



Ending User Fees, Restoring Access: How CLM Helped Mutolere Hospital Clients Return to Care

In 2022, during Community-Led Monitoring (CLM) interactions with clients at Mutolere Hospital in Kisoro District, a critical barrier to HIV treatment emerged: user fees. Clients reported struggling to mobilize funds not only for transport to the facility but also to cover a mandatory consultation fee of UGX 4,000 charged at every appointment.

These fees significantly affected retention in care — some clients opted out entirely, others self-transferred to different facilities, and many missed appointments while trying to raise the required amount. The facility in-charge confirmed the concern during a CLM follow-up interview, attributing 80 missed appointments and six client transfers between October and December 2022 to these charges.

In response, CLM convened a dialogue on March 1, 2023, bringing together Kisoro district leadership, the implementing partner (UPMB), and hospital management. After reviewing the data and client experiences, UPMB instructed the facility to immediately stop charging consultation fees for clients receiving HIV services





Just six weeks after the policy change, progress was already evident. The ART in-charge reported that missed appointments had dropped from 80 to just 10, and eight clients had transferred back to Mutolere Hospital.

“I had asked to be transferred to Kisoro Hospital because I sometimes couldn’t afford the transport and consultation fee,” shared a 34-year-old female client during CLM clinic monitoring. “But when I heard the fee had been removed, I asked to return here. There’s no long queue, and we get served on time.”

This case underscores the power of CLM to identify service delivery barriers and work collaboratively with stakeholders to create solutions that improve access, retention, and health outcomes for people living with HIV.

