

HIV & AIDS Workplace Policy

July 31 – August 1, 2006



CRE

Cross River Environmental
Capacity Development
Coalition



Canadian International
Development Agency

CRE *Reports* provide an analysis of the results emerging from the CRE Project for civil society and policy makers in Nigeria.

1.0 Background

The goal of the Cross River Environment Capacity Development (CRE) Project is to strengthen NGO capacity to affect gender-sensitive policy change and environmental improvement in Cross River State. One Sky, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), is the Canadian Executing Agency (CEA) of the CRE project, which brings a together a coalition of four Nigerian Environmental NGOs (DIN, LENF, NCF and Cercopan) and one environmental network (NGOCE). Together these organizations comprise the **CRE Coalition**. One Sky is working to strengthen the capacity of the ENGOS, which in turn are instruments to support communities and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the buffer zones of the two surrounding key protected areas – the Guinean Lowland Forest Ecosystem in Cross River National Park as well as the Montane Ecosystem of the Obudu Plateau – in the Cross River bioregion of Nigeria. The three focal areas in which the Coalition Partners work are: forest conservation, biodiversity, and poverty alleviation.

A key part of the CRE Project is integrating HIV/AIDS throughout the project. The CEA and project partners recognized the links between achieving environmental goals and HIV/AIDS in Cross River State. Cross River has the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. Ignoring the HIV/AIDS pandemic comes at a great cost to people's well-being and to Cross River State's ability to grow sustainably.

The CRE Coalition 2005-06 Annual Work Plan committed to integrating HIV/AIDS in organizational activities and policies. Specifically, outcome 3 is *enhanced utilization of gender equality approaches and HIV/AIDS integration in NGO and community-based initiatives*. The Coalition recognized the need for workplace HIV & AIDS policies in order to guide HIV/AIDS activities and ensure commitment from each organization. As such, the CRE Project aimed for each of the five ENGOS to have a workplace policy on HIV/AIDS in place as part of the 2005-06 AWP. To assist the project partners in formulating workplace policies, One Sky - the Canadian Institute of Sustainable Living held a day and a half long "CRE Coalition HIV&AIDS Workplace Policy Workshop for CRE Coalition members. Workshop sessions were held at One Sky on Monday July 31st from 10:45am – 4:45pm and on Tuesday August 1st at 10:30am -2:45pm. The workshop was facilitated by One Sky HIV&AIDS Advisor Evelyne Ssendendo.

2.0 Workshop Objectives

The workshop was organized to::

- Facilitate a common understanding of the rationale of an HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy: ie. To sensitize participants of the implications for all sectors in society being involved in the fight against HIV&AIDS, its (potential) impact on their organisation and programmes and clarify the importance of an HIV&AIDS workplace policy, especially for organizations working on HIV&AIDS directly or indirectly.
- Equip and improve partners' knowledge and skills for the development and implementation of effective strategies on HIV&AIDS internally (their respective ENGOS Workplace Policy).
- Understand the existing national and international principles used as guidelines in developing an HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy.

- Facilitate a common understanding of the key elements or components of an HIV&AIDS Workplace Policy.
- Familiarize partners with some regional and international case studies as examples of practical and best [‘promising’] practices.

3.0 Participants

The workshop was intended for CRE members only. Unfortunately, out of the 15 participants planned and expected to attend (three personnel from each ENGOs), only 5 participants were present at the workshop. Out of the five (5) participants, one was a woman. On the second day of workshop, NGOCE participant brought along their two VSO GEX (Global Exchange volunteers) as both observers and participants.

4.0 Integration of gender concerns

It was noted that in the HIV&AIDS Workplace Policy that recognition must be given to gender inequality and the links to HIV&AIDS. Commitment must be made by the organization to reduce gender inequality. The organizations must also recognize the various roles (both culturally, socially, economically) both men and women play. A constructive approach is to emphasize strengthening the positive roles/responsibilities, while the negative or those marginalizing/unconstructive roles must be highlighted but efforts can be made to reduce them at work, if not at home.

5.0 Workshop Agenda and Activities

5.1 Welcome

Participants were welcomed and an ice breaker was conducted to introduce participants to each other. An overview of the workshop was conducted, and an emphasis placed on the need for HIV&AIDS workplace policy development as part of mainstreaming.

5.2 A participatory overview and discussion of workshop objectives

Participants were in agreement with workshop objectives. Questions seeking clarification were answered.

