

Kick Aids/ Young leaders for life workshop held in Mombasa

A four day workshop to discuss a new HIV project targeting youth of 15-24 years was held last week in a Mombasa hotel. The project supported by UNICEF brings together the Ministry of Public Health through National Aids and STI Control Programme (Nascop), Ministry of Special Programmes through National Aids Control Council (Nacc) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The five year project aims at engaging and empowering youth with HIV messages and info thorough sports and theatre work. According to Roseline Mutemi of UNICEF, the programme whose first phase will target Coast, Nairobi and Nyanza will be an expanded 'Kick Aids initiative' which has been in operation in Coast province.



Dr Muraguri addresses the meeting as other panelists listen.

Speaking in the workshop, Dr Muraguri, the head of National Aids and STI Control Programme (Nascop) commented the stakeholders present saying that HIV is no longer a matter of the Ministry of health alone but it calls for a joint effort. "This is a good step in the war against HIV and Aids in the country".



Participants on a project visit in a Mombasa estate
Secretary of Sports Prof Lagat emphasized the need to use sport as a means for advocating and informing the youth on HIV and Aids. Lagat added that "sport promotes social cohesion and unity". Dr Sobbie Mulindi the

deputy director of Nacc said the best way to reduce the rates of HIV infection among the youth was to go to the grassroots and deal directly with them. "Let us work and empower with the youth for us to get results in the intervention", he added.

Also present were provincial directors of sports, peer educators and other officials from different organizations.



Secretary of Sports Prof Lagat and other participants in the meeting

The meeting came up with a draft work plan, list of activities and a budget for the project.

WOFAK opens a drop in centre in Kayole

Women fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK) today opened a modern drop in centre in Embakasi's Kayole area. With support from the French and Italian governments, the civil organization give support, training and care for the infected and the affected by HIV and AIDS. Present to open the centre were H.E Elizabeth Babier the France ambassador, a representative from the Italian government and Dr Muraguri of NASCOP who represented Minister for Public Health Hon. Beth Mugo.

In the Minister's speech, Dr Muraguri said that the government is committed to work with the civil society and partners in HIV prevention, care and support. He also congratulated WOFAK for their role in providing care to infected and affected women in their centers. Ambassador Barbier congratulated WOFAK and asked them

to continue with their work so as to lessen the socio-economic impact caused by HIV. WOFAK'S director, Ms Dorothy Onyango thanked the donors and Kenyan government for their support.

Hope in Aids vaccine search

Scientists have scored a major victory in the search for an HIV vaccine after discovering antibodies that attack the virus which causes Aids.

The discovery could pave the way for a vaccine against the virus, which kills over two million people worldwide each year. About 33 million people are living with Aids globally.

A report in Friday's *Times newspaper* in the UK said the discovery was important "because it highlights a potential way around HIV's defences against the human immune system, which have so far thwarted efforts to make a workable vaccine."

Blood samples

The hope now is that a vaccine that stimulates the production of these antibodies could remain effective against HIV even as the virus mutates.

The antibodies were discovered in a study of blood samples from more than 1,800 HIV-positive volunteers, from several countries in sub-Saharan Africa as well as the UK, the US, Thailand and Australia. The samples were then screened for broadly neutralizing

antibodies against the virus, which very few patients make themselves.

The report said the antibodies would not have been identified without a new method of hunting for them, developed by a company called Monogram Biosciences.

Said Christos Petropoulos, its chief scientific officer: "If you think of it as a fishing expedition, we and the rest of the field were previously using the wrong bait in the search for HIV-specific broadly neutralizing antibodies."

Scientists from the International Aids Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) are now examining the antibodies for clues to vaccine design.

"The findings themselves are an exciting advance toward the goal of an effective Aids vaccine because now we've got a new, potentially better target on HIV to focus our efforts for vaccine design," Wayne Koff, senior vice-president of IAVI, which led the consortium behind the research, told the *Times*.

"Having identified this one, we're set up to find more, which should further accelerate global efforts in Aids vaccine development."

Aids vaccine research has foundered to date because HIV mutates more quickly and easily than any other human pathogen yet discovered.

Condom Quality test results to be released tomorrow Friday 18th at a Press Conference at Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) at 12 noon.