



Pan African Christian AIDS Network

ANNUAL REPORT

January - December 2008

Date: January 2009.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	II
ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARDS THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	1
1. SUB-GOAL 1: INFORMATION, PARTNERSHIP AND NETWORKING.....	1
1.1 NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	1
1.2. PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPMENT	3
1.3. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	7
2. SUB GOAL 2: ADVOCACY	9
2.1. <i>Stigma and discrimination training</i>	9
2.2. <i>Advocacy and Change Agents’ training</i>	10
2.3. <i>Bishops and Senior Church Leaders’ consultation</i>	11
2.4. <i>Global Health Council</i>	12
2.5. <i>Concurrent Multiple Sexual Partnerships</i>	12
3. SUB-GOAL 3: CAPACITY BUILDING	13
3.1. <i>Development of Training Modules</i>	13
3.2. <i>Human Resource Base Training</i>	13
3.3. <i>Capacity building among Erikshjalpen partners</i>	14
3.4. <i>Capacity Building for Church Forum in Swaziland</i>	17
3.5. <i>Engagement with Bristol Myers Squibb</i>	17
4. PACANET INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY.....	19
4.1. <i>Strategic Planning Meetings</i>	19
4.4. <i>Finance and Administration</i>	20
4.5. <i>Administration</i>	21
4.6. <i>Governance</i>	22
APPENDIX 1: PRE- ICASA REFLECTION STATEMENT.....	1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report is a narrative of the progress against the objectives and the annual operational plan. It captures the accomplishments, achievements and challenges faced in the implementation process. Key accomplishments include the network development processes in Uganda, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Swaziland, Sierra Leon and Madagascar in the areas of networking, information sharing, advocacy, capacity building and for PACANet, the institutional development. Other achievements include strategic engagements at different levels with different partners.

The year began by refining the 2008 plan developed during the all staff meeting held in October 2007. This was revised, finalized in both tabular and narrative forms and harmonised with the budget before the activities were undertaken. The annual plan was followed with the development of the bi-annual plan for the period, January–June 2008 as well as Individual Operational plans by the individual staff. It is against these plans that the activities were implemented and monitored thought-out the year.

Key accomplishments include; the refinement of training modules that had been developed earlier and pre-tested in the various training events, HR Trainings in Burkina Faso, Sierra Leon and Madagascar, Stigma and discrimination training in Uganda and Sierra Leon, Change Agents training in Swaziland, Uganda and Sierra Leon, Bishops and senior leaders consultative Conference in Madagascar, Sierra Leon and Burkina Faso, Project Based Management Training, Come together conference and CCANet/ Church Forum Board Training in Swaziland, Completion of the situation analysis study and Call to Action Conference in Madagascar and ongoing technical support to the CCANets. PACANet also made available an amount of US\$20,000.00 as Institutional Support for CHANOL-CCANet in Liberia, Church forum in Swaziland and Uganda CCANet.

Accomplishments outside the network development process were carried out among specific partner organizations, mainly the Erikshjalpen partners. These include; Organizational culture review and strategic plan development for Kubatsirana and In house training for Church Mission Action-monitors on participatory project planning basics, community monitoring and evaluation in Mozambique, Strategic plan development and organizational management procedural guidelines for BUPDOS in Benin, Monitoring and evaluation framework development, and training for Taretuoki-Kenya, TRACED-Tanzania and Women Training and Rehabilitation centre in Ethiopia, financial management systems development for TRACED, and HIV and AIDS competence trainings for 13 partner organizations. In addition to specific sessions on HIV and AIDS, other sessions included child counselling, community participatory approaches, monitoring and evaluation, budgeting and reporting in relation to HIV and AIDS programming.

PACANet was also invited to serve on the Bristol Myers Squibb faculty and participated in various strategic partnership meetings in the constituency and beyond.

At institutional level, PACANet carried out a mid term review in the month of February, reviewed the organizational strategic plan and refined the Organisation's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. PACANet also participated in several events geared towards resource

mobilization, including; various strategic meetings, Sub committee members identification, orientation and Registering of PACANet in the US, in addition, Executive Board meetings were also held during the period.

The end of the year 2008 also marked the end of the three year funding phase, when some staff ended their contracts on the 31st day of December 2008.

ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARDS THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. SUB-GOAL 1: INFORMATION, PARTNERSHIP AND NETWORKING

Improve and increase the availability of information about Church and faith-based HIV and AIDS work; strengthen networking and improve and increase strategic partnerships with the faith-based community.

