



REPORT ON EMPUUMO MARATHON 2024

HELD ON 27TH OCTOBER 2024 AT KAKYEKA MBARARA CITY



State Minister for Education and Sports, Hon Peter Ogwang who represented the Chief Guest Hon Janet Kataha Museveni the First lady and Minister for Education and Sports flagging off Empuumo participants at Kakyeka stadium as Hon Robert Rukaari Member of Parliament for Mbarara City North looks on.



Hon Minister Peter Ogwang, Hon Mwesigwa Rukari, Hon Rosette Kajungu, Bishop Cyrus Flugging off runners at Empuumo Marathon in Kakyeka Mbarara



Hon Minister Peter Ogwang, State minister for Sports in the Ministry of Education and sports at the award ceremony of winners



1.0 OVERVIEW

This report highlights an introduction about Initiative for Better Health (IBH) and Empuumo Marathon, the activities carried out as pre event activities which include stakeholder engagements, launch of the marathon and medical camps. It also highlights the partnerships with Ministry of Health, Uganda AIDS and other key stakeholders who include The AIDS Service Organisation (TASO), AIDS Information Centre (AIC), Uganda Redcross Society, Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), as well as support from Joint medical Store (JMS). The report also highlights sponsors from different companies and organisations that supported the marathon.

1.1 Organizational description

Initiative for Better Health (IBH) is a registered non-governmental organization dedicated to saving lives, promoting health and improving living conditions of underprivileged and vulnerable people of Uganda. IBH advances livelihoods for health and directly benefits young people, women and their families, through live welfare projects on skilling, healthcare, livelihoods and women empowerment, in remote villages and slums across Uganda.

IBH believes, that economic empowerment is both the means as well as the end to a better life: the means because it empowers an individual to earn his/her livelihood and the end because it increases one's awareness on a range of issues from healthcare to appropriate social behaviour to understanding one's rights and in the process help him/her evolve as a better citizen.

1.2 Vision: A healthy Society where People are able to pursue their dreams

1.3 Mission: Improve Health and Economic Security of vulnerable young people and women in Uganda through mobilisation, skilling, linkages and advocacy

1.4 Values

Gender Equity, Integrity, Collaborations, Accountability, Transparency and Diversity

1.5 Overall goal

Increased access to better health services and economic opportunities by young people and women by Dec 2026

1.6 PROGRAMMATIC THEMATIC AREAS

IBH works through four thematic program areas, which include the following;

1.6.1 Health Promotion and Community Engagement Program.

Engage with communities to understand their needs, promote health awareness, and encourage participation in health initiatives.

The Program works with communities, civil society and Government institutions and leaders to understand health problems, prevent disease, and promote better health and living conditions for people living in urban slums, and in rural, remote, hard-to-reach areas. As part of the response IBH organizes **Empuumo Marathon**, an annual flagship event to support the scale-up of HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, treatment and eventually end of HIV/AIDS infections in adolescent girls and women in the region thereby contributing to ending HIV/AIDS by 2030.

1.6.2 Economic Security Program.

The program offers financial literacy, vocational skills trainings, and entrepreneurship skills to improve economic stability. The helps women unleash their potential to earn and save. IBH works with young people and women to help them access the resources, tools, skills and power to change their own lives. To increase access to decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, IBH provides vocational trainings to young people, youth and women. IBH trains young people and women to help them develop the skills they need for employment and to earn money, build a successful business.

1.6.3 Research and Advocacy Program

The program conducts research and advocate for policies and programs supporting health and livelihoods. Through this program, IBH works with community and networks of partners to address health challenges of the underprivileged and vulnerable people of Uganda. This program promotes access to care and conditions necessary for good health, well-being and dignity.

IBH engages local leaders, influencers, and stakeholders in health policy advocacy and education.

1.6.4 Institutional Development Program

This program area aims at building the institutional capacity of IBH to fulfil its mandate.

2.0 INTRODUCTION ABOUT EMPUUMO MARATHON

In an inspiring demonstration of unity and dedication to combat HIV, IBH took an active role in organising the Marathon named **Empuumo Marathon**. The bystanders and the residents at Kakyeka Mbarara witnessed a brilliant show of harmony on October 27, 2024 when over 1000 participants ran gleefully in the 5km, 10km and 21 Km Marathon organized by Initiative for Better Health in partnership with Ministry of Health and Uganda AIDS Commission. Other participants joyfully participated in 3km Walk with UPDF band. The Marathon echoed the slogan 'Kick HIV/AIDS out of South Western Uganda by 2030. This event aimed to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS and resources to establish skilling centres for adolescent girls and young women in hotspot areas in south western Uganda.

