

Celebrating

Red Ribbon Living Well
December 2021 – December 2022









Welcome to our 2022 World AIDS Day event!

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you all to Red Ribbon Living Well's 2022 World Aids Day event at The Somerville. Red Ribbon is a community organisation supporting individuals affected by and living with HIV, mental health challenges and domestic violence.

I am Husseina Hamza. As a black Muslim immigrant woman from Africa, I would like to share my journey and story around sexual health and perhaps what this means to other black women like me living with HIV in the United Kingdom.

Being on my own as an immigrant in a new country, I faced many challenges ranging from unemployment, housing, and immigration to language, faith and cultural barriers. My immigration status was still pending and I could not access work or financial support. Then came my diagnosis. Thinking all the odds were stacked against me, I felt ashamed. I blamed myself. Life became meaningless to me. This situation presented numerous challenges including navigating the healthcare system and other public services. I did all that against the background of the language barrier, English being a second language. Such are the unknown challenges that impact the lives of black African immigrants living with HIV in the UK every single day.

However, through my journey of living positively, I chose to live a healthy lifestyle and be part of the community. I refused to live a life filled with sorrow, regret and guilt. I was determined to live positively and focus on the

creation of community-based activities that will boost my energies to enhance my relationship with the wider community. Red Ribbon Living Well provided the means to achieve this.

As the director of Red Ribbon Living Well, I have championed community activities extending to include community mobilization, sensitization and empowerment around health and well-being issues. Over the years, I have helped those who are isolated or struggle to access healthcare services through community activism. I have used my experience as a community organizer to change attitudes and reduce HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination, especially within faith communities across London. The challenges I faced through the difficult journey only made me grow stronger emotionally, spiritually and mentally. Today, I see myself as a role model for those who are stuck where I was twenty-one years ago and who have not yet found the strength to rise above it.

I am also pleased to report on the many community-based activities and events we have been involved in over the past year, several in partnership with the Deptford People's Heritage Museum, the department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London and with the practical support of the Waldron Health Centre in New Cross. For instance, we have also been active in Community Coproduction work with Lewisham Council and Birmingham City Council to understand and take action on long-standing health inequalities for people of Black African and Caribbean heritage, and to ensure that the lived experiences and voices of Lewisham's Black African and Caribbean communities are heard. We contributed to a Lewisham Council HIV and Vaccination webinar and collaborated with Brook/Blueprint Health and Wellbeing (Love Sex Life)

360 CIC Lifestyle Network to help put racial justice at the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic response and to work with vulnerable adults, providing practical, social, educational and community support to those living in poverty and with illness, particularly within the BME communities in South London. We ran an International Women's Day event with the themes of "Break the Bias", "Be Kind to Yourself", and "Fight for equality to eliminate discrimination and bias between genders".

Community development is fundamentally based on valuing of human right, social justice, equality and respect for diversity. In September, as part of Lewisham's Borough of Culture celebrations, we also partnered with Alanouwaly Salifou Sylla Foundation to present Salifest which brought together people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities to share live music, food and socialise and have fun.

We are thankful for all that we have achieved and grateful to our many friends and supporters.

Husseina HAMZA
Director, Red Ribbon Living Well



Red  Ribbon
Living Well

in partnership with Deptford People's Heritage Museum

INVITATION

WELCOME HOME

Since 2010, Red Ribbon Living Well has been a place of safety and support for people living with and affected by HIV. Come and celebrate World AIDS Day 2021 with us and be inspired by our stories.

Wednesday 1 December
11 am - 3.30 pm

The Somerville
260 Queens Road
New Cross
London SE14 5JN

Our programme details are overleaf

Nearest Stations: Queens Road
Peckham and New Cross Gate.
Buses 36, 136, 171, 436, 177.



WELCOME HOME

PROGRAMME

11.00 Tea and Coffee

11.15 Welcoming Address

By Sista Jah Sun Rah, broadcaster,
and director of Shine Your Light
A minute of silence in memory of the departed

11.20 The Red Ribbon Living Well Story

A talk by Hussein Hamza, founder and director of Red
Ribbon Living Well, followed by testimonials by Red Ribbon
Living Well members

12.15 Challenging Health Inequalities

Joyce Jacca, Health Inequalities Community Link Worker,
North Lewisham, talks about her role
Angela Nzira's Story: Health Battles: "I'll leave no stone
unturned"
Presentation by the LSL (Love, Sex, Life) Sexual Health
Partnership

13.00 Lunch and Networking

Delicious African food and the opportunity to relax and
connect

13.45 Video Screening and Discussion

Extraordinary Ordinary Day, devised by Red Ribbon Living
Well and Lyla's Place, 2021. The video is about HIV-related
stigmas and how these can be overcome

3.15 Event Closes with a Candle Lighting Ceremony

Banners and art works created by Red Ribbon Living Well
Group members will also be on show.















Tackling health inequalities in Black communities

As a first step towards making healthcare equal for all residents, we are pleased to launch the BLACHIR report – the Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review.

