



WORLD AIDS DAY 2023
HIV SELF-TESTING
HEALTH WALK



SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR

Mr. Héctor Sucilla Pérez
(Country Director, UNAIDS)



HOST

Hon. Jennifer Dede Adjabeng
(Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) for
La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality)



DATE

November 25, 2023



STARTING – FINISHING POINT

Ayi Mensa (La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality)
to Peduase (Eastern Region)



SIDE ATTRACTIONS

Colour Splashing, Aerobiccs, 360 Camera
Video & Kenkey Party



NO. OF PARTICIPANTS

800 (est.)



On Saturday, November 25, 2023, GHANET organized a health walk that was aimed at raising awareness about HIV self-testing. The event was also part of the activities to celebrate the 2023 World AIDS Day under the theme **"LET COMMUNITIES LEAD."** The walk commenced at 6am from Ayi Mensa in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality and ended at Peduase in the Eastern Region.

The walk attracted approximately 800 people, including dignitaries such as Hon. Jennifer Dede Adjabeng (Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) for La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality), Hon. Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare (MP for Daffiama/Bussie/Issa Constituency, Upper West Region), Mr Héctor Sucilla Pérez (UNAIDS Country Director), Dr. Rita Owusu-Amankwah (represented the Director General, Ghana AIDS Commission), Dr. Elizabeth Agyare (WHO Representative), Dr. Stephen Ayisi Addo (Programme Manager, National AIDS/STI Control Programme), Ms. Refilwe M. Kotane, Product Manager - Public Health, MEA, Abbott, Ernest Amoabeng Orsin (President of GHANET), Mrs Victoria Araba Dadzie-Dennis (Vice President of GHANET) and Louis Acheampong (Treasurer of GHANET).

Speaking at a brief ceremony, before the procession, the MCE for La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality thanked the organizers for choosing her municipality

as the starting point of the walk. She noted that, HIV cases have been increasing in recent times, across the country. Hence, the need for more awareness to be created. She declared that her office was ready to collaborate with all stakeholders committed to the fight against HIV. She prayed for a successful event.



Hon. Jennifer Dede Adjabeng

MCE for La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality

Other speakers at the end of the walk included Mr. Héctor Sucilla Pérez, who applauded GHANET for the initiative. He indicated that walks, as a form of exercise, are good for the body and mind. He expressed hope that all participants would make it a habit to exercise regularly. He pledged UNAIDS' support to all activities that seek to give prominence for communities, in line with the global theme calling on communities to lead.

Ms. Refilwe M. Kotane, Abbott, flew in from South Africa to join the walk. She expressed her company's elation to be part of the event and congratulated GHANET for exhibiting exceptional organizational skills. "I wasn't expecting this kind of crowd. I thought it was going to be a small group of people walking; but seeing this number of participants, I am overwhelmed."

Hon. Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare, who is a member of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Health, used the occasion to call for more government support for HIV and AIDS programming. He lamented that HIV and AIDS awareness campaigns had decreased, which may be contributing to the rising figures.

Also speaking during the walk, Dr. Stephen Ayisi Addo called on the general public to test and know their status because Ghana is committed to attaining the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets. "Unless people test and know their status, we cannot identify those who need to be put on treatment".

Dr. Ayisi Addo revealed that, at present, about 100,000 people are HIV positive in Ghana but are unaware. "That is why we need to take HIV testing very seriously. Self-testing is an innovation which supports our efforts to encourage more people to test. I therefore urge everyone to test and know their status. HIV is no longer a death sentence. We have Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) available."



Mr. Héctor Sucilla Pérez

Country Director, UNAIDS



Ms. Refilwe M. Kotane

Product Manager - Public Health, MEA, Abbott



Dr. Stephen Ayisi Addo

Programme Manager, NACP



Hon. Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare

MP for Daffiama/Bussie/Issa Constituency, Upper West Region

On behalf of Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC), Dr. Rita Owusu-Amankwah, Director of Policy and Planning, acknowledged the zeal of the participants to get to the end point of the walk. She said that their presence spoke volumes about their commitment to their health.

She stressed on the need on the importance of knowing ones' status. "HIV self-testing empowers us with the knowledge we need to protect ourselves and our loved ones," she stated.

Dr. Elizabeth Agyare, representing the WHO, called for unity and determination in the fight against the virus. She highlighted the progress and challenges in the ongoing fight against HIV, urging national focus on addressing vulnerabilities and disparities.

She also called for a renewed commitment to evidence-based strategies, scientific innovation, and social justice principles, with emphasis on the importance of amplifying the voices of those affected. She expressed gratitude to all participants for their dedication, inspiring hope for a future free from the scourge of HIV and AIDS.

Speaking to the media at the end of the event, Mrs. Victoria Araba Dennis, Vice President of GHANET, thanked the media for the massive interest they had shown in the event. She implored them to continue propagating the message of HIV and AIDS and to always collaborate with GHANET.



Dr. Rita Owusu-Amankwah

Director of Policy and Planning, GAC



Dr. Elizabeth Agyare

World Health Organisation (WHO)



