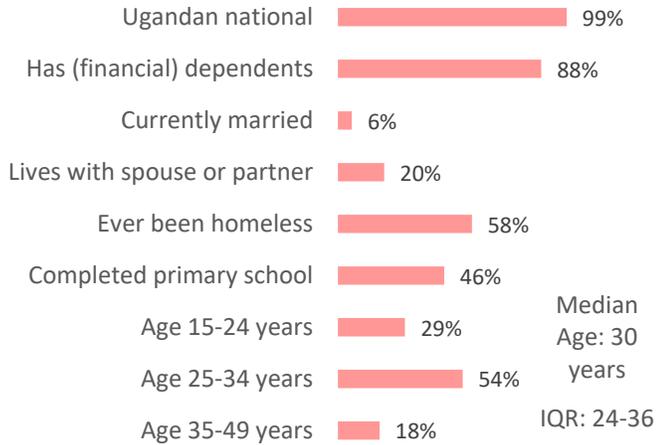


# Crane 3 Survey Summary – Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Fort Portal, Uganda 2023

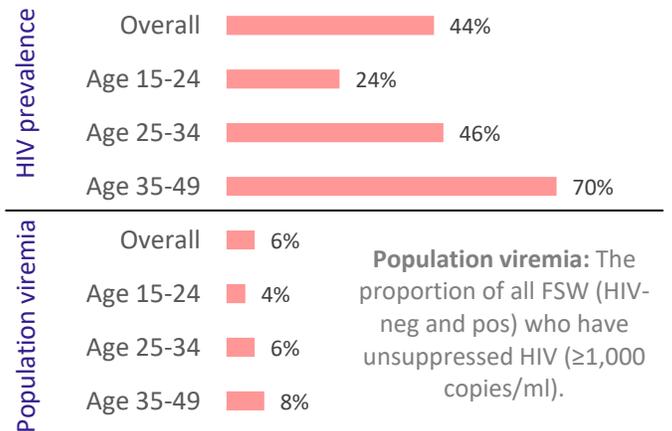


**Survey methods.** This respondent-driven sampling survey took place from August 2022 to February 2023 using a single survey office in Fort Portal. Participants were female, sold sex to men in Fort Portal in the past six months and were aged 18-49 years for female sex workers, (FSW) or 15-17 years for sexually exploited children (SEC). SEC were referred to social protection services. Data were collected through audio computer-assisted self-interviews; blood was tested for HIV, viral load, and active syphilis; cervicovaginal swabs were tested for human papilloma virus (HPV). Sample size was 463 participants; estimates are weighted unless stated otherwise. *Note: Interquartile range (IQR) refers to the middle half of those who responded.*

## Demographics



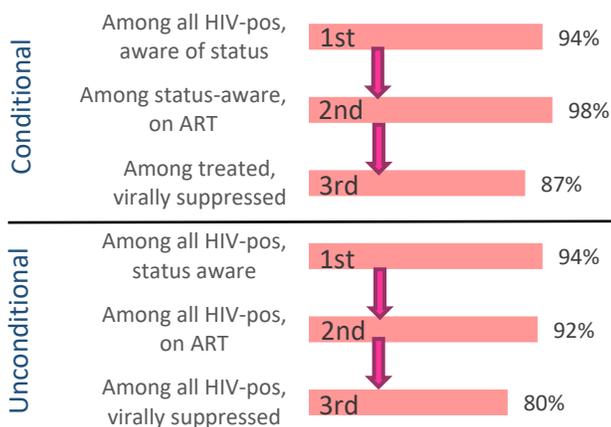
## HIV Prevalence and Population Viremia



FSW/SEC were on average 30 years old; almost one-third were 15-24 years old. Almost half had completed primary school. Most reported ever being homeless; nearly all were Ugandan nationals, and 9 out of 10 had financial dependents.