This joint research project between Lewisham and Birmingham City Councils is a landmark piece of work. We spoke to local Black African and Black Caribbean communities to understand their experiences of the healthcare system.

We will use the recommendations from the research to come up with a realistic plan to improve health outcomes for these communities. The findings will also be used to help the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and influence both Councils, the NHS and other partners.



Mayor Damien Egan, Deputy Mayor Cllr Brenda Dacres, Cllr Juliet Campbell, Cllr Chris Best and the Lewisham Mayoresses with staff from Lewisham and Birmingham City Councils

We are extremely proud of this work. Two years on and we are only getting started, now it's time to deliver.

You can read more about the partnership and see the full report at lewisham.gov.uk/BLACHIR

Happiness—Sadness

A selection of Red Ribbon Story Cards from our
PET 4 HIV Awareness Project

To Engage - To Educate - To Empower

Participatory Education Theatre for HIV Awareness is a Red Ribbon Living Well community-based project, run by the group members and funded by the National Lottery. The project seeks to incorporate Participatory Theatre Education methodologies that uses interactive approaches to allow the audience to probe, reflect on and respond to issues that concern them.

This approach poses questions and problems, rather than supplying answers and solutions. The aim is to bring about change in the target community's perception of the world and themselves as individuals within it. By changing perceptions, we do not simply mean raising awareness but allowing the community to examine their attitudes towards the unresolved dilemmas and contradictions presented in the drama which reflects their lives.

1. The scene is set by artists through short episodes of interactive performance skits; and,
2. Through the role of the facilitator, the audience is invited to participate to help interrogate and solve the dilemmas presented in the performance skits.

The approach provides opportunities for the audiences to interrogate both characters and situations within the performances; empowers the audiences by allowing them to intervene and determine the narrative sequence of the performance; engages the

audiences in the contradictions and paradoxes raised in the performance; and prompts improvisational role-playing to allow participants/audiences to put themselves in the position of the characters in the performance.

Since June 2022, PET 4 HIV Awareness Project has been engaging persons living with HIV in creative activities that showcase their life experiences in a bid to tackle HIV stigma among the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in South East London. The project has enabled its members to acquire the skills to think, discuss, create and tell stories that reflect their own life experiences.

However, its wider purpose is to engage members in activities that will stimulate their minds and reduce the possibility of developing prolonged periods of low mood, social isolation and physical inactivity. Most of our beneficiaries are individuals affected by and living with HIV. They are migrant individuals and families experiencing multiple disadvantages such as poverty, deprivation, violence, isolation, mental health and language barriers. Due to the HIV stigma, these people hardly engage with other community initiatives.

The project was divided into five phases and has been running community-based performance workshops since August 2022 with different themes each month.

On 2 December 2022, PET 4 HIV Awareness Project will conclude its fifth phase of the artist-audience performance workshops during our World Aids Day event in London.

Ouma OBANDA
Project Director

26.08.22 my story Afisa NALUBEGA

My story

Happy - HIV FREE Treatment

- Have a place to sleep and my food.
- Experiencing different culture

~~But~~

Sadness - HIV diagnosis

- Life came to an end can't tell no one.
 - Lack of my African food
 - No. medicine and am very sick.
 - Not easy to get a good GP
 - Loneliness (missing family and friend).
 - Wealth is not the same as Africa.
- Fall

Success → HIV medication

- Having my boy
- Being a grandmother.
- I have managed to keep my health in charge

Fallure: Housing, GP Surgery

- Not been able to fulfil my goals
- discriminated against by GP. writing HIV on blood form
- failed to married -

- un finished business
 - immigration too far so long to get status.
- #### Challenges

- ~~English~~ Language barrier even though I could speak English but it was not the same it took me time to understand what people were saying to me

Happiness

To mime (act without speaking), celebration of free HIV treatment, roof over her head and vibrant culture in the UK.

Sadness

To mime (act without speaking), cursing the high cost of foods on the market, lack of specialised treatment and doctors and missing family in Uganda.

Afiisa NALUBEGA

Namatirai Angela Sithole

26/08/2022

my story

① Happy

- a. I am happy because I am married to a husband who understand and support me.
- b. I am happy because I am looked after well by my HIV clinic

② Sad

- a. I am sad because of the care support that my husband is receiving from the care provider.
- b. I am sad because of the financial support we are receiving will not be enough.
- c. I am not happy because the food we want to eat is very expensive.

③ Success

- a. Managing to come to UK is a success.
- b. To be able to do public speaking
- c. Managing to do ~~put~~ trainings in this country is a success
- d. Drama acting.

④ Failure

- a. Feeling very low and not to do other important tasks
- b. The NHS charges
Asked to pay a bill of £8000.00
- c. Not giving family carers wages.
calling them unpaid carers.
- d. Taking long to grant me
Leave to remain
- e. ~~Saying~~ Asking people to get
Indefinite Leave to remain after 10 yrs.

Happiness

To mime (act without speaking), celebration of her marriage and a good husband whose company she enjoys. Angela should express gratitude for the supportive HIV clinic she attends.

Sadness

To mime (act without speaking), cursing about the insufficient financial support her husband receives and how it impacts her life in general. Show disgust at the poor care support and services rendered to her husband.