5.3 Anonymous Questionnaire/Survey on HIV&AIDS facts:

A 30-minute questionnaire/survey was distributed to participants; the facilitator asked participants to be honest and precise and emphasized the importance of the confidentiality of the survey. The purpose of the survey was made clear – to assist the facilitator in understanding what level of knowledge/facts acquisition participants were starting from. As well, the survey was given as an example for participants to utilize in their own trainings/ mainstreaming among their staff (as part of internal mainstreaming strategy) in addition to their beneficiaries/ target groups (external mainstreaming strategy).

5.4 Brief review of Nigeria's HIV&AIDS state of affairs:

The facilitator briefly gave a brief overview of the current state of affairs in Nigeria in reference to HIV&AIDS. A brief comparison was made to other African countries where HIV&AIDS has reached crisis proportions (Uganda, Senegal, Zambia, South Africa, etc.). The overview was used to discuss the rationale for integrating HIV&AIDS into programming in order to try to stop the pandemic in Nigeria from reaching a crisis state, and the current and potential impacts on the goals of organizations.

5.5 Emphasis of “why we are here; essence of workshop”

The facilitator briefly reviewed the next stage of the workshop, to undertake the process and stages of policy formulation. The facilitator also emphasized the importance of all organizational representatives taking back workshop information and format to all relevant organization staff to begin draft policy development. The importance of identifying appropriate processes to involve relevant staff (ex. Executive Directors, Board members) in order to finalize the policy document was also highlighted. A reminder was also made of each organization's commitment to developing HIV/AIDS workplace policies in the 2005-06 Annual Work Plan and allocated funds for this component.

5.6 Review of HIV&AIDS Workplace Policies.

The facilitator reviewed various rationales and strategies in developing HIV&AIDS workplace policies utilized by selected national, regional and international organizations. National and international standards for HIV&AIDS workplace policies were reviewed, emphasizing that the ENGOs own workplace policies must be developed in line with the principles/standards of national and international accepted HIV/AIDS workplace policy. General key components of an HIV&AIDS workplace policy were reviewed; however, specific approaches are dependent on organizational structure, culture and size, geographic reach and, importantly, finances and resources. The need to adapt workplace policies to local or organization contexts was stressed to ensure organizational, regional and country relevancy and ownership.

Following this, the facilitator led a discussion of national and regional case studies/practical and best practices from other organizations and distributed examples of workplace policies including policy development processes, challenges, successes, and lessons learnt.

5.7 Twelve Box Model Mainstreaming tool.

Individuals organized into their respective ENGOs groups for this activity. The facilitator introduced the 12 Box Model Mainstreaming Tool and gave a brief explanation. The 12 Box Model Tool was originally used as a gender mainstreaming tool. It was adapted by Oxfam-Novib for the development of draft HIV/AIDS Workplace Policies. A handout of the tool was given to each group.

Workshop Agenda and Activities: Day two

5.8 Twelve Box Model Exercise

Individuals and groups were given time to carry out the 12 Box Model Exercise for one and a half hours, followed by presentations of ENGOs of 12 Box Model Exercise.

6.0 Lessons learned

- Having pushed the workshop further into last quarter of the project resulted in limited time for the relevant staff members to be involved (due to other demanding priorities) in the workshop. There is some concern that there will be inadequate time to follow up with the project partners to ensure finalization of the HIV&AIDS policies.
- Including representatives of all levels of staff in the mainstreaming process is crucial; they have a lot to offer. However, bringing them on board at the last minute is not very beneficial and can backfire or impede the mainstreaming process, depending at what stage in the process the organization is at. Having staff who have not been involved in the process join in at later stages can confuse, slow down, or impede the end results.
- As noted by one of the workshop participants “Power is no longer wealth in the hands of the few whilst the majority are left out; rather, it is now information/knowledge in the hands of many”. However, information and knowledge must be used for it to have any value. Information must flow beyond focal people or directors so that appropriate implementation may take place.

7.0 Contribution of workshop to CRE project outputs / outcomes:

The workshop content contributed to and enhanced ENGOs understanding of HIV&AIDS integration approaches to their overall organizational mainstreaming: Although not all of the ENGOs relevant staff were present at workshop, those representing the organizations did their level best to share, discuss and make input into the process at hand. Their positive contributions to the workshop illustrated, to an extent, their increased understanding of HIV&AIDS integration approaches.

More than half of the partners (DIN, NGOCE, CERCOPAN) are on the verge of having HIV/AIDS mainstreaming integrated into organizational work plans and policies. It appears that more than or perhaps in addition to resource shortage, it is time limitation which is hampering this overall integration process. However, most ENGOs have bought into the significance of developing and employing HIV&AIDS mainstreaming approaches.

The HIV/AIDS Advisor will follow-up with one on one meetings with ENGOs who were not in attendance to provide workshop handouts and mentorship toward development of the HIV&AIDS workplace policies.