1.1 Network development process

Diversity of Africa

It is clear that Africa can not be looked at as one big village whereas the need, interest and urgency to establish Christian country AIDS networks challenges may be the same in Southern, Eastern and West Africa, the pace at which the processes evolve vary significantly and is determined by various dynamics in the region such as language differences, economic dynamics and infrastructure, affecting such things as money transfer, travel, cost of facilities and on ground in country logistics coordination. Therefore adaptability of staff can not be taken for granted. Despite these realities and challenges, PACANet registered several accomplishments and results in the network development process as narrated below.

1.1.1 Completion of Situational Analysis in Madagascar

The key objective of the situational analysis was to ascertain what the Churches and Christian organizations had been doing in response to HIV and AIDS or would like to do to mitigate the impact in Madagascar. Activities included follow up on IMAGE-APLI the consultant, who was contracted to carry out the study, and per the terms agreed had promised to complete and provide the preliminary report by 7th January, 2008. However, the report was submitted on 17th January, 2008. This contributed in a way to the delay in organising the conference for the dissemination of the study findings.

1.1.2 Comparative Summaries of Situation Analyses

The summary of all the Situation Analyses was done and information from Swaziland, Namibia, Zambia, Uganda, Liberia and Sierra Leone compiled. The data from Burkina Faso and Madagascar was yet to be translated into English so as to be included in the SA summaries. The summaries were intended to compare the HIV and AIDS trends in the countries for informed PACANet network development planning and information sharing. The comparative analysis was deferred awaiting translations the French version reports into English.

1.1.3 Call to Action Conferences (CAC)

During the year, two conferences were held. The broad objective of these conferences was to disseminate the findings of the situational analysis studies. In addition to the dissemination of the study findings, there were presentations on other topics such as HIV and AIDS and the

Christian Biblical Mandate in response to HIV and AIDS in Africa, and the History of PACANet.

In Madagascar, the CAC was successfully held on 4th-6th February 2008. It attracted a total of 62 participants including both men and women. At the end, based on the study findings and the related presentations mentioned above, the delegates were charged and ready to step up their HIV and AIDS responses. This was also an opportunity for bridging the gap between the National AIDS Councils and grassroots organizations through face to face interaction in a joint forum.

1.1.4 Come Together Conference

In Swaziland, this Conference, the equivalent of consensus building was held to blend the network development processes that had taken place. It was done this way because consensus had been generated at the beginning of the church forum. The conference was held at Esibayeni Lodge on the 3rd - 5th November, 2008 near Mustapha airport-Swaziland. It was attended by almost all the delegates who went through the call to action conference, human resource base training, change agents, Church leaders Consultation Conference, and project planning training. The attendance was very good with 79 participants including both men and women. The conference was facilitated by PACANet and organized by the Church forum. The objectives of the conference focused on: The lessons learnt in the collaboration, challenges of working together, development of communication strategies with different partners, identification of advocacy issues, governance related issues and strategies for fostering collaboration with the Government.

At the close of the conferences, the groups presented their discussions in the plenary. A small group was tasked to continually work and support the church forum secretariat in areas recommended by the participants as detailed in the conference report. The report is available for reference.

1.1.5. Efforts to accelerate work in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia

The objective of this task was to seek ways of ensuring that collaboration with Churches and Christian organizations continue, so that strong networks are established in the two countries.

In **Burkina Faso** activities included a trip in January 2008, by the Executive Secretary (ES) and the Project officer Francophone countries. Meetings were held with various stakeholders to establish reasons as to why the process had dragged so long. From these engagements, it became crystal clear that one way of achieving goals in this country was to identify and appoint a local focal person, who would execute the activities on behalf of PACANet. The person was identified and oriented to the task unfortunately he did not sign the (MoU) as PACANet could not meet his remuneration requirements due to budgetary limitations. The responsible project officer continued with the tasks of coordinating the activities including local logistics. In the process, there arose more commitment from the local stakeholders, a result of this intervention trip.

In **Ethiopia**, Mr. Daniel Gezahegne who had been identified earlier in November 2007 to serve as the local focal person had strategized for the task which unfortunately dragged. On 8th February, 2008, the director of programmes met with members of the Steering Committee of the task force, which describes itself as CUAHA - Churches United Against HIV and AIDS in Ethiopia. The meeting culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between PACANet and the local LWF-Lutheran World Federation. LWF was to play the role of the local resource organization to help facilitate the work. In spite of the mammoth efforts, the task force was still not adequately poised for action. Members were excessively too slow and targets could not be met. The process was called off with efforts and resources relocated to Madagascar.

1.1.6 CCANets Support

The Executive Secretary and the M&E Officer held two separate meetings with the leaderships of the CCANets in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone, the meeting focused on the implementation of the outstanding network development activities before the end of the year. This culminated in the Task Force also pledge to develop a five-year strategic plan which is at its final stage of completion.