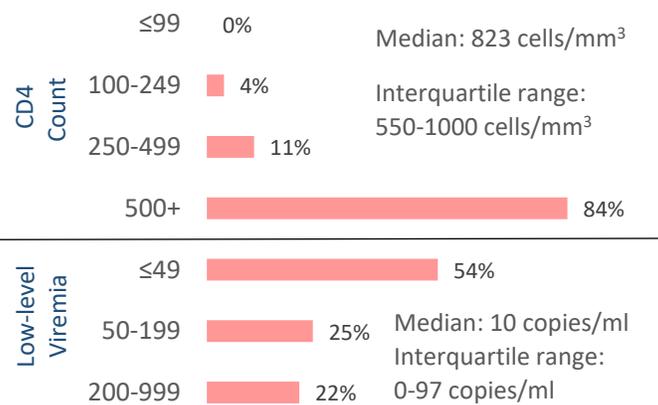
More than 40% of FSW/SEC were living with HIV. HIV prevalence increased with age and was highest among 35-49-year-olds. Six percent of all FSW/SEC had unsuppressed HIV (population viremia).

## UNAIDS 95-95-95 Targets



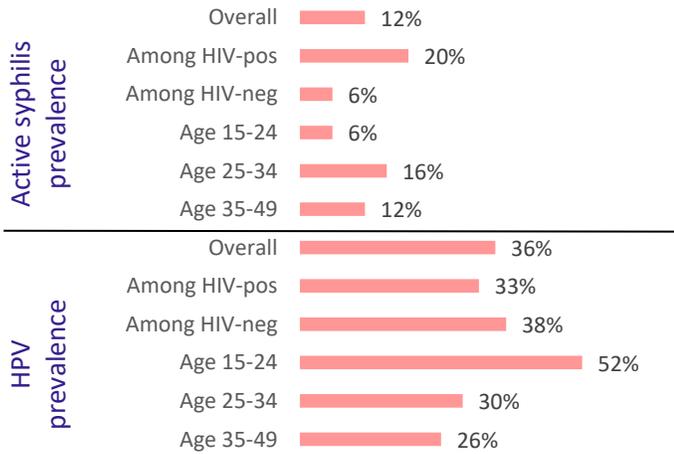
HIV status awareness and treatment uptake were based on self-report with adjustment for viral suppression. More than 9 in 10 FSW/SEC living with HIV (FSW/SECLHIV) knew about their status; as well, 4 in 5 were virally suppressed.

## CD4 Count & Low-level Viremia Distribution



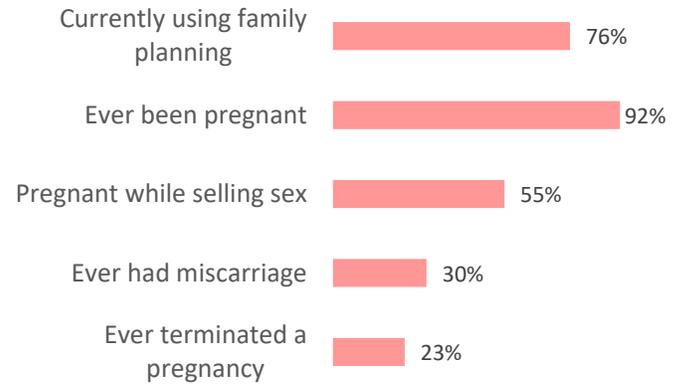
Four out of five HIV-positive FSW/SEC had CD4 counts of 500 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> or more, suggesting good immune status. Among virally suppressed FSW/SEC ( $< 1000$  copies/ml), almost one-fifth had viral loads between 200 and 999 copies/ml.

## Active Syphilis & HPV Prevalence



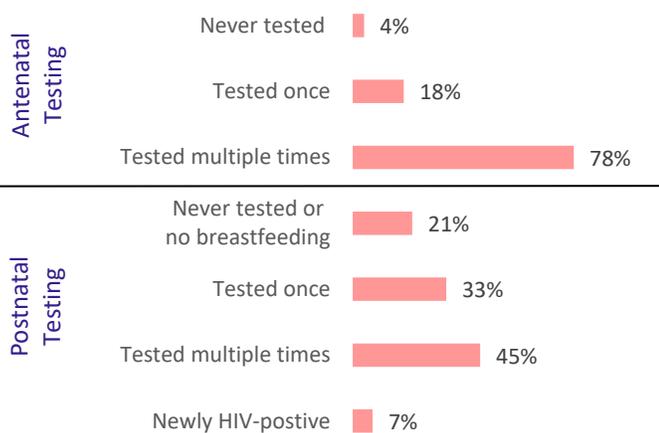
Prevalence of active syphilis was high and peaked among 25–34-year-olds. Similarly, about one-third had high risk HPV infection putting them at risk of developing cervical cancer. One-third of HIV-positive FSW/SEC was co-infected with high-risk HPV strains.

