WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BILHARZIA
AN AID FOR COMMUNITY SENSITISATION
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FACILITATORS’ TIPS ON USING THE FLIPCHART

- Make sure you have time to talk without interruptions, and don’t act in a hurry.
- Begin by asking the people you are talking with what they know about Bilharzia.
- Use the flipchart to help explain aspects of Bilharzia that your audience is not familiar with.
- Speak clearly, using simple words and language that your audience can understand.
- Encourage your audience to ask questions and listen to their concerns.

Remember that well informed people are more likely to take preventive action against Bilharzia.
WHAT IS BILHARZIA?

• Bilharzia is a disease that people get from contact with water that has Bilharzia worms.

• The worms enter one’s body through the skin and move to the intestines or bladder.

• Left untreated, it can cause serious complications including liver damage and death.
WHAT IS BILHARZIA?
WHAT CAUSES BILHARZIA?

- Bilharzia is caused by a tiny worm that enters the body through the skin.

- The worms are so tiny they can only be seen through a microscope.

- The worm reproduces in the body, and interferes with normal body functions.

- It is NOT caused by witchcraft.
WHAT CAUSES BILHARZIA?
• When a person with Bilharzia defecates or urinates in or near a lake, river or swamp, the Bilharzia eggs in their feaces or urine enter the water and hatch into tiny worms.
• The tiny worms enter water snails where they mature.
• During the day, the snails release the mature worms into the water.
• When a person gets in contact with such water, the worms enter through their skin.
• These worms move through the blood to the intestines or bladder where they live as adult worms.
• The worms can live in the body for many years if not treated. Female worms release many eggs per day through stool or urine.
• Some of the eggs remain in the body and damage the liver and/or spleen which results into severe disease.
HOW DOES ONE GET BILHARZIA?

1. Snails
2. Sperm
3. Larvae
4. Eggs
5. Human

MINISTRY OF HEALT

MINISTRY OF HEALT
WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BILHARZIA?

- Abdominal pain and diarrhea, fever, chills, tiredness, blood in urine or faeces, loss of body weight and anemia.

- If untreated for some time the disease affects the liver and spleen resulting into a large, ball-shaped abdomen (ascites).
WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BILHARZIA?
WHO CAN GET BILHARZIA?

- Anyone can get Bilharzia if they swim, walk, stand, or come into contact with lake, river or swamp water that has Bilharzia worms.
- Even water that looks clear can have Bilharzia worms.
WHO CAN GET BILHARZIA?
• Bilharzia is very common in Uganda.
• Two out of every ten adults in Uganda have Bilharzia.
• Three out of every ten children under 5 years have Bilharzia.
• Most of these people do not know they are infected.
• Some people look healthy but carry Bilharzia in their bodies.
WHY SHOULD ONE BE CONCERNED ABOUT BILHARZIA?

ADULTS

YOUNG CHILDREN
HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES FROM GETTING BILHARZIA?

- Avoid contact with river, lake or swamp water. Here are some tips for doing that.
- Use a protected water source like a well or borehole for bathing and washing clothes and dishes.
- If you must use water from a river or lake, collect it and let it stay for 24 hours before use.
- If you must stand, walk or put your hands in water:
  1. Wear protective gear like boots and gloves.
  2. Do it before 8.00 am when there are not so many worms in the water.
  3. Limit the amount of time you spend in it.
HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES FROM GETTING BILHARZIA?
HOW IS BILHARZIA TREATED?

• In districts where many people have Bilharzia, the Government distributes free Bilharzia medicine every one or two years in schools and communities.
• Bilharzia medicine does not prevent you from getting Bilharzia but it treats existing infection.
• Please note: In case you have any of the signs of Bilharzia go to the nearest health facility for treatment.
• Bilharzia can be cured.
HOW IS BILHARZIA TREATED?
DOES BILHARZIA MEDICINE HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

- Bilharzia medicine may cause side effects when taken on an empty stomach. So you should eat food before taking the medicine.
- Side effects are usually mild, such as dizziness, headaches, stomach pain and nausea. These can be managed by drinking lots of water.
- On rare occasions, Bilharzia medicine can cause severe effects such as swollen body and vomiting.
- These side effects are more common in people who are heavily infected with Bilharzia worms.
- Side effects should be immediately reported to the nearest VHT or health facility.
DOES BILHARZIA MEDICINE HAVE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?
HOW CAN WE STOP BILHARZIA FROM SPREADING?

- Avoid direct contact with lake, river, or swamp water.
- Take the Bilharzia medicine offered in schools and communities every one or two years.
- Always use latrines or toilets and never defecate or urinate in or near a river, lake or swamp.

*Put a stop to Bilharzia before Bilharzia stops you!*
HOW CAN WE STOP BILHARZIA FROM SPREADING?