In Liberia, a two-day board meeting was held from 7th -8th July, 2008 with the purpose of preparing a strategic framework for the CCANet. A draft framework was developed highlighting the strategic direction of the network for the next five years. PACANet is following up the completion of this strategy.

On the institutional support to the CCANets, by the end of 2008, (US\$20,000) had been provided to each of the CCANets in Uganda, Swaziland and Liberia. This fund is intended for the institutional set up of the CCANets and facilitation of the processes as required.

1.1.7 CCANet Board orientation and meetings

To strengthen the network, in Uganda, a meeting was held at the Bwebajja J and M Hotel aimed at reviewing the Uganda-CCANet vision and mission so as to elaborate the issues in the strategic direction for guiding the development of the CCANet Strategic Plan. This was done and the issues were well elaborated. The plan shall be finalized during the first quarter of 2009.

In Swaziland, whereas the Board of the Church Forum had planned for an orientation, considering the time strain, it was agreed and effected that the Board define their Strategic direction for inclusion in the PACANet three year broad plan. This strategic direction was defined in a meeting held from 16th - 19th June, 2008. The report of the planned direction is available with the Forum and PACANet Management.

1.2. Partnerships development

1.2.1. Danish NGO network conference

On 28th April to 15th May, PACANet represented by the ES participated in the Conference concerning AIDS and Religion, hosted at the University of Copenhagen under the theme – ‘*the church-based prevention of HIV and care for AIDS patients – how to do it better*’. PACANet made a presentation on the historical trend of how HIV and AIDS and Christianity have evolved together. There were opportunities to hear from the West, South & East Africa, and also interfaced and exposed the academics to PACANet and the potential in the church. An invitation was given to them by PACANet to carry out research in the constituency for the development and growth of the movement of the Christian response to the pandemic in Africa.

1.2.2. Research network on AIDS and Religion meeting

Upon the invitation by DMCDD, PACANet had an opportunity to interact and establish a relationship with the above mentioned network based in Netherlands, challenging anthropologists to study and interpret the relationship between religion and HIV and AIDS. This was an opportunity to engage the pastors in the metropolitan areas (those in immigrant communities) and Christian organizations involved in supporting HIV and AIDS work in Africa.

1.2.3. PACANet’s Strategic Partners Meeting

On the 10th – 14th June, the Executive Secretary met with the three strategic partners in Stockholm, Sweden. The meeting offered an opportunity to the three funding Partners to meet, share expectations of each other, and their common observations and concerns as to how they see PACANet developing. They shared their views on the future role and the nature of relationship between PACANet and each one of them. Minutes and specific observations recorded are with management for action.

1.2.4. Pre-ICASA Conference

The Pre-ICASA conference organized by PACANet was held in Dakar Senegal at Diarama and Ngor Hotel from the evening of 29th to 2nd December 2008, under the theme “The Church and HIV and AIDS: *Challenged or Changed?*”

Present at the conference were delegates from 26 African countries and four countries outside Africa representing Churches and Christian organisations. In all, up to 100 people including both men and women attended. The conference began with an opening ceremony presided over by the President of the ICASA organizing committee. On 30th November and 1st December, there were plenary presentations on theological reflections and monitoring and evaluation. There were also theme group work on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), HIV prevention, HIV and AIDS treatment and theological reflections. Group reflections culminated into the development of a Statement for presentation at the ICASA main event. The opportunity was also used by PACANet to gather data. A questionnaire was administered on Multiple and Concurrent Sexual Partners. The findings from this survey will be presented at the Harvard University MCP consultation which will be held in Africa in early 2009.

See appendix 1: Pre-ICASA Reflection Statement



Participants at the Dakar Pre-ICASA 2008

1.2.5. FBO Coalition Meeting

PACANet participated in a Faith Based Organizations coalition meeting held in Nairobi on 11th June, 2008. The coalition sought to improve strategies and methods of HIV and AIDS intervention in the East Africa region. The coalition requested PACANet to coordinate its future activities.

1.2.6. Meeting with DMCDD

PACANet management attended a review meeting with Mrs. Karen Sorensen from DMCDD. Several issues were touched including the Mid Term Review findings, what and how PACANet intended to address the issues raised by the review, budgets, reporting and delays in situation analysis report submission for Sierra Leone. It was agreed that a summary of baseline indicators be developed from the situation analysis studies to inform CCANets while programming.

1.2.7. Liaison with SADC and UNAIDS

The Executive Secretary liaised with SADC and UNAIDS in April 2008. This culminated into, PACANet's appointment on the technical advisory committee of the SADC AIDS unit to represent FBO-Faith Based Organisations. The Director of programmes represents PACANet on this committee. For the coordination of the faith based response, UNAIDS contacted PACANet to collaborate on FBO matters in response to HIV and AIDS in the region. This relationship is expected to consolidate further in the year 2009.

