



How to Tell Your Story: Working with USAID Communications

November 17, 2022



OHA Communications Role

- Amplify USAID and **partner programming achievements** as we work towards sustainable control of HIV/AIDS
- **Find and create opportunities to collaborate with partners** to amplify and disseminate HIV/AIDS program work and achievements (i.e., webinars, social media, blogs, etc.)
- **Serve as the focal point for public affairs and communications**, working across USAID, with other U.S. government agencies, and **implementing partners**

OHA Comms External Activities

- Social media management
- Conferences and events
- Content creation: blogs, articles, social media toolkits, newsletters, USAID/OHA web pages
- Relationship building: partners, advocates, priority audiences

Contact us: OHA-Communications-Team@usaid.gov



Communications Tips and Resources



USAID Branding & Marking

- Branding Manual sets the standard for all USAID communications produced by employees, contractors, grantees, and other partners
- “Branding Follows Funding,” (i.e., logo placement (in order): PEPFAR, USAID, IP)
- [Branding and marking training](#)



<https://www.usaid.gov/branding/gsm>

Why Branding and Marking is Important

- The U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 requires USAID-funded programs and program assets to be marked with our logo, which includes the seal, the brand name (USAID), and the tagline “From the American People.”
- Branding helps raise awareness for USAID’s presence around the world—and ensures transparency and accountability to host countries and American taxpayers. By branding USAID programs, everyone knows where the funds come from and what they support.

Writing Tips



Write for your audience (Government officials, USAID partners, USAID beneficiaries, advocates, etc.)

Reference the [USAID style Guide](#)



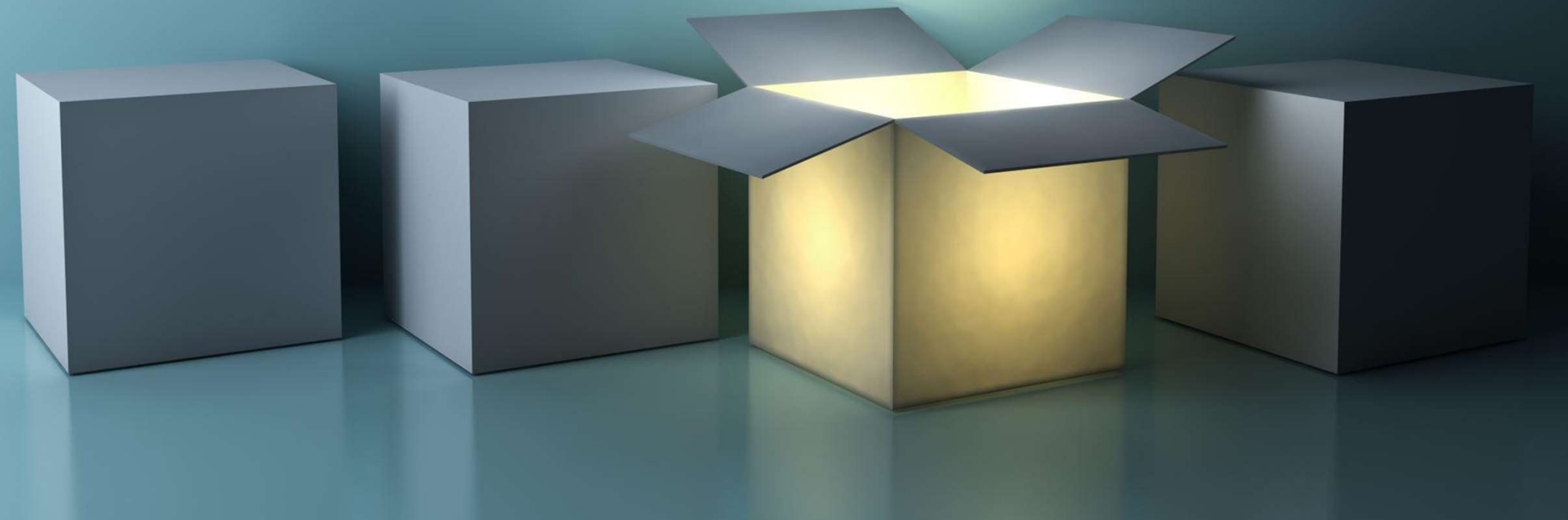
Avoid unexplained acronyms and jargon

Show the human impact



Reference [USAID's storytelling guidelines](#)