## Maternal Health: Pregnancy



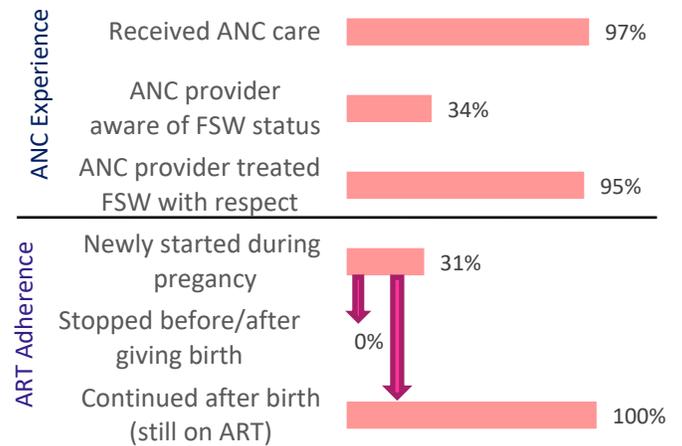
Three quarters reported currently using family planning. Most had ever been pregnant in the past and more than half had sold sex while pregnant. About one-third reported having had a miscarriage and almost a quarter ever terminated a pregnancy.

## Maternal Health: Ante- and Postnatal HIV Testing



Almost all FSW/SEC who had ever been pregnant reported being tested for HIV at antenatal; almost four-fifths had been tested multiple times. One in 14 FSW/SEC reported newly testing HIV positive at postnatal.

## Maternal Health: Antenatal Care (ANC) and ART



While pregnant, almost all FSW/SEC received ANC and were treated with respect by the provider but only one third of the providers knew about their clients' sex work/sexual exploitation. Among those living with HIV and newly starting ART during pregnancy, all continued ART after giving birth.

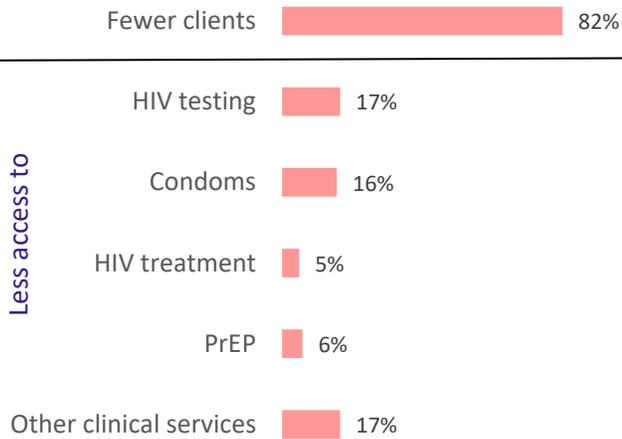
**Population size estimate:** Using this survey and two separate rounds of sampling at hotspots (three source capture recapture) we estimated the Fort Portal FSW/SEC population size at 1,500 (95% confidence interval: 1,000 – 2,100) or 4.7% of the female population aged 15-49.

**Pediatric HIV prevalence:** The survey also sampled children of enrolled FSW/SEC. Out of 31 eligible children aged 0-16 years, 31 (100%) were tested for HIV during the survey. Of these, 3 (6.5%) tested HIV-positive (unweighted).