1.2.8. Meeting with Salvation Army

PACANet staff at the Secretariat held a meeting with the Salvation Army coordinator for Eastern Africa. Issues discussed included the shared vision and direction of PACANet in

Africa, the FBO Coalition and ways for harmonization of approaches, coordination of action together, experience of Kenya FBO's in strengthening local response, national facilitation team action and possibilities for PACANet to host the FBO Coalition.

1.2.9 Partnership Outreach in the USA

The Director for International Relations organized logistics and fixed appointments for the, Executive Secretary-ES and team that visited the US from September 22nd -October 16th, 2008. Several meetings were held with different organizations and individuals in a bid to enhance PACANet's partnership. Those met requested the team to submit PACANet's strategic plan document and the mid term review report for follow up.

Samaritan's Purse-The ES and team attended a meeting at Boone in North Carolina. The purpose of meeting was to Share accountability since last Samaritan's support to PACANet and also discuss collaborative partnership future perspectives to impact the African continent

The team met with Mr. Ken Isaacs (Vice President) at Samaritans purse and Dr. Sherri Warren (the HIV focal person). Among other issues discussed included fronting PACANet to funders. Samaritan's Purse committed to select a team to work with PACANet on the issues raised and fixed time for developing the concept slated during the first quarter of 2009.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-On 1st October, the ES and team traveled to Pennsylvania and held a meeting with MCC. Like the other meetings the purpose was to share accountability since the last support from MCC and discuss collaborative partnership to impact the African continent. The team met with Mr. Bruce Campbell-Janz (Vice President) and Colleta Stetler (Africa Department), and also interacted with Joanna Hiebert Bergen via phone from Canada. Joanna specifically requested for the Situation Analysis reports for three countries of their interest. These were sent awaiting feedback. The parties showed interest in partnering with PACANet in some of the activity areas, for example PACANet's training programs and support to CCANets. They await the 5 year strategic plan to identify areas they could partner.

USAID official-The ES met with Heather MacLean and made a presentation. In light of the presentation, USAID advised that PACANet holds discussions with Pastor John Thomas of Christian Baptist Church who has experience working with USAID funding as well as identifies the foreign missions/ embassies. One of the outcomes of this meeting was the recommendation that each CCANet should have at least one board member who is well trained and good at fundraising so that follow up requirements are directed and focused in collaboration with that individual.

IMA World Health-The ES and team met with the President of IMA Paul Derstine, Sarla Chand -Vice President, International Program, and Esther Ndiang'ui -Senior Program officer. Several issues were discussed focusing ways of impact the tide of HIV and AIDS in Africa. IMA awaits the Strategic Plan document to see areas for partnership.

World Bank officials-Two meetings were held with the manager of the "AIDS Campaign Team for Africa - ACTAfrica." The meeting aimed at exploring the possibility of partnership between the World Bank and PACANet. Among others, possibilities discussed included accessing the Institutional Development Grants. The official promised to send a

format for the application for the grant. The official also said World Bank could provide a person to help with the writing of the proposal but a structural assessment of PACANet to ascertain the organization's readiness would be done first. It was therefore recommended that a World Bank representative in Kampala visits PACANet for the purpose.

On Funds from the National AIDS Commissions-NAC, these would be solicited to facilitate the Situation Analysis studies in selected countries. It was agreed that once the next set of countries are identified, PACANet would be connected to the country representatives with recommendation from the World Bank office. On Regional Meetings, the official said World Bank could pay for some related costs, mainly through coordination with the respective countries to contribute for the participants travel costs including per diems, while PACANet would have to pay for the facilitators and the venues.

In another meeting on 10th October with Ms. Elizabeth Lule, a supporter and a PACANet link to the World Bank, contacts for PACANet to follow up were availed and several recommendations for follow up made as summarized below.

- It was recommended that PACANet works with the bi-lateral organizations to raise money or these could fund PACANet directly.
- PACANet makes use of the global development learning network by the World Bank which enables countries to meet regularly.
- PACANet engages with World Bank to facilitate exchange of useful information on best practice, which is usually done by holding conferences for different organizations in different countries.
- PACANET links with the contact person who deals with partnerships at the Global fund.
- As an entry point, PACANet could link with the World Bank institute which provides capacity building to its clients at country level
- PACANet to organize a meeting with Joy Phumaphi who currently handles partnerships at World Bank to discuss further on the issues that were raised.

1.3. Information and communication

1.3.1. Enhancement of PACANet Visibility

The Communications department revised the PACANet brochure and made a production of a video documentary for the organizations. This involved identifying and mobilizing participants for the production of the documentary: 50 copies of the video were produced, and 1000 copies of the brochure printed in English plus 1000 copies in French.

