

LEADERSHIP FOR RESULTS
UNDP's Response to HIV/AIDS



COMMUNITY CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY NOTE

The Answer Lies Within



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Foreword

The world is at a critical juncture in its response to HIV/AIDS. The last couple of years have seen an increase in treatment and access to medications. However, in many countries, prevalence rates are not declining. One reason why is that we are still struggling to address the underlying causes fueling the epidemic's spread.

The Community Capacity Enhancement programme, or CCE, is an integral part of UNDP's Leadership for Results programme and is based on a methodology known as Community Conversations. The CCE programme is aimed at dealing with the underlying causes of HIV/AIDS, be they power relations, gender issues, stigma or discrimination. Most community methodologies rightly focus on awareness-raising and discussion; CCE focuses heavily on interactive dialogue on the epidemic's deeper causes and, through a facilitated process, community decision-making and action.

This publication outlines the rationale and strategy behind the CCE programme and provides a guide for its implementation.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Moustapha Gueye for bringing this methodology to UNDP. Moustapha began working on community capacity issues while at ENDA (Environment and Development Action), and it was there, in collaboration with colleagues, the Salvation Army, and HOPE Worldwide that the CCE methodology was developed and the first documentation produced in collaboration with UNAIDS. Since then, the programme has evolved significantly. Moustapha has been a tireless advocate of Leadership for Results and has been the global expert and leader of the CCE programme.

I appreciate the dedication of Daouda Diouf and Thebisa Chaava, who, as the programme's senior experts and trainers, have helped guide the methodology and global implementation. I would also like to thank David Tiomkin for his contribution to programme design. Without his effort and meticulous follow-up, CCE would not have gone to scale.

The immense success of the programme would not have been possible without the vision of UNDP country office staff, in particular resident representatives, deputy resident representatives, programme officers and consultants who worked to ensure its success. This includes country offices in Botswana, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malaysia, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and Swaziland.

This strategy note and implementation guide was produced by Moustapha Gueye, Thebisa Chaava, Daouda Diouf and David Tiomkin.



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1. Generating and Nurturing Community Conversations Nationwide

Rationale

The emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has simultaneously affected communities¹ at many levels: sickness and death is combined with deepening poverty and widespread orphaning. The challenge was initially perceived as a health problem requiring a public health approach. But health services, and communities for that matter, were ill prepared to deal with an issue that encompasses the complex issues of sex, terminal illness and death. Innovative ways of working with communities to generate an effective and structured response had to be put in place.

HIV/AIDS results area:

Developing the capacity of individuals and communities to respond to the epidemic and to understand how their interconnectedness and individual attitudes and practices influence its spread.

What became clear early on was the incredible understanding and response that came forth from communities once knowledge of the science and epidemiology of HIV/AIDS was shared. Communities immediately began to recognize for themselves the values and actions that would have to change if what they were hearing about this new disease was true. They reflected on how it spread and caused disease throughout the body and in other individuals. They identified which behaviours and sociocultural practices would need to change if the epidemic was to be controlled.

This awareness came about through a process called ‘Community Conversations’. This series of facilitated dialogues contrasts with conventional approaches in which people are grouped together for awareness-raising lectures, often accompanied by the distribution of pamphlets or posters. Such approaches often leave communities with bleak, prescriptive messages that deny them the benefits of dialogue on how the community could be affected. Communities are oftentimes overwhelmed and feel a sense of hopelessness following such events. A common comment after awareness-raising campaigns on condom use has been, “if we do what they say, we’ll never have any more children.”

In contrast, Community Conversations promote human rights principles. Dignity of individuals and families is preserved and enhanced in an environment that encourages compassion, acceptance and accountability. Stigmatization, coercion and violence are avoided. UNDP has identified a core set of human rights principles that are guiding our response. These include equity, equality, non-discrimination, human dignity, non-violence,

¹ Community is defined as a heterogeneous group of people living and/or working together, sharing norms, values and concerns, with common systems and structures for leadership, problem-solving and communication.

participation, inclusion, accountability and responsibility. These principles are acted upon and promoted during Community Conversations.