## Crane 3 Survey Summary

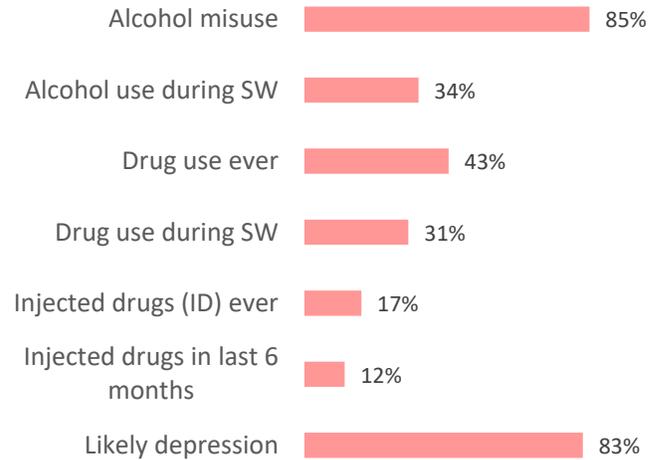
# Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Fort Portal, Uganda 2023

### COVID-19 Impact



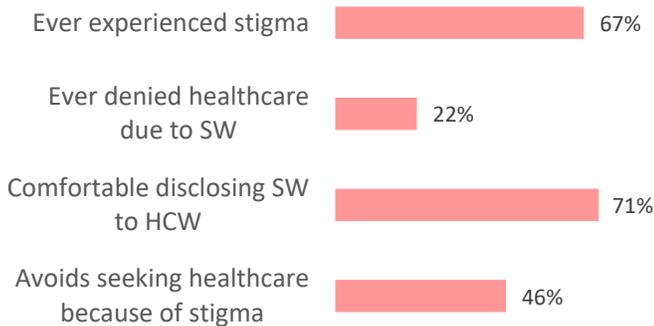
Most FSW/SEC reported fewer clients due to COVID-19. About one in seven reported decreased access to condoms or reduced access to HIV testing. Access to HIV treatment or PrEP were less impacted.

### Alcohol, Drug Use, Depression



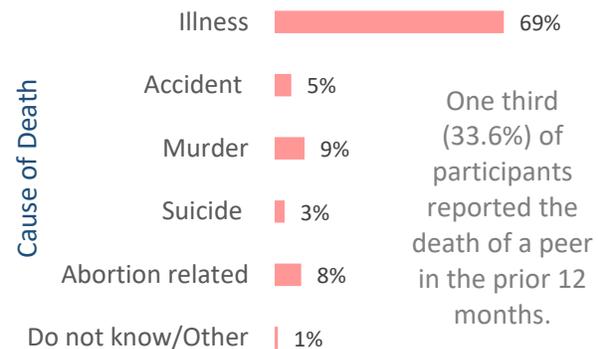
A large majority screened positive for alcohol misuse and likely depression. About one-third reported using alcohol and almost half reported using drugs during SW/SE; one in eight reported ever injecting drugs.

### Sex Work (SW) Related Stigma



Two thirds of FSW/SEC reported ever experiencing stigma related to their SW/SE. About one-fifth had been denied healthcare because of their SW/SE, and about half avoided healthcare due to stigma. Still, 7 in 10 were comfortable disclosing their SW/SE to healthcare workers.

### Mortality among Peers

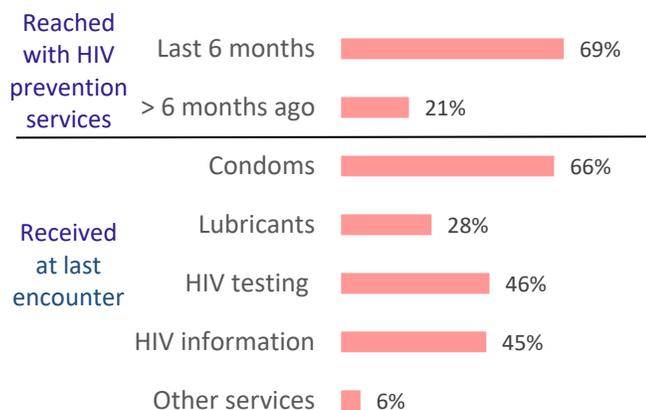


One third of FSW/SEC reported deaths among their known peers within the last 12 months. Illness accounted for two-thirds of reported deaths; murder accounted for nearly 1 out of 10 deaths, followed by abortion-related deaths.