To increase the organization's visibility and access to information on ongoing events in the constituency, the website was redesigned and regularly updated, though more needed to be done in terms of improving it.

The quarterly newsletter was produced and circulated in the constituency and beyond. There was increasing responses from recipients consisting of both individuals and organizations on the publication list. PACANet recognises that more needs to be done to improve on the quality of the updates and plans to ensure this have been laid down in the next phase including enhancing the communication unit.

1.3.2. Partnering on materials for Church response to HIV and AIDS

Through its partnership initiatives, PACANet acquired training materials from SFH-Strategies of hope, aimed at improvement of Church's response to HIV and AIDS. The books are available at the Secretariat, ready for distribution. In addition, partnership negotiations with both FOCAGIFO –Friends of Canon Gideon Foundation and SFH culminated into PACANet obtaining production rights, which will allow for the reproduction of training materials provided by these organizations. PACANet also solicited several additional training materials published in French which were used as supplements for the HR II training in Burkina Faso.

1.4. Limiting factors and the way forward

1.4.1. Network development

Comparative analysis of the researches

Attempts to make a comparative analysis of all the studies was done, but due to the challenge of the language barrier, this could not be completed within the period, because the Burkina Faso and Madagascar studies had to be translated from French to English. Attempts to address this issue by either outsourcing support or hiring extra man power had a significant financial implication for the organisation. Hence, could not be accomplished as planned. This was instead deferred and translations shall be completed by the end of May 2009, according to the responsible officer's schedule who is the only officer competent in French.

Lack of feedback mechanism

In the six selected countries, different church and Christian organisation representatives participated in the different network development processes in the bid to form networks. A lot has been going on even before the stage of consensus building, following action plans made during and after those events. Unfortunately PACANet was yet to develop a mechanism of capturing data of what happens beyond the trainings, consultative conferences and other related network development processes.

Now that there is the monitoring and evaluation officer responsible for this, templates are being designed to ensure that in the next phase, such critical data is captured and communicated.

Delays in network development processes

The situation analysis report for Madagascar was delayed. IMAGE-APLI the consultant had promised to complete the study and provide the preliminary draft report by 7th January, 2008, but instead availed the report on 17th January, 2008. This contributed in a way to the delay in organizing the conference for the dissemination of the findings.

On the Burkina Faso network development, since the dissolution of the Task Force in Burkina Faso, there had been hope that the local focal person identified would serve as the immediate

contact person on the ground. Unfortunately he could not sign the MoU as the organisation had limited funds to meet his remuneration requirements as already noted in the network section of the report. This contributed to further delays, though in the process, the responsible project officer took on the task to the extent of coordinating local logistics, like finding venue and drawing money from the bank for the activities and got involved in making all the local arrangements in the interest of progress and realizing targets.

The network development process in Ethiopia was called off. Both PACANet and the Danish Development Council took the rather painful decision of suspending the collaborative efforts in Ethiopia due to delay excesses that could not match the time frame for all the activities. However, all efforts and resources were reallocated to Madagascar.

1.4.2. Partnership building

Over the years of implementation, it has been learnt that partnership is about relationship building. Relationships are built on trust. But the process of building trust takes time as it has been with PACANet in all efforts made and is based on shared events, objectives and mutual interest. Efforts to build partnerships as reported took on the same vein and outcomes of these efforts are expected considering the expressed interest from different partners in PACANet's vision, strategic direction and plans for Africa. These though could not be realized within the time frame as was desired.

1.4.3. Capacity gap in the communication unit

Staff capacity: Initially PACANet had two staff in the communications department, thus the coordinator and the officer. When both resigned, only one was replaced. The work became overwhelming for the new officer in terms of timely delivery of the expected information to the constituency and quality of the website. In addition, the officer had no technical competence on website management; this was always outsourced which had a budgetary implication. With the training being acquired, this shall improve because the website shall be managed internally by the officer and not dependent on the costly external expertise.

The news letter of the last quarter of the year delayed because the officer was involved in another task which had an agreed and fixed deadline hence could not produce the quarterly news letter in time.

2. SUB GOAL 2: ADVOCACY

Improve and enhance the education and advocacy role of the Church, both within itself and as a unified voice on the critical issues of HIV and AIDS.

2.1. Stigma and discrimination training

During the period, two trainings were conducted. **In Uganda**, the training was held in Kasese from 9th-14th March, 2008 with the objective to equip participants with the requisite knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to fight HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in the Church as well as the community at large. A total of 21 people participated in the training including both men and women. Activities mainly included discussion of various issues surrounding HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination, with particular emphasis on the Church.