This partnership between IBH, Ministry of Health, Uganda AIDS Commission, and other partners underscores the collective commitment to breaking the chains of stigma, reducing infections, and enhancing services for People Living with HIV. This united effort signifies our unwavering determination to stride into the future with a resolute focus on achieving epidemic control and realizing the end of AIDS by 2030 – zero new infections, zero AIDS-related deaths, and zero stigma and discrimination. The Empuumo Marathon 2024 serves as a powerful testament to the potential of collective action and shared responsibility in building a healthier, more resilient future.

Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) this initiative marks a significant step leading up to World AIDS Day. The Marathon was successful and raised HIV awareness thus contributing to support the reduction of HIV infections, combat stigma and discrimination, and enhance HIV services for a diverse range of populations, including children, adolescents, women, men, and key groups especially those that were tested for HIV and other related HIV illnesses.

Beyond its awareness goal, the marathon played a pivotal role in promoting community engagement and identifying pathways for development and collaboration, deeply reflecting the mission of IBH. This event brought together government officials, NGOs, Schools, Churches, private stakeholders, and local communities in a shared mission.



Participants warm up for the marathon



Participants exercising after the marathon



Runners warming up to start the run



Participants in a prayer led by Bishop Syrus Tayebwa, the Bishop of Pentecostal Churches in Ankole sub region, South Western Uganda



Hon Minister Peter Ogwang, State minister for Sports in the Ministry of Education and sports who represented the Chief Guest Hon Janet Kataha Museveni the First lady and Minister for Education and Sports, emphasised how this event not only contributes to controlling AIDS but also places a spotlight on World AIDS Day, fostering awareness and understanding. He stated, "We are grateful for IBH's support and the involvement of relevant stakeholders in raising awareness on HIV/AIDS". The government of Uganda will create opportunities for stakeholders and citizens to end AIDS by 2030.



Stakeholder's engagement meeting held Uganda AIDS Commission



Participants at the stakeholders meeting held at Acacia Hotel in Mbarara City.

A series of meetings were held at the Ministry of health AIDS Control Program



National stakeholders Meetings at ACP/Ministry of Health



UPDF band at the Marathon



Participants being flagged off for 10km run



Runners being flagged off for 21Km run



IBH team(Ingrid Nyesige, Innocent Tibanyendera) with Representative of partners at the Marathon.



Part of IBH team (Dr Sheillah, Josh, Innocent, Ingrid, Marion and Opio)



Participants seeking health care at the Marathon site in Kakyeka Mbarara city



Blood donation at the marathon, HIV Testing and counselling going on.



Participants consulting health workers for healthcare at the Marathon



5.0 MEDICAL CAMP IN RWAMABONDO KAJARA NTUNGAMO

Initiative for Better Health worked with the District health Office of Ntungamo and organized a one-day free medical camp for the benefit of public in Rwamabondo on Sunday 20th October 2024. The medical camp was conducted at Rwamabondo health centre and its medical team had 28 people led by deputy district health officer. The medical team consisted of Doctors, clinicians, nurses, lab technicians, pharmacists, midwives, and those who did safe male circumcision. Over 1000 people were checked, tested, treated and received free medications. The camp was supported by Joint medical store (JMS) with medicines.

152 people tested for HIV out of which 6 tested positive. We also arranged for free Blood Sugar Level and Blood Pressure tests which were hugely useful for many villagers.

Below are people seeking health care in Rwamabondo Kajara Ntungamo









People seeking Health services at a Medical Camp in Rwamabondo

6.0 LAUNCH OF THE MARATHON IN KIJUNGU MBARARA



The Woman Member of Parliament for Rwampara Honorable Molly Asiimwe officially launched the Empuumo Marathon in Kijungu Mbarara City. This event aims to raise awareness and unite communities in the urgent fight against HIV/AIDS, reinforcing the global objective to end AIDS by 2030.