# Crane 3 Survey Summary: HIV Prevention

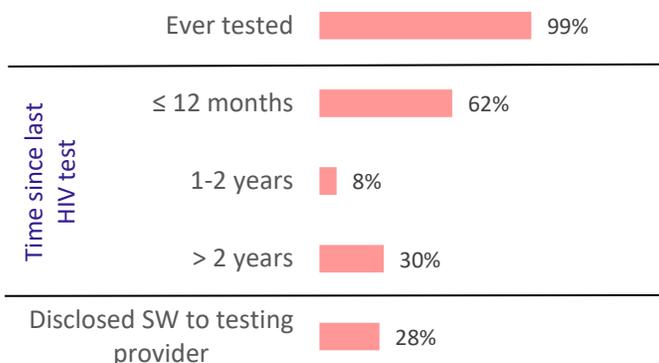
## Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Fort Portal, Uganda 2023

### Outreach Services



Most FSW/SEC had been reached with outreach services; two-thirds within the last six months. Condoms were most frequently received, followed by HIV testing services and HIV information.

### HIV Testing



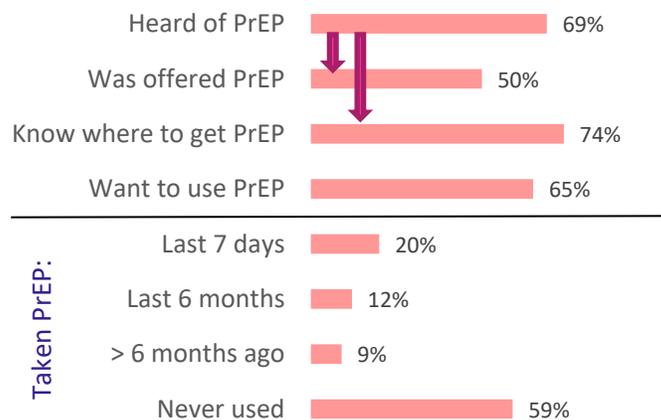
Virtually all FSW/SEC had ever tested for HIV, and three in five had tested in the last 12 months. More than a quarter had disclosed their SW/SE to their testing provider.

### Reason for not testing for HIV in the last 12 months



Among HIV-negative FSW/SEC who did not test for HIV in the prior 12 months, about half did not feel at risk. Other reasons for not testing included fear of testing positive and other people learning their result.

### Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)



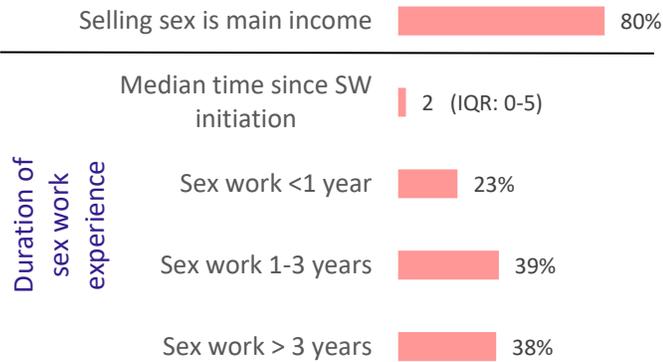
More than two-thirds of HIV-negative FSW/SEC had heard of PrEP; of these, half had been offered PrEP. Two-thirds of HIV-neg FSW/SEC reported wanting PrEP. One fifth had used PrEP in the last 7 days; three out of every five FSW/SEC had never used PrEP.

## Crane 3 Survey Summary: HIV Prevention

### Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Fort Portal, Uganda 2023

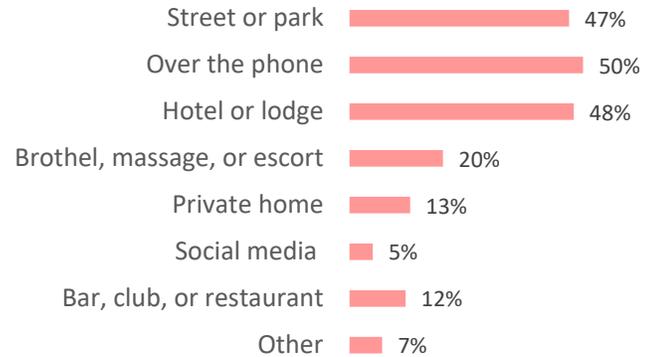
**Non-Paying Partners (NPP):** An NPP is a sexual partner who does not pay for sex, for example, a spouse or boyfriend. Approximately half (46%) of FSW/SEC had sex with an NPP in the last 12 months. Only 4% of FSW/SEC reported their last NPP was living with HIV, and 1 in 10 (11%) reported having used a condom at least once during the last three sex acts with an NPP. More than one-quarter (27%) of FSW/SEC reported that their HIV status was known to their most recent NPP.