The aim is not just to have people discuss a problem they know something about. It is to provide a platform for people to think through all the repercussions of a situation. It is meant to help people analyse the way their individual values and behaviours, and those of their family and neighbours, affect people's lives and to discuss them with others. Community Conversations create a space for mutual learning and result in new perspectives and creativity. They help reshape relationships in line with transformed values. They are an inclusive process for enhancing the capacity of all groups in the community, including people living with HIV. They make use of transformative tools and processes that generate hope through the exploration of concerns, possibilities and opportunities for addressing the complex challenges of HIV and AIDS. They also create clarity on what needs to be done. All of this is accomplished within a methodological framework with specific steps.

UNDP has implemented Community Conversations in a number of countries with very different social, economic and political situations – those with high and low prevalence rates, highly urbanized as well as rural areas, countries that are relatively high on the Human Development Index and others that are low. In all instances, this approach has brought about a fundamental shift in the way community work gets done, resulting in a series of actions and decisions that have arisen from communities themselves. It is an approach that can be used to deal with other human development challenges as well, including wealth generation, democratization and good governance.

Case Study One **Addressing Cultural Sexual Practices**

During one Community Conversation in Southern Africa, the community discussed the practice of widow cleansing. The purpose of the custom is to 'cleanse' or purify a woman after the death of her husband to prepare her for remarriage. This cleansing is thought to take place when the widow has sex with the men of her late husband's family. The community identified this practice as one that could potentially increase the spread of HIV. Through a facilitated conversation, the members of the community were able to agree on an alternative method of cleansing that was non-sexual in nature.

Linkages and Synergies

Community Conversations are the main methodology used in the Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) programme. This programme, in turn, is an integral part of UNDP's Leadership for Results programme. CCE, along with programmes in Leadership Development, Arts and Media, and Development Planning and Implementation, are a set of initiatives that are mutually reinforcing. Each programme is linked to the others and unfolds in a systematic way over a three-year period. This programming link is not accidental. It is part of a strategy to take CCE to scale and multiply its effectiveness.

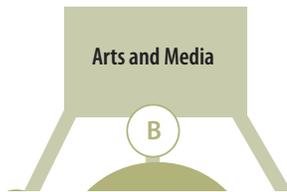
The Leadership Development Programme, for example, focuses on enhancing leadership potential at all levels of society to reverse the epidemic. It involves a six- to nine-month programme, integrating new tools, frameworks and models into leadership activities. Many of these same tools and frameworks have been integrated into the Community Conversations process. Furthermore, it is required that a substantial number of CCE trainers go through the Leadership Development Programme. This will enhance common understanding, build strategic partnerships and develop competencies.

Like other approaches aimed at stimulating and sustaining changes from within, Community Conversations require time, commitment, true partnerships and inclusion. Through this process, data are generated that represent the genuine concerns of individuals and the community, which must be reflected in national and decentralized development plans. Linking this data, and the community decisions that result from it, to these plans is critical to ensure that financial resources and infrastructure will be available and accessible to communities in a way that is institutionalized. Linking Community Conversations to these national processes does not mean that they will become bureaucratized. Rather, it is a way of ensuring that results emanating from the community can be acted upon in an effective way.

Similarly, linking Community Conversations to creative arts and media can facilitate community-to-community exchange and give wider public access to the results of this transformative process. Arts and media can be the vehicle for taking the voice of communities nationwide, which, in turn, will influence development practice, including the response to HIV/AIDS. In addition, the arts and media sector will generate new metaphors and stories that will become part of the culture, based on the vision of a future that people create for themselves and their children.

The following diagram illustrates how the various components of the Leadership for Results Programme are linked to each other:

Leadership for Results: A Set of Synergistic Initiatives



- A.
 - CCE reaches finite numbers directly
 - Media can reach millions
 - Stories of community decisions and actions reflected in all media inspire change nationwide
- B.
 - LDP reaches finite numbers directly
 - Media can reach millions
 - Media leaders participate in LDP

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