At the end of the five (5)-day training, participants had gained adequate knowledge about issues surrounding HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination. They developed action plans to counter stigma and discrimination beginning with their churches and the immediate communities. Each participant received a certificate of participation.

In Sierra Leon, the training was held from September 15 – 19, 2008 at Jovouhey House Catholic Guest on Leicester peak in Freetown. It was attended by twenty-four (24) participants representing different churches and Christian organizations selected from various regions in the country. The content covered HIV and AIDS Basic Facts (Transmission and Prevention), Basic concepts of Stigma and Discrimination, The Mission of the Church, Strategies for Combating Stigma and Discrimination

At the end of the trainings, the post training assessment proved a dramatic increase in knowledge and improvement in attitude, and the participants developed individuals work plans of activities to be undertaken in three months to facilitate an improved response to HIV and AIDS related stigma and discrimination. Each participant received a certificate of participation at the closing ceremony.

2.2. Advocacy and Change Agents' training

During the period, 3 trainings were conducted. **In Uganda**, the training was held at the Pope Paul Hotel in Rubaga, Kampala from 20th -26th July 2008. It had 32 participants representing all the regions of the country. The training was conducted in collaboration between PACANet and Country Christian AIDS Network-Uganda (CCANet). Participants agreed that after three years they wanted to see, **“Empowered church leaders responding effectively to HIV and AIDS in Uganda”**.

An advocacy issue identified at the national level was: “Low level of acceptance of people living with HIV and AIDS”. Through the advocacy topic, participants wanted to see people living with HIV and AIDS supported and accepted in their families, in their churches and their communities. A detailed discussion on how to achieve this followed and each region was able to develop a plan of what was to be done next.

In Sierra Leone, the training was held during the week of September 22 – 26, 2008. A total of 24 people including both men and women selected amongst the churches and Christian organizations in Sierra Leone from the various regions participated.

In Swaziland, the training took place from 13th-18th October 2008 at the Global Village in Manzini.

A total of 30 people participated including both men and women. The content covered topics including Orphans and Vulnerable children, Stigma and discrimination, Basic Facts on HIV and AIDS, Concepts of change, Advocacy and Gender and HIV. At the end of the training participants were able to develop individual plans of action as well as joint regional level plan.

2.3. Bishops and Senior Church Leaders' consultation

During the period, 3 consultations were held, with the goal to engage and solicit the support and commitment of the senior Church leaders about ways, through which the Church and Christian organizations could effectively contribute to the response to HIV and AIDS.

In **Madagascar**, the PACANet team facilitated the consultation at the Residence Hotel in Ankerana, Antananarivo from 4th-6th June, 2008. 40 persons participated in the event, including dignitaries such as the Country Representative of the United Nations' Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), the Executive Director of Madagascar's National AIDS Control Programme and the Ministry of Health's Director of Programmes for HIV and AIDS, senior Church leaders and members of Madagascar's task force. The Country representative of UNAIDS, the Executive Director of National AIDS Control Programme.



Bishops and Senior church leaders in Madagascar

In **Sierra Leone**, the three day consultation was held from July 2 – 4, 2008 at the Hotel Cabenda in Freetown. A total of 28 delegates representing heads and senior leaders of churches and Christian organizations attended the event. The participants working groups covered areas including **Church Teachings and Practices, Family Life Education, Advocacy, Networking and Collaboration**. Using the presented materials, the delegates drafted a communiqué, articulating the resolution of the Church Leadership comprising the declaration and commitment of the church in Sierra Leone to effectively respond to the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

In **Burkina Faso**, the consultation took place at the “Office de Développement des Evangeliques” in Ouagadougou, from 1st -3rd October, 2008. Out of 40 Senior Church Leaders invited, 37 responded positively. The opening ceremony on 1st October 2008 was presided over by Mr. Pascal Ouedraogo, representative of the President of the National AIDS

Commission (SP/CNLS) flanked by other dignitaries including the representative of the President of the Evangelical Mission Fellowship (FEME).

2.4. Global Health Council

PACANet was invited to represent its constituency in advocacy campaign for the renewal of the PEPFAR bill at the Global Health Council. The bill was stuck in congress at the time. This aimed at strategizing on how to move the bill. Following this engagement with other stakeholders, the bill was renewed and 48 billion USD committed over the next five years.

2.5. Concurrent Multiple Sexual Partnerships

A regional conference for church leaders on HIV prevention strategies to counter the impact of multiple concurrent partners had been slated for latter years in the next strategic plan. However, responses from the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico brought about changes. Christian Connection for International Health-CCIH felt that PACANet was in a better position to support the idea in Africa, hence approached the ES, with a proposal, and deliberations started immediately. In response, the Advocacy Coordinator gathered briefing notes from the discussions in Mexico and developed a proposal concept, which was shared with the various stakeholders for input. This initiative has been planned to take place in 2009 with funds being sought from UNAIDS.