REPACKAGE YOUR CONTENT



START WITH 1 PIECE OF CONTENT



INTERVIEW A BENEFICIARY

1. Write a **success story** to submit to USAID
2. Include in a **text box in your next report.**
3. Write a **press release** and submit to local media outlets.
4. Record the **interview on video (or just audio)** and **insert a clip in your next report** or share in your next meeting with the donor.
5. Take some **photos** at the interview to include in your success story, in reports, and as a social media post (in accordance with your specific agreement/contract).
6. Pull quotes from interview and **share on social media.**
7. Add a **snippet to your newsletter** and link to it your website/blog.

CONSIDER LOCAL LANGUAGES

Offer translation for interviews to **allow interviewees to respond in the language they are most comfortable speaking.**

Be sure to **translate accurately** in your final piece.



Photo Tips

- Clear, well-focused, and high-resolution photographs.
- At least 1800 pixels wide is recommended
- Images should be well composed and relevant to the story
- Signed consent forms are required for all photos, videos, and stories.
- Avoid photos of minors faces
- [Photo guide for USAID partners](#)



This is a clear, well-focused, and interesting photograph.



This is an unclear and uninteresting photograph.

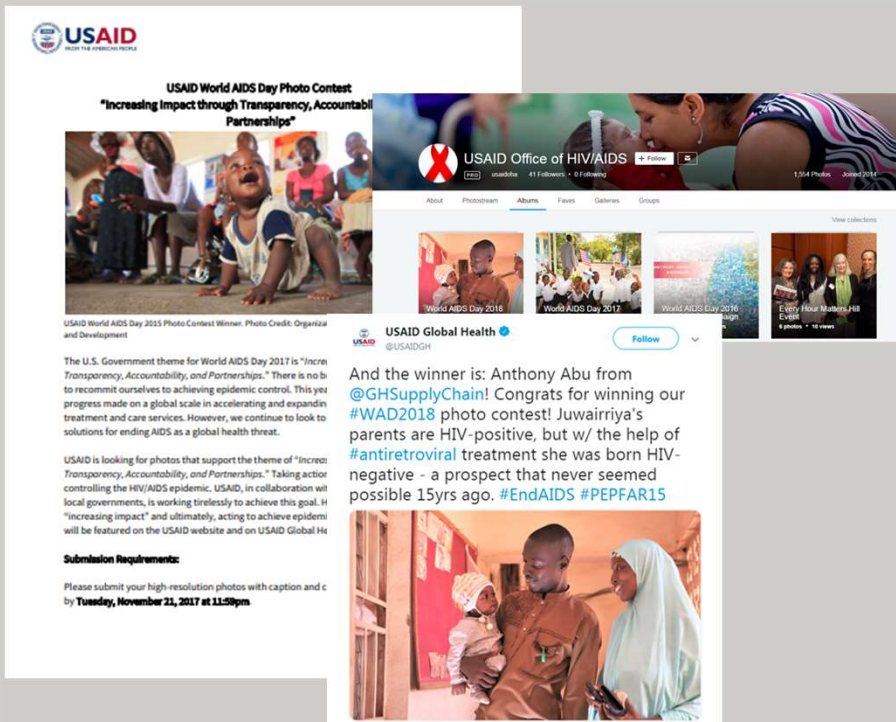
Examples from USAID OHA partners



Photo Inventory

- Send us your program photos!
 - Photo Contest
 - Social Media graphics

*Hi-Res, w/ caption, **proper credit** (Photographer Name/Organization), and **photo release forms** from each individual photographed



USAID
FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID World AIDS Day Photo Contest
"Increasing Impact through Transparency, Accountability, and Partnerships"

USAID Office of HIV/AIDS
1,554 Photos June 2017

USAID World AIDS Day 2015 Photo Contest Winner. Photo Credit: Organiza and Development

The U.S. Government theme for World AIDS Day 2017 is "Increase Transparency, Accountability, and Partnerships." There is no better way to commit ourselves to achieving epidemic control. This year's progress made on a global scale in accelerating and expanding treatment and care services. However, we continue to look for solutions for ending AIDS as a global health threat.

