matter arises which is not covered by this policy, it will be brought to the attention of Human Resources Committee for review and recommendation to the Executive director for final decision. The Executive director may at his sole discretion refer the matter to the Board, if necessary.

The Head, Human Resources Division or her/his representative will supply or make copies of this policy to all employees of the **Awakening Smiles Initiative**.

All amendments, duly appended to this policy, without alteration or erasure, will have the same force and effect as other sections to all employees of the **Awakening Smiles Initiative**.

This policy will be subject to amendments from time to time by the Board of Directors as circumstances may warrant, upon recommendation from the management.

1.1

Objective

The Objective of this policy is to provide clarity on the responsibilities **Awakening Smiles Initiative** has to its employees and their beneficiaries. The policy provides a framework in which to:

- a) Manage employees who suffer from HIV / AIDS
- b) Eliminate discrimination against individuals with HIV and AIDS through education and sensitisation.
- c) Inform all employees of their rights and benefits.

Awakening Smiles Initiative recognises the seriousness and the implications of HIV and AIDS to the individual, his family, the **Awakening Smiles Initiative** and co-workers of affected individuals.

Awakening Smiles Initiative is committed to address HIV and AIDS in a positive, supportive and non-discriminatory manner with the support and co-operation of all employees.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the **Awakening Smiles Initiative** and indirectly immediate families of employees of the **Awakening Smiles Initiative** as per staff policies

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 Education and Information

- a) The **Awakening Smiles Initiative** will mitigate the spread of HIV/AIDS through education programme and dissemination of information in collaboration with partners in AIDS education and information like TASO, Mild May International, FUE and Ministry of Health. It will regularly disseminate information on the magnitude of the disease and developments in scientific research, especially those relating to prevention. To implement this effectively, **Awakening Smiles Initiative** will distribute an HIV/AIDS staff Handbook, posters, fliers, stickers and other media-based information to all employees and will encourage staff attendance of awareness presentations.
- b) All **Awakening Smiles Initiative** employees travelling, and on international assignments, information will be provided on the destination country including the general level of HIV/AIDS infection, any specific precautions to take, and purchase of medical travel packs.
- c) All **Awakening Smiles Initiative** employees and their immediate families will be considered in the ongoing health education programmes made by the **Awakening Smiles Initiative** from time to time.
- d) Education and information programmes are developed with the co-operation of all stakeholders and the participation of the target population is always valued and the community-based organisations are always involved where possible.
- e) Education and information programmes have the objective of:
 - i. Imparting a basic knowledge of the disease and information on prevention of the disease;
 - ii. Eliminating discrimination against persons with HIV and AIDS through dispelling any ignorance about the disease and its mode of transmission;
 - iii. Information on the rights of, and service available to, infected employees; and
 - iv. Protection of persons potentially exposed to HIV in the pursuance of their duties.

1.3.2 Confidentiality

Persons with HIV or AIDS have the right of confidentiality and privacy concerning their health and HIV status. Health care professionals maintain absolute confidentiality of all records relating to the personal health and HIV status of employees which may by law never be disclosed to any other person without the written consent of the employee and,

after death, without the consent of his /her family or partner, except in cases involving a clear threat to or disregards of an identifiable individual's life interests. The health administrator is accountable for the supervision, maintenance, confidentiality and security of employee's personal medical files.

1.3.3 Potential hazard

Workers who may work under increased risk of infection are informed of specific precautionary measures to be taken and are provided with appropriate protective devices. Employees at an increased risk of infection due to geographic situation of their work-site or areas of high HIV incidence are informed of protective measures to be taken and reassured as to the availability of health care facilities and services. Procedures for casualty evacuation in the event of life threatening injuries or disease will be outline in the health and safety policy.

1.3.4 Health Services

Counselling services will be available for all employees with HIV and AIDS at designated Medical Health Centres in the **Awakening Smiles Initiative** medical scheme. Where this is not physically or practically possible the employee is encouraged to participate in counselling services provided by external organisations.