Key stakeholders, including Nation Media, The AIDS Support Organisation (TASO) AIDS Information Centre (AIC) and Kakoba Health centre III, worked with IBH to provide medical services. In addition, the launch was attended by Mbarara city Mayor, Office of the City health Officer, Mbarara City resident Commissioner, Officials from Mbarara district Local Government, Resident district Commissioner of Ibanda, The District Health Officer Sheema, the district Speaker for Rwampara district, representatives from civil society, women groups, area local council and division leaders among others



Community members seeking HIV related health services at a free medical camp during the launch of the Marathon in Kijungu Mbarara city.



Community members seeking health care at a medical camp in Kijungu Mbarara during the marathon launch.

7.0 Media Engagement

- I. Nation Media Group was the main sponsor of Empuumo Marathon 2024. The Marathon was covered on all NMG platforms as well as hosting IBH team on Morning @NTV.



The Executive Director IBH Mr. John Kateba Aturinde appearing on Morning@NTV hosted by Higenyi to discuss Empuumo Marathon 2024

2. Empuumo Marathon 2024 was also covered by UBC The national broadcaster on UBCExtra as well as on UBC Radio Western.



Head of Programmes at IBH Mr. Tibanyendera Innocent and the Executive Director Mr. John Kateba appearing on UBC TV Extra as hosted by Sonko Joram to discuss and provide updates o the Empuumo Marathon 2024



Mr Matsiko of Uganda AIDS commission (UAC) and Ingrid Nyesigye of IBH and Twinomushuni Joshua appearing on UBC West Radio at different dates to discuss Empuumo Marathon 2024.

3. New Vision group was also involved in hosting Empuumo marathon representative on both TV West and Radio west



Ingrid Nyesigye with Sister Charity before appearing on TV west. On the right is IBH's Twinomujuni Joshua before appearing on Radio West Sports Express programme with the host Mr.Pato

4. Next Media group through its sister platform Salaam TV supported the Empuumo Marathon 2024



The head of programmes at IBH, Mr. Tibanyendera Innocent appearing on Salaam TV a sister station to NBS TV with Mariam the host to discuss HIV/AIDS awareness through prevention, Testing and Treatment. Key focus area of the Empuumo Marathon 2024.

5. IBH engaged Salt TV in our drive to create awareness on HIV/AIDS through Empuumo Marathon 2024



Justine Ayebare of IBH appearing on Salt TV in a drive to create awareness on HIV/AIDS and provide updates on the Empuumo Marathon.



Ingrid Nyesigye of IBH and Nyamwija Immaculate from the association of sex workers in Mbarara appearing on Sky Tv in Mbarara to discuss Empuumo Marathon 2024. On the right IBH's Dr Sheila Ankunda and Mr. John Kateba the ED IBH and Mr. Centenary Head of mobilization committee in Mbarara of the Empuumo Marathon appearing on Radio Maria FM in Mbarara on a mobilization campaign for the Empuumo Marathon.



Mr. John Kateba the Executive Director IBH and Bishop Cyrus appearing on GNTV Uganda to rally Ugandans on HIV/AIDS awareness campaign through Empuumo marathon

8.0 Post Empuumo Marathon Activities

IBH was engaged in organizing post-marathon activities for an HIV/AIDS awareness prior to World AIDS day 1st December 2024 to help sustain engagement, promote recovery, and continue advocacy initiatives

We engaged in advocacy & awareness Activities lie Community Debriefs to discuss the marathon's impact and the extent of our awareness spread plus our next steps. We held meetings with the Ministry of Health and Uganda AIDS commission to mainly encourage government agencies and its staff to commit to ongoing advocacy.

1. World AIDS Day commemorations

IBH in collaboration with Uganda Cares, Reproductive Health Uganda, AIDS Control Program/Ministry of Health, Kampala Capital City Authority, participated in this year's World AIDS day commemorations. This event started with a vibrant AIDS Awareness Walk that was flagged off by Dr. Daniel Kyabayinze, the Director of Public Health under Ministry of Health Uganda.

The walk was aimed at creating awareness about HIV in our communities. This event was officiated by Hon. Hajjat Minsa Kabanda, Minister for Kampala Capital City and Metropolitan Affairs. She urged people to seek treatment and adhere to their treatment. The minister also emphasized the need to strengthen health systems to address HIV stigma and discrimination, ensuring we achieve the goal of ending AIDS by 2030.

