# Community Development Project: Ending HIV Case Study Project

## Introduction

HIV/AIDS is one of the globe's most massive epidemics having infected large populations around the globe. As an incurable condition, it presents a scenario put under control through management of the infection. Governments and non-governmental organizations have spent vast amounts of resources in the attempt to contain the spread of the infectious disease to the healthy population. HIV, a viral and sexually transmitted infection has been in existence since the late twentieth century after the first diagnosed case. Since then the disease was on the rise as it rapidly spread from one person to another. From the statistics of the world health organization, by the year 2015, approximately thirty-six million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS. That population was inclusive of a total of over one and a half million infection in children, most of whom contract the virus during birth from their mothers (Global statistics, 2017). The spread of the virus is enhanced by the large population that does not recognize their HIV status. From the figures of 2015, over two million people were newly infected with the virus by the end of that year. This magnitude exemplifies the rate of infection of the spread of the epidemic (World Health Organization., 2015). The situation is deplored by the fact that only sixty percent of the people living with HIV know their status. The remaining forty percent is unaware of their status and continue with risky lifestyles that contribute to the cases of new infections every year. Acquainted o with these statistics and the reality of the global epidemic, community development projects such ‘Ending HIV’ created to serve the purpose of reducing the rate of infection and eliminating the virus for future generation. The project further illuminates the management criteria of the infected people to prevent new infections and reinfections. Further, the project is also concerned with the standards of living of the people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in Australia (Sendziuk, 2003). The paper is categorical in the analysis of the project through various perspectives of community development in the attempt to articulate community development principles as applied in the project. Further, the analysis will be categorical in the identification of other perspectives such as leadership, public awareness, social justice and other perspectives in values.

## Ending HIV project

In reference to the looming epidemic and the risk it posed to the society, HIV infections in Australia warranted the development of the project in the attempt to control the spread of the virus. From the first diagnosis of HIV in 1982, there are about over thirty-six thousand people in the country diagnosed with HIV in Australia alone. The rate of infection every year has dropped although there increased concerns of the undiagnosed population. From the total statistics of people, it is estimated that around ten percent of people living with HIV in Australia are unaware of their HIV status (Calmette, 2014). Therein, through the use of the projects such as ending HIV in the country, the objective is to ensure that information is available to the public while advocating for testing and management of the virus. With little over a thousand infections every year, the stability of the declined spread is relatively favorable as compared to other countries.

The objectives of the ending HIV project are to ensure the reduction of the number of infections that takes place in the country. From the projections of the ACON organization, their responsibility is in the provision of information in testing, treatment, and management of disease and the reduction of the further spread of the infection. The commitment of the organization and the program is to eradicate HIV Australia by the year 2020 (Jansson, & Wilson, 2012). Through prevention of further infections, the objective is achievable through continued advocacy and testing. The major facets of the project are the advocacy and information provision. Therefore, the basis of engagement takes place in three facets of advocacy which include testing, treatment, and biomedical prevention. Further, the project encompasses the improvement of the living standards and empowerment of the people living with HIV.

## Advocacy in testing

The project recognizes that to prevent the further spread of infections as well as manage the population living with HIV is through testing. The project undertakes the responsibility of testing individuals throughout the country. According to Brown et al. (2014) it is crucial to build a testing service capacity, incorporation with other health agencies as well as the Australian government. The objectives are the detection of new cases early to aid in the management and prevent further infections. The project has established various modes of testing such as rapid HIV testing to popularize the testing culture. Another way is the home testing that is geared towards encouraging testing from home for those in fear of stigma and discrimination.

## Advocacy in treatment

The program is adamant in ensuring that individuals infected with HIV have access to the relevant treatment as indicated by clinical markers. The treatment is imperative for the management of the infections. The project advocates for increased access to medication and treatment to all persons and promoting easy and cheaper access to treatment. Through an initiative of the project, a program has been implemented to access the treatment drugs of several months of supply (HIV statistics in Australia, 2017). The program was informed by the reduced treatment due to scheduled inconveniences of picking treatments.

## Advocacy biomedical prevention

Through emerging technologies and breakthrough in the biomedical field, new ways of preventing infections have been formulated. Ending HIV project has been its pioneer in the prevention of further transmissions interdorm with other methods such as testing, early treatment and use of condoms. These inventions include the use of PREP as a course of treatment for the people with an HIV negative status with the aim of transmission prevention. Microbicides gel that is applied to prevent infection is as an agent that kills the HIV before any disease is achieved (ACON 2017). Cognizant of nature of the virus, vaccine and cure are still under research and development and the project advocates for the continued research and study.

## Community Education

Among the most important programs is the provision of information to the people about HIV /Aids. The process is cognizant that most of the infections take place due to lack of knowledge about transmission and disease of the virus. Therefore, the program advocates for community education of issues of contamination, prevention methods as well as information management and treatments available for the infected people (World Health Organization. 2015). Further, the program is concerned with issues of reduced prejudice and stigma that often prevent HIV testing and treatment for most people.