USAID is looking for photos that support the theme of "Increase Transparency, Accountability, and Partnerships." Taking action to control the HIV/AIDS epidemic. USAID, in collaboration with local governments, is working tirelessly to achieve this goal. If your "increasing impact" and ultimately, acting to achieve epidemic control will be featured on the USAID website and on USAID Global Health.

Submission Requirements:
Please submit your high-resolution photos with caption and credit by **Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at 11:59pm**

USAID Global Health
@USAIDGH

And the winner is: Anthony Abu from @GHSupplyChain! Congrats for winning our #WAD2018 photo contest! Juwairriya's parents are HIV-positive, but w/ the help of #antiretroviral treatment she was born HIV-negative - a prospect that never seemed possible 15yrs ago. #EndAIDS #PEPFAR15

Rule of Thirds

Don't automatically put your subject in the center of every photo.



PHOTO: MORGANA WINGARD FOR USAID



PHOTO: KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA FOR USAID



PHOTO: DOUGLAS GRITZMACHER FOR USAID



PHOTO: MORGANA WINGARD FOR USAID



**THE IMPORTANCE OF
CONSENT & DISCLOSURES**

GET PERMISSION BEFORE YOU START

WRITTEN, PHOTO, & VIDEO

A **signed USAID or donor disclosure form** is due for all video and photos of beneficiaries, as well as for written interviews and quotes.

Protects the interviewee, your organization, and the U.S. government.

The form must be offered in the language the individual can read.

An **English version** of the form is available on the USAID website and **additional languages** are available through country Mission offices.