At this event, critical health services were provided like HIV Testing and Counseling, TB Screening, Condom Distribution and sensitization.



Hon. Hajjat Minsa Kabanda, Minister for Kampala Capital City and Metropolitan Affairs, Director AFH Uganda cares Mr. Henry Magala, The Executive Director IBH John Kateba, Ms Flavia the Executive Director AGHA, and some of IBH team at World AIDS Day celebrations in Kamwokya, the slum of Kampala.



A team from IBH, AHF-Uganda Cares, Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), AIDS Control Program/Ministry of Health, Kampala Capital City Authority, and community stakeholders participating in 2024 World AIDS Day commemorations IN Metropolitan Kampala.

9.0 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. Marathon of over 1000 participants both runners, walkers, and 100 volunteers.
2. Awareness Materials: 10,000 information packets distributed.
3. Media Coverage: Local media platforms like TV West, UBC TV/Radio, GNTV, SkyTV, Lit TV/ FM, NTV-Uganda Spark TV, and Daily Monitor, radio stations all covered the event.
4. Conducted three medical camps offering
 - HIV testing and counselling
 - Malaria testing and treatment
 - Screening for NCDs
 - Testing and treatment for TB
 - Screening for Hepatitis B and treatment
 - Screening and treatment for STIs
 - Safe male circumcision
 - Blood donation
 - Medical consultations and referrals
 - Eye diseases
 - Health education and wellness
5. The Marathon impacted on positive behavioral Change through prevention and healthy life style messages that were delivered. This in turn would encourage safer sexual practices and the use of preventive measures like PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), use of condoms etc as well as Promoted overall health and wellness of people in Ankole and Kigezi subregion, which is crucial for people in Ankole and Kigezi subregions living with HIV/AIDS.
6. The Empuumo HIV/AIDS awareness marathons helped raise awareness about the disease, reducing stigma and promoting education on prevention, treatment, and care in south western Uganda and the in Uganda as a whole.
6. Regarding Fundraising and Resource Mobilization, Empuumo Marathon 2024 successfully raised funds to support HIV/AIDS research, treatment, and prevention programs in Ankole and Kigezi sub regions.
7. The marathon achieved Community Engagement and Mobilization. The Empuumo marathon 2024 on HIV/AIDS awareness was able to mobilize communities in Ankole and Kigezi to take action against the epidemic, promoting a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility to kick the disease out of Uganda by 2030.

Below are links to the event activities

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/empuumo-marathon-gathers-over-1-000-runners-in-mbarara-4803644>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Empumo&oq=Empumo&aqs=chrome..69i57.2056j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5B3DsDFaLA>

<https://www.ntv.co.ug/ug/news/sports/empuumo-marathon-kicks-off-in-mbarara-to-raise-hiv-aids-awareness-4803782>

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/ankole-uses-marathon-to-stop-hiv-in-its-tracks-4765084>

<https://kawowo.com/2024/09/08/inaugural-empuumo-marathon-primed-to-intensify-fight-against-hiv-aids-in-south-western-uganda/>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q566_z-GF4w

<https://www.ntv.co.ug/ug/features/upcoming-empuumo-marathon-to-raise-hiv-aids-awareness-in-south-western-uganda-4801260>

9.0 CHALLENGES:

Organizing HIV/AIDS Empuumo marathon involved unique challenges and offered valuable lessons, blending the logistics of a large-scale sporting event with the sensitivities of a public health advocacy campaign.