1.3.5 Testing

a) Voluntary anonymous incidence monitoring

Epidemiological incidence monitoring of HIV infection may be undertaken with employee participation invited on a voluntary, anonymous and unlinked basis to identify areas for strategic preventative education and information programme planning and to assess the efficacy of existing health programmes. Anonymity will at all times be assured and preserved.

b) Confidential testing on request

Confidential HIV antibody testing with pre and post-test counselling will be available to all employees. Employees will be confidentially notified of an HIV positive result and assured of access and availability of continuing support and health services. No employee in service will be instructed to undergo testing for HIV at management request.

c) Pre-Employment Selection Criteria

Awakening Smiles Initiative notes that general mandatory pre-employment blood screening tests for HIV may achieve only functional preventative effect, and is declared unacceptable by the World Health Organisation, International Labour Organisation, political, trade union and employee groups. Compulsory HIV testing will not be the basis for pre-employment testing or a ground for refusing to employ any person. Selection criteria for prospective applicants for positions determined to involve an identified high risk to the health and safety of the applicant, the health and safety of fellow workers or the safety of the process they control, may in particular circumstances include appropriate screening test. The international guidelines of prior counselling, informed consent, support and confidentiality will be applied.

1.3.6 Non-Discrimination

Awakening Smiles Initiative is committed to fair, sound and non-discriminatory employment practices. Employees who develop, disclose, or are diagnosed HIV or AIDS positive will not be prejudiced, victimised or discriminated against on account of their medical condition. HIV or AIDS do not by themselves; justify termination of employment, demotion, transfer or discrimination in employment. The compulsory conditions of service, including NSSF contributions, medical aid, stated benefits, sick leave, training and development will continue, as amended from time to time.

1.3.7 Co-workers

All employees receive educational and informational briefing on HIV and AIDS, and the realities, misconceptions and circumstances of working with affected employees. Where for reasons outside **Awakening Smiles Initiative's** control, co-workers become reluctant, unwilling or resist working with an affected colleague, they will be counselled and cautioned that their attitude in appropriate circumstances is unwarranted, unreasonable and not medically or scientifically justified, in an effort to alleviate their fears and concerns.

1.3.8 Consequences if illness

Employees who develop, disclose, or are diagnosed with HIV or AIDS are evaluated against their duties, their continued ability to perform or undertake them, the position of co-workers, and **Awakening Smiles Initiative** statutory duty to provide, maintain and ensure a safe working environment and the safe execution of the processes employees control.

1.3.9 Ill-health retirement

Awakening Smiles Initiative ill health retirement provisions and the conditions of service apply to all employees affected by HIV or AIDS, against stated criteria

1.3.10 Review

It is the responsibility of the management committee to review the policy in line with changing working practices in international and national realm.

1.4 Social Responsibility

The actual and potential growth, and impact of the HIV/AIDS disease on people of productive and economically active age poses an enormous global and business challenge. The **Awakening Smiles Initiative** recognises that it has a corporate social responsibility to support HIV/AIDS preventive efforts and to protect the basic human rights of those in the workplace who are HIV positive.

The **Awakening Smiles Initiative** will also contribute to reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS with a "positive living" campaign to educate and protect its employees and where possible their families.

Where possible the **Awakening Smiles Initiative** will be involved in HIV/AIDS awareness and education in the communities where it operates as will approved from time to time recommended by management to the Board.

1.5 Employee Health Care

Employees are critical to the business success of the **Awakening Smiles Initiative**. The loss of an employee is not only a personal and family tragedy, but also results in direct and indirect loss to the **Awakening Smiles Initiative** in terms of retraining, recruitment and productivity.

The **Awakening Smiles Initiative** is committed to the protection and maintenance of its employees' health and well being within affordable limits.

1.6 Documentation

The original copy of this document is to be kept in the Human Resource Division, only copies are to be distributed and marked as such. On revision of this policy, all super ceding documents are to be deemed irrelevant. An up to date version is to be kept by the Human Resource Division and also kept on the LAN at all times.