GIVE CLARITY & GET PERMISSION

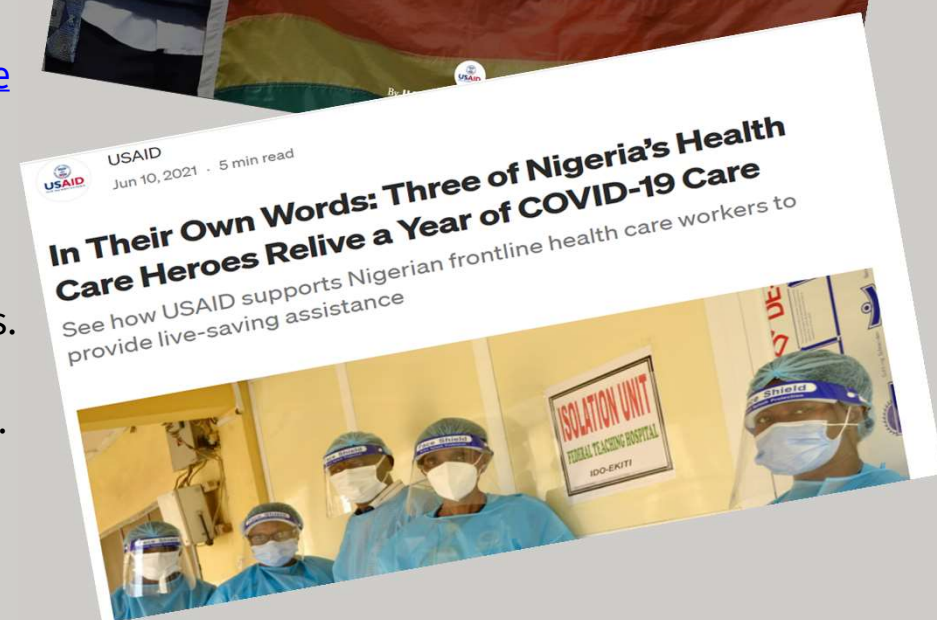
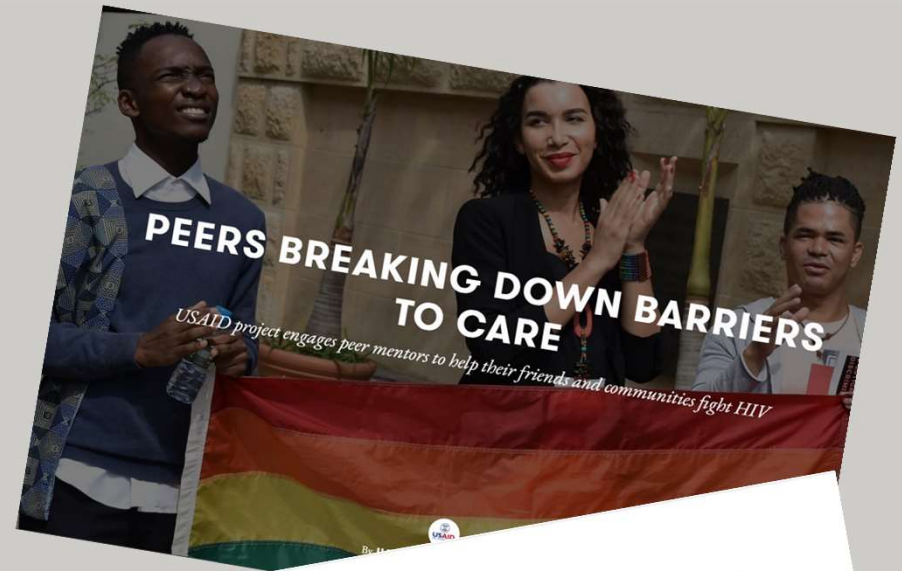
- 1. Be up front** about where the photo, video, or interview could *potentially* be published.
- 2. Allow the person the opportunity to say no.**
- 3. Be sure they can read and understand** the disclosure form.
- 4. Get the form signed.**
- 5. Keep** the form on file.

Communications Platforms



Story Platforms

- [USAID Medium Blog \(22K followers\)](#)
 - Medium has 600- to 800-word blogs with two to three photos.
 - Human interest stories are preferred for this platform.
 - **Example:** [In Their Own Words: Three of Nigeria's Health Care Heroes Relive a Year of COVID-19 Care](#)
- [USAID Exposure Page](#)
 - Exposure is an external online storytelling platform that USAID uses to post compelling photo essays. Exposure focuses heavily on photos.
 - 12-20 professional high-quality photos that tell a story showing the human impact of USAID's work.
 - **Example:** [Peers Breaking Down Barriers to Care](#)



Story Platforms

- [OHA Blog](#)

- The OHA blog shares how USAID demonstrates its leadership in advancing HIV epidemic control.
- Should have 600 to 800 words (similar to Medium, with two or three images), but can be more technical in nature since it lives on the OHA web pages of the USAID.gov site.
- Blogs should use plain language.
- **Example:** [Propelling Change](#)