Challenges

1. **Funding and Resource Mobilization for Empuumo Marathon 2024.** Securing financial backing for our event that combines charity with a niche cause of raising awareness about the scourge of HIV became tough especially to attract corporate sponsors unfamiliar with or hesitant about the HIV/AIDS awareness raising. Limited budgets affected marketing, logistics and the ability to offer incentives like medals or T-shirts etc.
2. **Logistical Complexity.** The Empuumo Marathon 2024 demanded significant planning like route mapping, safety measures, medical support, and permits. Adding an HIV/AIDS focus layer on complexities like educational booths, testing stations, or counselling services, required enough space and staff. Organizers were therefore Overstretched which may have compromised safety or the advocacy component, diluting the event's purpose.
4. **Stigma and Public Perception in Uganda especially in the Ankole and Kigezi subregions.** HIV/AIDS remains stigmatized in many communities, which deterred participation, sponsorship, and public support. People avoided our event as it is explicitly tied to the condition due to fear of association or judgment.
5. **Community Engagement.** Engaging diverse groups in Ankole and Kigezi subregions as our target communities, people living with HIV/AIDS, healthcare advocates, runners, and the general public required tailored messaging. Engaging a broad spectrum of communities in Kigezi became a challenge in terms of reaching those communities where we risked alienating key stakeholders and failed to inspire participation from that region of Kigezi. This therefore without broad buy-in from all targeted regions, the Empuumo marathon 2024 risked being seen as exclusive or failing to raise awareness effectively.
5. **Low turnout and reluctance from local businesses to fund an event perceived as controversial** straining resources and morale within the marathon organize.
6. **Measuring Impact was a challenge.** Beyond participant numbers, gauging the event's success in raising HIV/AIDS awareness, media coverage of the event, it was tricky to measure the impact Empuumo Marathon had on targeted group. Therefore, as Initiative for Better Health, the Organizers of Empuumo Marathon we struggled to justify the effort to stakeholders, sponsors and secure future support without clear metrics.
7. **Routes were not closed for traffic** caused inconveniences to runners

10.0 Lessons learned:

1. There is need as organizers of the Empuumo marathon to Leverage Partnerships by Collaborating with NGOs, health organizations and local governments to amplifies message reach, credibility, and boost visibility and resources. The applicability of this lesson is by Seeking co-sponsors early, tapping their networks for funding, getting volunteers, and media exposure at least 6months before the marathon date.
2. HIV/AIDS Stigma is high; therefore, we learnt that it is important to tailor messaging to reduce Stigma. Framing the marathon as a celebration of resilience and community rather than just a disease-focused event can broaden appeal and even attract support. Shift in perceptions is demonstrated by positive messaging and that is what Empuumo marathon ought to focus on through more appealing slogans and highlighting stories of participants living with HIV/AIDS to humanize the cause.
3. Plan for Inclusivity by offering varied participation options like including virtual participation options and if possible, engage global audiences to participate in the same event on the same day.
4. Need to adequately plan and prepare for Contingencies. Flexibility is key given weather uncertainties in Uganda, low turnout, or logistical hiccups all can derail the marathon. Organizers of Empuumo Marathon must have backup plans like indoor venues, and over-recruit volunteers to handle surprises.
5. There is need to track and share Outcomes of the Empuumo Marathon. This can be done through setting clear goals like funds raised, tests conducted, or media impressions and then build momentum for future events. Post-event activities are key and also sharing of a marathon report with participants and donors to sustain engagement.
6. We as organizers ought to target 5,000 participants and Streamline registration and setup processes.

I. CONCLUSION:

The Empuumo Marathon successfully raised awareness, promoted prevention, and supported those affected by the disease. Despite challenges, the event demonstrated the community's commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS. However no financial resources were raised.

Sponsors an partners

List of sponsors'
1. AIDS Information Centre (AIC)
2. The AIDS Support Organization (TASO)
3. Red Cross Uganda
4. Divine Mercy Hospital
5. Uganda People's defence Forces (UPDF)
6. Joint Medical Stores (JMS)
7. Quality Chemical Limited
8. Yaket Water
9. Crown Beverages (Pepsi)
10. Westlake water
11. Nile Breweries
12. Golf Course Supermarket
13. Freso Supermarket
14. Shell Petrol Station ,Mbarara main
15. Nation Media Group
16. Salaam TV
17. TV West
18. UBC TV and Radio
19. Radio Maria
20. Lit TV
21. Sky TV
22. GNTV
23. Global Bus Coaches
24. SOGEA SANTOM
25. Sumz
26. HEPS Uganda
27. Keneth Mushana
28. Kamugisha Herbert
29. Mbarara High School
30. Mbarara Municipal Primary School
31. Hon Kankunda Amos MP Rwampara Constituency
32. Hotel Triangle
33. Metropolitan University
34. Acacia Hotel
35. Pelican Hotel

36. SilverBack Hotel Mabarara
37. Embogo Energy Drink
Partners:
1) Ministry of Health
2) Uganda AIDS Commission
3) Mbarara City council
4) Mbarara District Local Government

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