#### Sex Work Characteristics



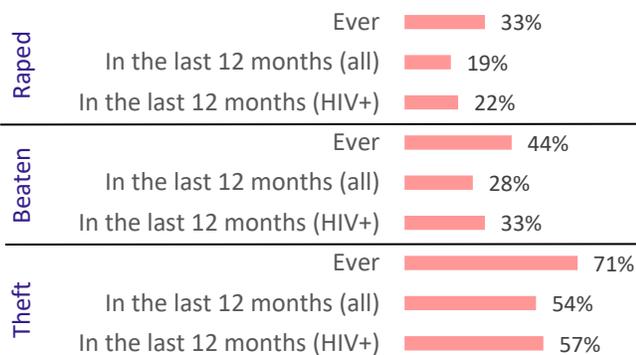
Four out of five FSW/SEC saw SW/SE as their main income. On average, FSW/SEC started selling sex two years prior to the survey and over one-third began SW/SE more than three years ago.

#### Where Sex Workers Meet Clients



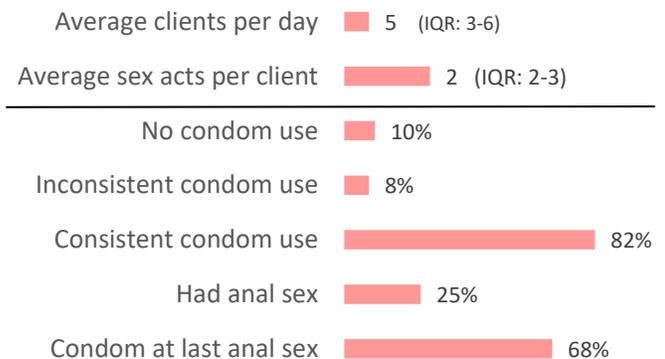
About half of FSW/SEC met their clients over the phone, at hotels or lodges, or on streets or in parks. Other places included brothels, massage places, or escorts; private homes, bars, clubs, restaurants, or social media.

#### Experienced Violence



About one-third of FSW/SEC reported ever been raped; one-fifth had been raped in the last 12 months. Almost half had ever been beaten, more than a quarter were beaten in the last 12 months. Most FSW/SEC reported ever experiencing theft.

#### Sex Acts & Condom Use



On average, FSW/SEC reported five clients per day and two sex acts with each client. Consistent condom use was reported by four-fifths of FSW/SEC at last sex encounter. One-fourth ever had anal sex with clients; condoms were used in two-thirds of anal sex acts.

## Crane 3 Survey Summary: Care and Treatment

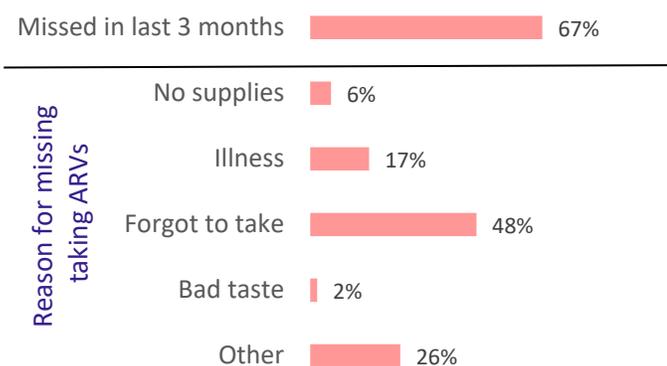
### Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children in Fort Portal, Uganda 2023

**Viral load (VL) testing:** Among HIV-positive FSW/SEC aware of their HIV status, nearly one-fifth (19%) stated that their VL had been measured in the previous 12 months. Of these, one quarter (25%) had received and understood their result.