2.6. Limiting Factors and the way forward

Advocacy strategy not well articulated

Despite the specific advocacy activities undertaken as part of the network development process in the selected countries, It is observed that due to lack of a well articulated advocacy strategy, PACANet's engagement was so limited as compared to the scope and scale of advocacy at global, regional/continental and national levels. The mid term review-MTR observed that there was a staff capacity gap in terms of understanding and translating advocacy at Pan-Africa level. However this observation was made clear in the middle of the year when little could be done, save for planning for better strategic placement for this assignment in 2009. Based on these observations, the reviewed strategy has advocacy well articulated with objectives and activities planned within a specified time frame, ranging from global, continental and national engagements. In the next phase, staff will also be exposed to advocacy training opportunities and engagements in a bid to address this gap.

Delegation of Representatives

In some instances, top church leaders usually preferred to send their deputies to participate in the programs which required their physical presence for example the Bishops and senior church leaders 'consultative conferences. Due to this snag, the desired target for this activity was not fully achieved, yet these are the ones supposed to enforce policy and directly influence church practice on sensitive topics related to HIV and AIDS. Though this was done, future activities shall ensure that more effort is invested in justifying the rationale for the categories of representatives invited.

3. SUB-GOAL 3: CAPACITY BUILDING

Develop and strengthen the capacity of churches, Christian organizations and Christian networks to comprehensively respond to the impact of HIV and AIDS.

3.1. Development of Training Modules

During the quarter of April-June period, the facilitators worked on developing training modules. These were developed with focus on; philosophy for training, appropriate module title, relevance of the content, selection criteria of participants and facilitators, module duration, overall objectives as well as specific, practical, number and duration for covering topics or course content, training /running costs, number of participants, lessons learnt by the facilitators, certification, follow up and assessment. In all, eight modules were developed, including:

1. Basic Facts on HIV and AIDS,
2. Care and Prevention of HIV and AIDS,
3. Introduction to HIV and AIDS Counselling,
4. Family Life
5. Loss and Bereavement
6. Project Based Management
7. Stigma and discrimination, and
8. Change Agent training.

3.2. Human Resource Base Training

During the period, HR trainings were conducted with the objective to equip participants with the requisite knowledge and skills that they needed to effectively pass on the HIV and AIDS message to members of their congregations and organisations as well as the wider community.

In **Sierra Leon**, HR phase I training was held at Scripture Union Offices in Freetown on 25th March, 2008 and ended on 19th April 2008,. At this training, 26 participants including both men and women went through module one of PACANet's training modules, which deals with the basic facts about HIV and AIDS. This was followed by HR Phase II training conducted at a Catholic guest house, Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny – Javohey House for 20 participants from June 18 – 30, 2008. In order to compensate for time, the participants consented for the training to run up to late evenings on both Saturdays and Sundays. With this arrangement, all the three modules were successfully conducted with a very impressive participants' performance.

In **Burkina Faso**, HR Phase I training was held from 20th April – 9th May, 2008. A total of 20 people participated including 11 men and 9 women. Some participants among these joined in from APSM-Mali and BUPDOS-Benin. This was followed by HR Phase II, again held in Ouagadougou from 8th-20th September 2008 and facilitated by the Head of Regions and the Francophone Project Officer. A total of 21 people participated including 13 men and 8 women. Topics presented included: "Sex and Sexuality", "Human Development and HIV and

AIDS”, “Sexual Counselling”, “Pre-marital Counselling”, “Marriage Counselling” “Group Counselling”, “Spiritual Counselling”, “Crisis Counselling”, “Behaviour Change Counselling”, “Depression Counselling”, “Making of a Will”, “Death and Dying”, “Project Planning”, “Participatory Approaches”, “Budgeting”, “Monitoring and Evaluation”, “Resource Mobilisation” and “Report Writing”. Participants did a lot of group work and came out with interesting inputs. They also did practical exercises with a view to equipping them with skills in counselling.

On the last day of the training, they did a final evaluation and wrote a post-test and made individual action plans.



*Participants at HR II training in Burkina Faso
HR II training*



A role play on counselling during

In Madagascar, HR Phase I training was conducted from 15th May – 3rd June, 2008. A total of 26 people participated including 14 men and 12 women. The trainings covered all the three modules contained in the phase one package, with heavy emphasis on practical exercises for development of skills in counselling. On the last day of the training, the participants did a final evaluation and wrote a post-test.