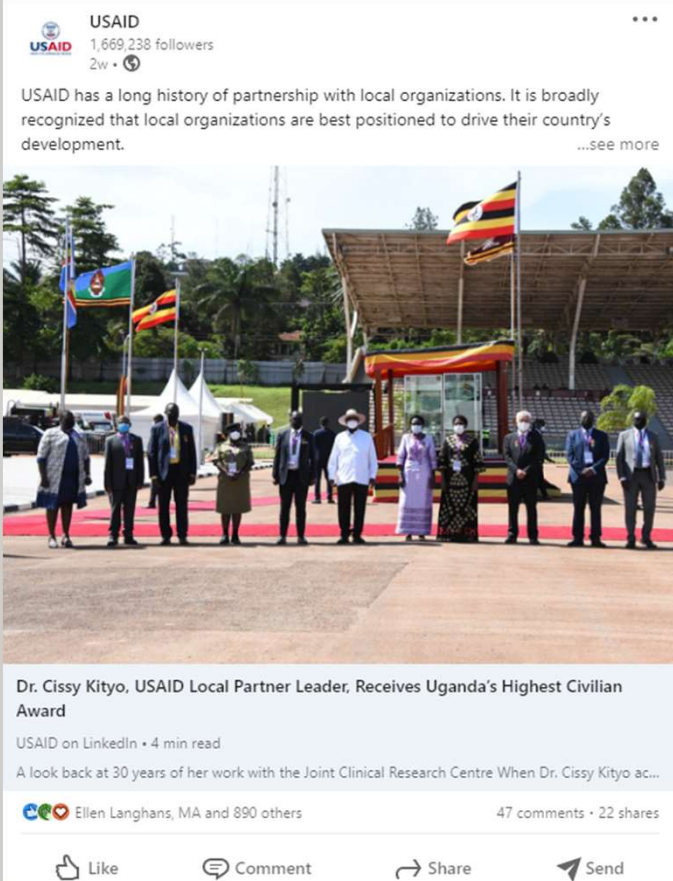
- [USAID's Storytelling Hub](#)

- USAID's Storytelling Hub is an award-winning immersive multimedia platform that showcases human-centered stories about USAID's work.
- Should have a professional, high-quality human-interest video accompanied with professional photos.
- **Example:** [Maggie Reaches for her DREAMS](#)



Story Platforms

- [USAID LinkedIn \(2M followers\)](#)
 - External blogging platform with a professional audience that includes USAID staff, partners, members of the development community, and the general public.
 - 600- to 800-word blogs with two to three photos.
 - These blogs can be a bit more technical in nature (more about USAID programs and staff) as LinkedIn is primarily used for professional networking.
 - **Example:** [Dr. Cissy Kityo, USAID local partner leader, receives Uganda's highest civilian award](#)



USAID
1,669,238 followers
2w • 🌐

USAID has a long history of partnership with local organizations. It is broadly recognized that local organizations are best positioned to drive their country's development. [...see more](#)

Dr. Cissy Kityo, USAID Local Partner Leader, Receives Uganda's Highest Civilian Award

USAID on LinkedIn • 4 min read


A look back at 30 years of her work with the Joint Clinical Research Centre When Dr. Cissy Kityo ac...

👍❤️ Ellen Langhans, MA and 890 others 47 comments · 22 shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share ✉️ Send

Note to Implementing Partners Newsletter


- Sent monthly from OHA Director
 - Share USAID/OHA headquarters news, updates, tools and resources; partner stories and successes; and communications campaigns
 - 750+ members and growing



PEPFAR
U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

OHA Note to Implementing Partners



Dear colleagues,

On March 5, S/GAC announced the resumption of COP/ROP 21 planning, effective April 1, and ending no later than May 21. In addition, S/GAC updated the [FAQ document](#) on the COP/ROP 21 planning resumption, also explained [here](#).

As a reminder, if there are additional members of your organization who are not included on the list for this biweekly note, please send their contact information, in addition to any questions, concerns, or updates to OHA-Communications-Team@usaid.gov. Please find all links and attachments from this note in our [Note to Implementing Partners folder](#).

Social Media Landscape

GH Channels:

- @USAIDGH Twitter (220K+ Followers)
- USAIDGH Facebook (200K followers)

Agency channels:

- @USAID Twitter (913K)
- USAID Facebook (1M)
- USAID YouTube (19K)
- USAID Instagram (366K)

The collage features several social media posts:

- Atul Gawande (@GawandeUSAID)**: A tweet from Feb 5 announcing his official Twitter account, mentioning 2500+ @USAID Global Health colleagues. The tweet includes a photo of a woman and a child.
- USAID Global Health (@USAIDGH)**: A tweet celebrating World Social Work Day and the Year of the Health and Care Worker, highlighting Cynthia's work. It includes a photo of a woman wearing a face mask.
- USAID (@USAID)**: A tweet celebrating the 60th anniversary of USAID, with the text: "We advance U.S. natl. security & economic prosperity, generosity & promote #resilience. Privacy: go.usa.gov/usaaid.gov". It shows 719 Following and 801.9K Followers.
- USAID Global Health (@USAIDGH)**: A Facebook post celebrating 59 years of USAID's work, with the text: "For 59 years, @USAID has improved the health of people in developing around the world. Privacy policy: usaaid.gov/privacy-policy". It shows 175.3K Followers.

Social Media Tips

- Tag @USAIDGH and @PEPFAR in your post
- If possible, include language such as “Through @PEPFAR and @USAIDGH”
- Always use “people living with HIV” instead of HIV patients.
- Use “life-saving treatment” when referring to ARVs.
- Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) type posts perform very well on social media. For example, “People living with HIV who are virally suppressed cannot sexually transmit the virus to others.”
- Importantly, use plain language whenever possible - avoid jargon and acronyms.





Facebook

Create short posts

- <250 characters = 60% more engagement. More than 477 characters = “see more...”

ALWAYS use visuals

- Visually appealing photos increases engagement by 4x.

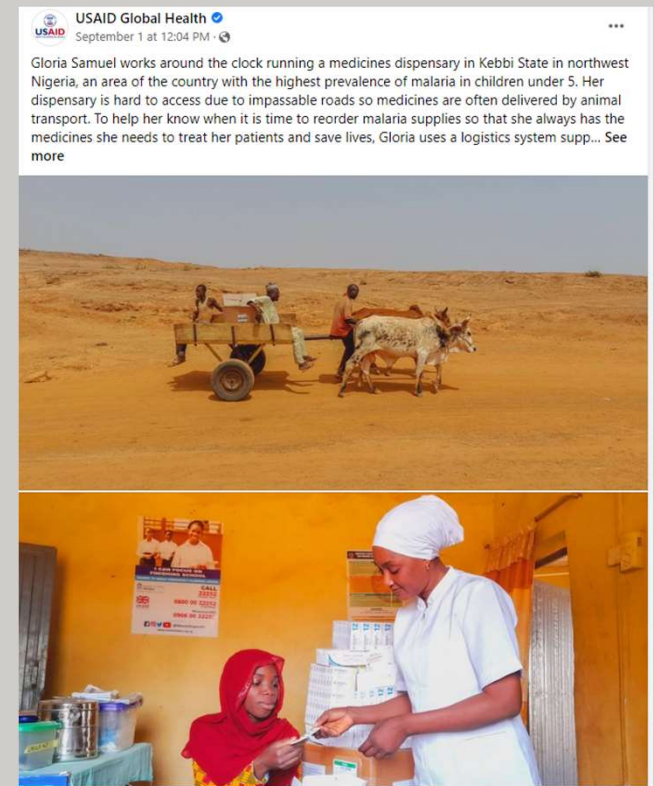
Use videos

- Videos get 59% more engagement than other posts.
- Caption videos. 86% of users watch on mute.

Facebook

Tag. Don't hashtag

- Tag organization with @ at beginning (FB pages have official names)
- Hashtags not proven effective on Facebook



Twitter



Create short messages

- 280 character limit. Shorter = better.

Use visuals

Use 1 or 2 hashtags

- Two or less can double engagement.

Add links last in message

- Links take up 20 characters



Awareness Days

- International Day of the Girl: October 11, 2022
- World Children's Day: Nov 20, 2022
- International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women: November 25, 2022
- 16 days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence: November 25 - December 10, 2022
- World AIDS Day: December 1, 2022
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities: December 3, 2022
- PEPFAR Anniversary: January 28, 2023
- International Women's Day: March 8, 2023
- World Social Work Day: March 21, 2023
- World Health Worker Week: April 2- 8, 2023
- HIV Vaccine Awareness Day: May 18, 2023