**U=U:** About one-fifth (22%) of FSW/SEC living with HIV had heard about *Undetectable = Untransmittable*. After learning the meaning of U=U, almost a quarter (23%) stated that they believed U=U was true.

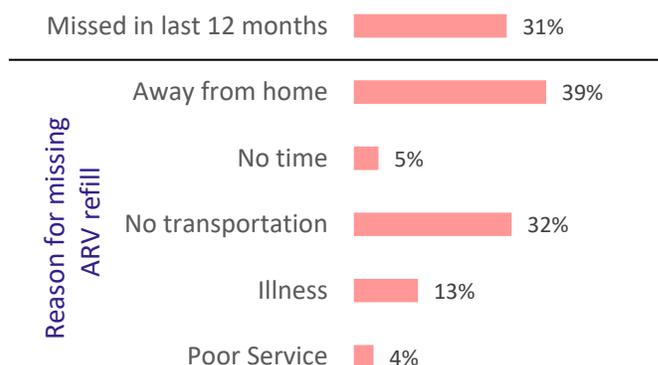
**Food security:** Of FSW/SEC living with HIV and on ART, about one in seven (15%) reported not having enough food.

#### Missed ARV Dose(s)



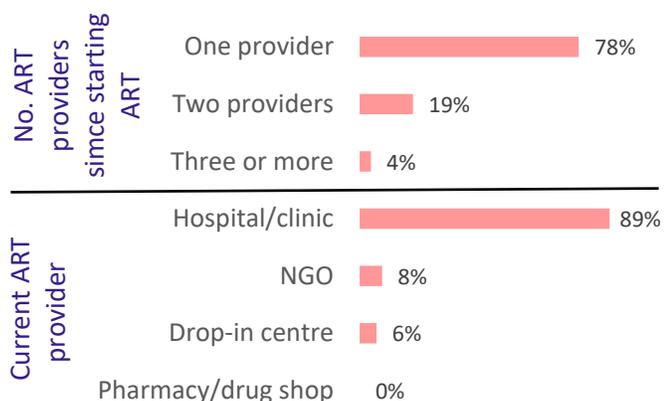
Two-thirds of FSW/SEC on ART reported they sometimes missed taking their ARVs in the last 3 months; the most frequent reason being forgetfulness.

#### Missed ARV Refill



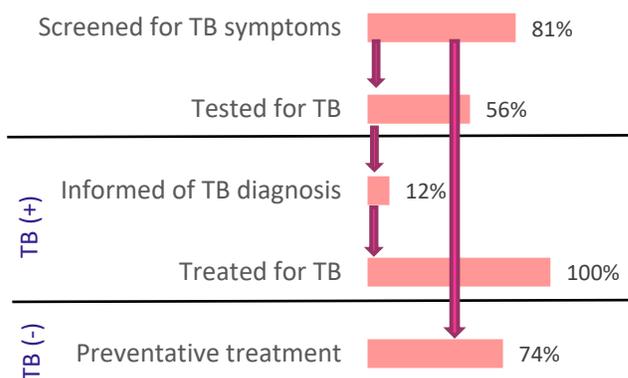
A third of FSW/SEC on ART reported they sometimes missed refilling their ARVs in the last 12 months, mostly due to being away from home or lack of transportation.

#### Select ART Characteristics



Among FSW/SEC on ART, about 4 in 5 had switched ART service sites at least once. Most received ART from hospitals and clinics or NGOs.