## Principles and practice of community development projects

Community development projects are geared towards the achievement of a particular objective and status for the community. Therein, they are formulated through values and principles that overcome a disadvantage with the strategy of eradication of specific ailment of the society. Populations are affected by various aspects of the community that often predispose them to vulnerabilities. For instance issues of poverty and marginalization are listed among the social vulnerability issues that contribute to new infections of hive and aids. Therein, the application of these aspects enhances the value of the project such as ending HIV (Price, & Parkhill, 2015). Principles of community development include perspectives of:

## Social Justice

The policies rely on the values of equality and fairness within the society. Therein, imperative to community development projects, these aspects are achievable through the establishment of a socially just system of the implemented plan. In this regard, ACON applies the concept of equality and fairness in the implementation of its objectives. To achieve this, the program and the organization is devoid of the social demarcation markers that discriminate against other people. Such markers include economic status within the society, issues of race, sexuality, and gender among others. The program applies the approach of equality as means to its objectives and achieving acceptance and credibility to achieve its objectives (Gulaid, & Kiragu, 2012). Through the elimination of social structural disadvantages, the program can overcome issues of exclusion, inequality as well as discrimination of people in the community.

## Self Determination

The concept of social justice relies on principles of self-determination where the project taps into the rights of the people in the achievement of self-interest goals. Ending HIV project relies on this principle in its effort to advocate for reduced infections and transmission of Hiv/aids among the people (Munford, & Walsh-Tapiata, 2005). Through the principle resonates with people’s self-interest of maintaining their health and preserving themselves, and the efforts of HIV testing, treatment and prevention can be achieved through personal involution.

## Inclusiveness and participation and equal opportunity

The concept illuminates the need for equality among all people in the community regardless of their social justification and markers. Therefore, for a project to gain community acceptance, it must be inclusive of all people regardless of their background, physical location ethnicity, race, economic status, gender or sexual orientation. With the aim of ACON to eliminate HIV from Australia by the year 2020, the program needed to be inclusive of all people living in the country. The proponents of the program are adamant in the inclusion of all people in the community while implementing the program (Munford, & Walsh-Tapiata, 2006). For instance, the advocacy for treatment includes the ease of access to medication to people regardless of the cost and including the lower economic strata of people. Ensuring individuals have an equal opportunity to access the services provided by ACON and the project is denotation marker of the success of the project. Therein, the implementation of the principle and value added to that achievement of the goals.

## Community Engagement

Community development project requires applying the engagement principle for effectiveness and success. The principle applies involvement of the community to the set strategies and implementation of the program. Through the use of information collected and suggested by the community, ACON was able to apply this principle to deliver services such as testing programs and treatment programs (Munford, & Walsh-Tapiata, 2005). For instance, while engaging the community, the program was able to determine possible manners through which efficient treatment protocols could be applied.

## Community development process

Community development takes the various steps to achieve the intended objectives, and their acknowledgment allows for projects to be implemented. Therefore implementation of the program such as ending HIV requires the application of the process that follows through the community preparedness. Secondly, the community requires being stimulated by the reality of the issue at hand. Through information of the statistics of HIV in Australia, the stimulus was achieved that led to the next stage of organizational involvement (Kenny, 2011). ACON initiated the program to the community where the initial participation produced several challenges. Through engagement and issues identification, the program was able to develop and refine the plan, to fit emerging concepts and issues. As a result, the self-examination phase is ushered where organization reflects of the achievements made and further improves the program through prioritization of the achievable goals and course of action.

## Community development roles skills and practice issues

The achievement of organizational goals is dependent on the implementation formula of the individuals working in the program. Therein the application of relevant principles of community development is imperative to the success of the program. Ending HIV in Australia is relatively an equal task, and the program requires the intensive application of people, and therefore the organization must employ these principles to achieve the set objectives.

## Community development worker roles

Implementation of the program such as ending HIV requires the employment of community development workers in the program. Therein, the part of the worker in principle is the change agent that is much needed in the community and implement the program strategies. The workers from the ground level engagement that the organization requires with the community and therefore a crucial part of the organization. Thus, the worker's role evolves from a change agent to service developer (Ife, & Tesoriero, 2006). The worker ensures that all services included in the program such as training, HIV testing, and treatment are conducted in the community. Further, the worker takes up the role in capacity building through engagement in the society while developing inclusiveness socially in the community.

## Community knowledge and alliance building

Information is power, and therefore it’s imperative that in the implementation of the program strategies that the community development worker is aware of the community environment and its people. The knowledge is useful in the initiation of various perspectives of the programs and engagement with the people. The process of acknowledging the community is imperative to the alliances built in the community. Markedly, the program such as ending HIV is implemented in the community. Information about the community, therefore, helps the community development worker to build sustainable alliances that help implement the program efficiently (Sanfort, 2000). For instance, ACON developed suitable alliances with the health sector as well as the government at national and local levels. The alliance is imperative to the achievement of the goals due to the influence of the health sector and the government towards the health of the Australian population.

