

# Awareness campaign, Shuga to reach Nigeria

MTV Base and the MTV Staying Alive Foundation, have joined forces with the Nigerian government's National Agency for the Control of AIDS and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to combat a lack of awareness and misinformation about HIV, sexual responsibility and teen pregnancy among Nigerian youth, using the medium of Shuga, MTV's TV series and multimedia campaign.



PEPFAR (The US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) has also expressed the intention to join forces with the campaign.

The news was announced at a press conference in Lagos by Alex Okosi, senior vice president and managing director, Viacom International Media Networks (VIMN) Africa; Georgia Arnold, executive director, MTV Staying Alive Foundation; Emmanuel Alhassan, director, Resource Mobilisation for the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA); Mairo Mandara, Nigeria Country Representative, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and Dr Okey Nwanyanwu, CDC Country Director, Nigeria.

Fusing public health messaging with gripping storylines, Shuga is part of a powerful 360-degree mass media campaign designed to raise awareness about HIV prevention and teen pregnancy in Nigeria, after research highlighted widespread ignorance about or indifference to contraception, poor access to contraceptives, a significantly high incidence of mother-to-child HIV transmission, and gender-based violence in the region.

The series will premiere on MTV Base (DStv Channel 322), Nigerian terrestrial broadcasters and other MTV networks and third party broadcasters around the world from World AIDS Day (1 December 2013).

Other elements of the Shuga campaign will include a radio drama series, a peer educator programme, a comic book in Hausa and English, a mobile information service, social media and a range of digital platforms.

Okosi added, "MTV Base is proud and excited to bring Shuga to Nigeria for the first time. We are delighted that this award-winning series and multimedia campaign will be using its muscle to shine a light on important public health issues affecting youth, and promoting meaningful behaviour change while leveraging Nigerian creativity and talent."

Commented Arnold, "In moving Shuga to Nigeria, we aim to strike a chord with young Nigerians and provoke a significant shift in their attitudes and behaviour towards sexual health and associated public health issues. Combining these messages with stylish production, poignant storylines, believable characters and world class acting allows Shuga to sweeten the pill and make an impact where other campaigns may have failed to resonate in the past."

John Idoko, director general, NACA commented, "The Nigerian government is delighted to support this important youth education initiative which complements our on-going education projects at all levels of society. Shuga's subtle messaging will not only ensure greater understanding of HIV prevention and treatment measures among young people but communicate important messages about tolerance and acceptance".

Mandara said, "The Gates Foundation is committed to Nigeria because we believe every person deserves the opportunity to live a healthy life with dignity. By raising awareness of public health issues through this exciting project with Shuga, and investing in primary health services, we can work together to give every Nigerian a chance at leading a healthy and productive life".

"Efforts such as Shuga that seek to expand knowledge about HIV among young people are critical to helping us achieve an AIDS-free generation. Raising awareness is key to keeping this and future generations healthy and able to lead productive lives," commented Shirley A. Dady, PEPFAR country coordinator, Nigeria.

For more about the campaign, go to [www.facebook.com/MTVShuga](https://www.facebook.com/MTVShuga) and follow Shuga on [@MTVShuga](https://twitter.com/MTVShuga).

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