Angela SITOLE

BESSIE EWULU 26/8/2022

My Story of my journey of Life: -

Happiness: When I was getting ready to come to the United Kingdom ~~at~~ as at 2006, It was all happy both to me and to my family with health and hoping that I was coming here to ~~be~~ ^{acquire} a good education & life.

Sad But eventually I fell sick as per HIV which ~~acquire~~ nearly took my life, and by then I did not know any body because I was severely ill, and being in coma in the hospital where ~~I~~ ^{I was} admitted in St. Mary hospital in Paddington, To God be the glory I was alive today.

Success

I was successfully simple that after the sickness then I started going to college in City of Westminster College where I got my Levels L1 & L2 L3 in Health and Social care, and L2 functional Maths and L2 English.

Failure: Government of United Kingdom

I was homeless and was sleeping rough, money with me, no house, no access to public found, then it bring about my land lady refuse me to enter my house b/c of the discrimination and I suffered and was cry day & night.

Happiness

To mime (act without speaking), happily celebrating gift of life.

Sadness

To mime (act without speaking), cursing poor health conditions among black.

Bessie EWULU

Adegunji Oluotoba 26/08/2022

Challenges :- Immigration Support and HIV.

My story:- I am Adegunji Oluotoba came to UK in 2011, having lived for some years in UK without any determinant to better quality lifestyle due to non-availability of information about immigration support and HIV counselling to support me, but in joined the support group assisted by evidence meaningful support on immigration and HIV.

SAD: Loneliness, living round in isolation, homelessness and etc.

Failure:- Non able to get immigration support at then needed for some years due to social lifestyle and societal discrimination.

Success:- With immigration support in 2016 I got my permanent line to remain in 2018, and to be joined in health care services and also graduated as a health and social care graduate in December, 2021.

Happiness

To mime (act without speaking), happily celebrating the unity in Red Ribbon Living Well Group as a member and long-term beneficiary of its services.

Sadness

To mime (act without speaking), cursing isolation and loneliness among members of his black community.

Adetunji OMOTOSHO

PELUCY

26/08/2022

RAISE -

MY STORY

HAPPY

- MEDICATION IS FREE
- CHRISTMAS - GIFTS
- BIRTHDAY - GIFTS
- COMMUNICATION

SAD

- IMMIGRATION
- HOUSING
- FOOD
- WEATHER (WINDS)

SUCCESS

- EDUCATION

FAILURE

- FUNDS - (MAINTENANCE)
- UPKEEP
- DISCRIMINATION

Happiness

To mime (act without speaking), celebration of birthdays and Christmas culture in the UK including free medicine.

Sadness

To mime (act without speaking), cursing the poor housing conditions in which victims live, immigration rules that frustrate those vulnerable and the high cost of foods on the market.

Pelusi RAIJE

Information and Advice about Testing

“Better off Knowing”

HIV testing in the UK is free, voluntary and confidential. You can be tested at a sexual health clinic, a GP surgery, A&E, a community testing project or at home using a self-test. Having an HIV test is the only way to know for sure whether you have HIV or you don't.

The sooner you know you have HIV the sooner you can get the medical care you need. This will give you the best chance of getting the treatment and care you need to stay well.

U=U means "Undetectable and Untransmittable"

This means that when a person living with HIV is on regular treatment that lowers the amount of virus in their body to undetectable levels, there is zero risk of passing on HIV to their partners. The low level of virus is described as an undetectable viral load.

People who are taking HIV treatment and have an undetectable viral load do not pass HIV on to their sexual partners. The U=U campaign is supported by the British HIV Association (BHIVA), which is the professional association for doctors and other healthcare professionals working in HIV in the UK.

What is PrEP?

PrEP is Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. It is a once-daily pill regimen that can help you stay HIV-negative. It is an approved prescription medication.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a form of HIV prevention that uses anti-HIV drugs to protect HIV-negative people from acquiring HIV

PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV. PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% when taken as prescribed.

Addressing stigma and health inequalities

Stigma and health inequalities create significant barriers to accessing testing, prevention, and care for BAME communities.

All national and local HIV treatment and prevention initiatives should explicitly plan and evaluate how they will address HIV-related stigma, discrimination and health inequalities. Stigma isn't something that's new and it isn't something that's going to go away overnight.

Alongside this, we must increase the knowledge and awareness of HIV amongst the general healthcare workforce and service providers e.g., Housing, Jobcentre, Citizen Advice and all government bodies.

HEALTH INEQUALITIES: HIV PREVENTION

COMMEMORATE AND CELEBRATE HIV/AIDS: 40 YEARS
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

The Somerville, 260 Queens Rd, SE14 5JN | Fri 2nd Dec | 10am-3pm



Red Ribbon Living Well CIC is a community organisation for individuals affected by and living with HIV and other comorbidities, Mental Health challenges, and domestic violence. The group was founded in 2009 by members who recognised a need for peer support in the community and it has grown from its grass-roots beginnings.

Contact us on <https://www.redribbonlivingwell.org/>