## Networking, leadership and teamwork skills

Engagement with the community requires the organization to forge relationships within the community that the project is implemented. Therein, leadership skills and qualities are necessary for the community development workers to assess the relevant relationships to building and maintain those relationships for the benefit of the organization, the program, and the people. Strong leadership and networking capabilities are necessary for the implementation of the program. Further, networking with the right people ensures that the organization and the worker have access to pertinent information about the community and the population. Mindful of the complexity and intensity of the ending HIV project, the program requires the presence of a multifaceted approach (Ife, & Tesoriero, 2006). The approach therein requires various people to work on different tasks that ought to influence on each other. Leadership skills are thus imperative in fostering teamwork among the community development workers. For instance, the team working on issues of information dissemination ought to be corporative with the team working on HIV testing and that working on HIV treatment. Working interdorm and solving conflicts and redundancies in the team improve the effectiveness of the team and the program.

## Community education

Social issues are embedded into the society and the community far deep that a solution requires vigorous education and change in perspective about certain issues within the society. The case of Hiv/aids transmission and infection became grave due to particular risky lifestyles such as unprotected sexual encounters. To combat the issue, ending HIV program relies on community information to change the perspective of the people on issues. Further, as a preventative strategy, the people being aware of how the transmission and infection of HIV occur aids in the prevention (Aimers, & Walker. 2016). Further, the community requires the knowledge to understand the available options for those who have contracted the virus and how to manage it. Relevant information on the infection and transmission process helps in the demystification and reduces issues of stigma and discrimination in the community.

## Sustainability of community development project

Community development projects are anchored in the principle of sustainability to achieve their goals. The sustainability concept is imperative to any project as it stamps the effectiveness and appropriateness of the project in the community. Community development projects must achieve sustainability to ensure that the results of the projects are not temporally to achieve a permanent change in the society. The concept of sustainability takes the perspective of three key areas within the community (Floyd, & Hayward, 2008). Economic sustainability includes the economic viability of the project implemented. The process is achieved by ensuring economic markers engaged to the community draw resources from the community and have the capacity to sustain the fund through the work put into the community. Therefore, the community does not degenerate economically due to the program thus introducing new community problems. Environmental sustainability is a concept that applies to the projects that have direct impacts on the environment and the ecosystem and hence ought to ensure that the ecosystem can regenerate and sustain the project’s activity in the community (Sendziuk, 2003). Social sustainability is a form of sustainability recognizes the presence of social markers that ensure a self-sustaining change created in the community. Through engagement on issues of distributional equality in the services provided, the project, therefore, becomes sustainable.

## References

ACON (2017). *Acon’s Commitment | Ending Hiv*. Retrieved form: https://endinghiv.org.au/nsw/acons-commitment/

Aimers, J., & Walker, P. (2016). Incorporating community development into social work practice within the neoliberal environment. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, *23*(3), 38-49.

Brown, G., O’Donnell, D., Crooks, L., & Lake, R. (2014). Mobilisation, politics, investment and constant adaptation: lessons from the Australian health-promotion response to HIV. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, *25*(1), 35-41.

Calmette, Y. (2014). Ending HIV: An innovative community engagement platform for a new era of HIV prevention. *Digital Culture & Education*, *6*(3), 279-293.

Floyd, J., & Hayward, P. (2008). Community development for ecological sustainability: Working with interiority in the cultivation of social foresight. *academic paper for the stream,‘Community Development and Building Social Movements’, Community Development and Ecology: Engaging Ecological Sustainability, Deakin University, Centre for Citizenship, Development and Human Rights*, 26-28.

Global statistics (2017).  *Global Statistics*. HIV.gov. Retrieved from: https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/global-statistics

Gulaid, L. A., & Kiragu, K. (2012). Lessons learnt from promising practices in community engagement for the elimination of new HIV infections in children by 2015 and keeping their mothers alive: summary of a desk review. *Journal of the International AIDS Society*, *15 (*2).

HIV statistics in Australia (2017). *HIV statistics in Australia - HIV Media Guide*.Retrieved from: http://www.hivmediaguide.org.au/hiv-in-australia/hiv-statistics-australia/

Ife, J. W., & Tesoriero, F. (2006). *Community development: Community-based alternatives in an age of globalisation*. Pearson Australia.

Jansson, J., & Wilson, D. P. (2012). Projected demographic profile of people living with HIV in Australia: planning for an older generation. *PLoS One*, *7*(8), e38334.

Kenny, S., 1946. (2011). *Developing communities for the future* (4th ed.). South Melbourne, Vic: Cengage Learning.

Munford, R., & Walsh-Tapiata, W. (2005). Community development: Principles into practice. *Social work theories in action*, 97-112.

Munford, R., & Walsh-Tapiata, W. (2006). Community development: working in the bicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. *Community Development Journal*, *41*(4), 426-442.

Price, K., & Parkhill, N. (2015). Impetus for change?: The importance of targets and regulatory reform to ending HIV. *HIV Australia*, *13*(1), 17.

Sanfort, J. R. (2000). Invited Commentary: Developing New Skills for Community Practice in an Era of Policy Devolution. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *36*(2), 183-185.

World Health Organization. (2015). *Consolidated strategic information guidelines for HIV in the health sector.* SAGE

Sendziuk, P. (2003). *Learning to trust: Australian responses to AIDA.* Sydney, NSW: Univ.

 of New South Wales Pr.