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## Partnerships a key strategy in HIV vaccine trials-TASO masaka experience

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**Background:** Pre-ART and ART clients registered with TASO are referred from HIV testing agencies including Ministry of Health facilities. TASO Masaka has so far registered a cumulative of 30,000 clients, with referrals from partners contributing as significant percentage of 90%. Partnership, acknowledged by TASO Uganda as one of the pillars of the organizational success embraces the utilization of comparative merits of other organizations to the benefit of TASO and her clientele.

**Description:** The success of partnerships is best seen in access to critical services outside the TASO Masaka areas of professional expertise such as. The center has partnered with other AIDS service organization in a network called the Masaka District Network of AIDS service Organization (MADNASO). The center has partnered with Medical Research Council (MRC) and Rakai Health Sciences Program (RHSP) to conduct different studies.

**Lessons learnt:** Holistic HIV/AIDS management entails addressing the needs of the PHA, their families and society which cannot be handled through a single intervention thus the need for partnerships to address all the emerging needs of the PHAs. Symbiosis is critical in building lasting and effective partnerships. Premising partnerships on the principle of comparative advantage serves to strengthen the interventions of different. There's need of more partnership of civil society organization, so that the issues of PLWHAS are collectively addressed. TASO Masaka in collaboration with MRC successfully conducted the microbicides study, and currently they are coordinating the Septrine prophylaxis cessation study (Costop study). The center was able to collaborate with RHSP to conduct an Acyclovir study in 2010

**Conclusion/Recommendation:** The success of any HIV vaccine trial depends on partnerships. Partnerships is an effective way of enhancing HIV prevention through sharing best practices and strategies which can be used to provide a good quality services to clients.