#### Tuberculosis (TB) Among HIV Positive FSW/SEC

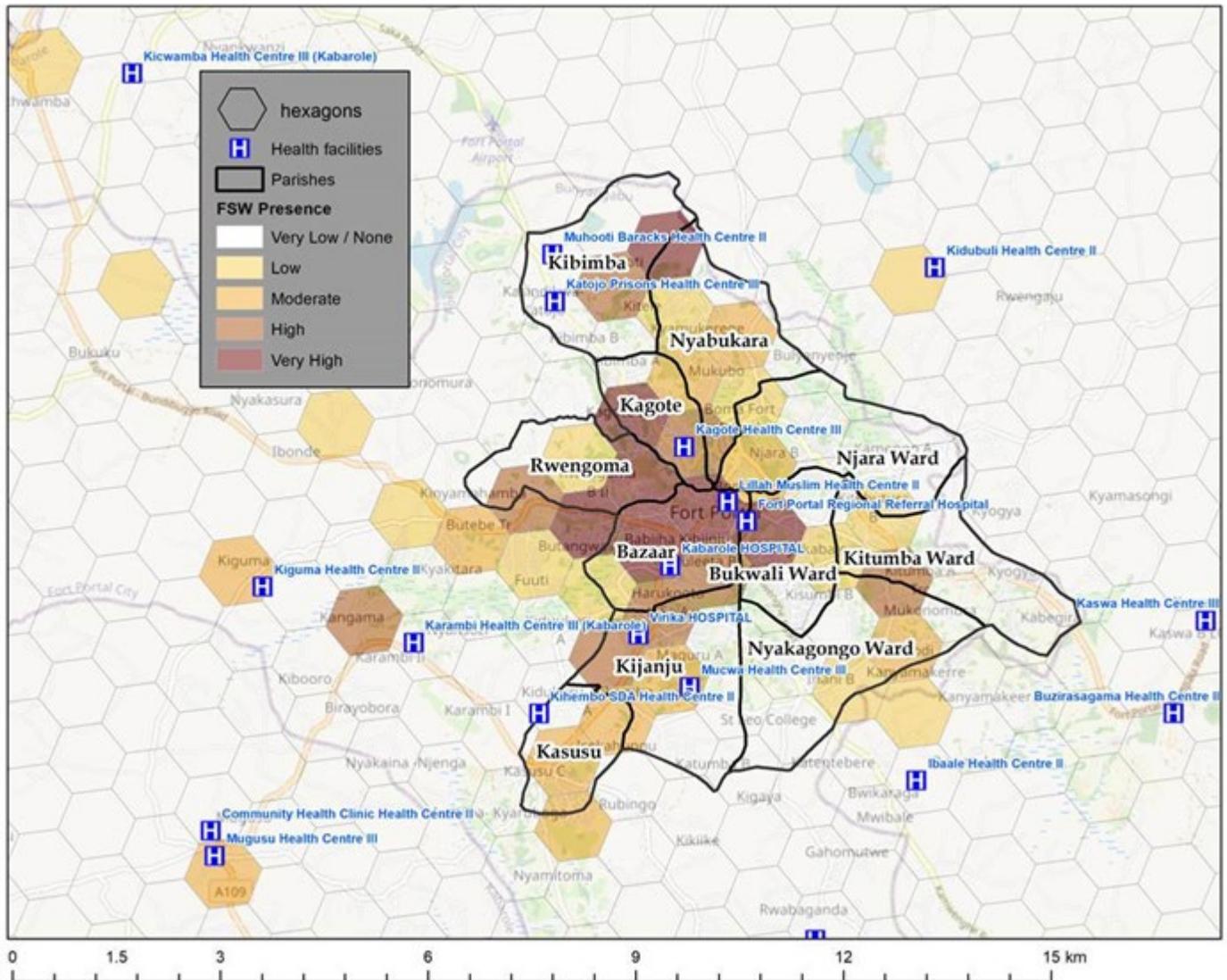


Among FSW/SEC living with HIV, 4 in 5 were screened for TB symptoms at first HIV positive result; of these, more than half were tested for TB. Of those tested, 1 in 10 were diagnosed with TB. Among TB-negative FSW/SEC, three-quarters reported receiving TB preventative treatment.

## Crane 3 Survey Summary: Sex Work Distribution in Fort Portal Female Sex Workers and Sexually Exploited Children, Fort Portal, Uganda 2023

Fort Portal city includes eleven wards and coloring in the map below indicates where SW/SE is more common: Dark areas indicate areas with a high presence of FSW/SEC whereas white areas indicate no to very low presence of FSW/SEC. Only publicly accessible SW/SE locations were asked about, such as bars, lodges, intersections, etc. Bazaar, Rwengoma, Kagote, Bukwali, Kibimba and Nyabukara had the highest presence of FSW/SEC.

**Figure 1.** Distribution of sex work in Fort Portal, 2023.



The **Crane Survey** is a collaboration of Makerere University/School of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Ministry of Health.

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