The HR Phase 2 training took place on 7th to 28th October 2008 at Antsirabe, second city in the country and located 160 km from Antananarivo. The same 26 participants who attended HR Phase I, from different Churches and FBOs plus the Task Force members came for the training. Topics presented included the same as those already indicated for this phase. On the last day of the training, the participants did a final evaluation and wrote a post-test.

3.3. Capacity building among Erikshjalpen partners

WTRC -Women Training and Rehabilitation Centre - In August 2008, the programme officer worked with the staff in Addis Ababa-Ethiopia and elaborated the centre’s Project design. On 14th to 21st December 2008, the same officer worked with the Ethiopia Hewot Berhan Church development wing, a unit mandated to oversee the centre’s progress, along with the centre coordinator and developed the Centre’s monitoring and evaluation framework.



Women training and rehabilitation centre staff, developing M&E Framework

CMA - Church Mission Action - In March 2008, the programme officer conducted a one week in house training for CMA monitors in the basics of project cycle, monitoring, reporting, team work and group dynamics including conflict management and participatory community mobilization approaches.

Kubatsirana - In March 2008, the programme officer carried out an organizational culture review of Kubatsirana in Mozambique. Systems, structure and the organization's working model were reviewed through a wide consultation with the various stakeholders in the different project sites. Based on the review data, in the same month, the officer facilitated the development of the organization's strategic plan.

TRACED - Tanzania Resource and Assessment Centre for Disabled Children - In May-June 2008 PACANet facilitated the development of the organization's financial management systems in form of a management and guidelines manual. On 2nd to 9th November 2008, the programme officer worked with TRACED - and developed the organization's monitoring and evaluation framework. Both the hard and soft copies are available with the partner.

TMT-Taretuoki Mission Trust-Kenya - On the 12th-19th October 2008, the programme officer worked with management and staff in Emali Kenya, and developed the organization's monitoring and evaluation framework. Both the hard and soft copies are available with the partner.

HIV and AIDS competence training: In June 2008, Phase II of the tailored HIV and AIDS competence training was facilitated by PACANet and held in Uganda for 17 participants/representatives from Erikshjalpen partner organisations. The content in this Phase included stigma & discrimination, basic child counselling skills, Community participatory approaches, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and budgeting in relation to HIV and AIDS intervention, intended to enhance their HIV and AIDS programming.



Erikshjalpen partners doing an Energizer during training

Phase wind up meeting for West Africa: A 2-day meeting was held thus from 28th to 29th November 2008 to review the progress of the joint Erikshjalpen-PACANet programme in terms of value and lessons learned for the three parties involved thus, the partner organizations (APSM, BUPDOS and CREDO). The past was reviewed and way forward determined. The specific objectives for the meeting were to review the general progress in West Africa, performance in each of the programme components against the set indicators and targets, update members on ongoing processes including new innovations and interventions in response to HIV and AIDS and determine the way forward in the next programme phase. The general observation was that support to West Africa was limited due to language limitation and general notion that the prevalence of HIV was low in West Africa as compared to the Eastern and Southern Africa, yet the truth on the ground is that it continued to devastate communities, hence the recommendation that the process be continued to meet both the outstanding and emerging partner capacity needs. It was decided therefore that the partners present their capacity needs to Erikshjalpen in form of a plan and the related indicative budget while Erikshjalpen solicits for more resources to support the process and PACANet continues to provide technical guidance and support.

3.4. Capacity Building for Church Forum in Swaziland

Project Based Management Training - In collaboration with the Swaziland Church Forum, the training was conducted by the Director of Programme on 26th to 29th August 2008 at Esibayeni Lodge near Matsapha Airport in Swaziland. Fourteen (14) participants attended, including the Administration Assistant and the Program officer from the Swaziland Church forum. Others were sent by their respective churches and Christian organizations and included those that had completed the first 5 weeks of the HR Training package.

The topics covered were ultimately focused on project planning. Detailed notes were given and at the end, participants received certificates.

Board Training -The DOP conducted the board orientation workshop on 8th - 10th September 2008 at Esibayeni Lodge near Matsapha Airport in Swaziland. The training was attended by 10 board members representing various mother church bodies. The broad objective was to facilitate board members to reflect on their individual vision, leadership and management before they could lead others. Another broad objective was for members to understand the critical factors which make a strong team and understand board functions. Specific objectives included;

- i. Participants develop and or review their mission statements so as to improve their personal leadership and management skills
- ii. Participants understand board development cycle
- iii. Board members understand key collective board functions
- iv. Board members conduct and assess their self perception inventory
- v. Awareness of potential conflict between Board and management roles

3.5. Engagement with Bristol Myers Squibb

BMS-STF Faculty Meeting-The BMS Secure The Future engaged PACANet on a retainer basis to provide technical assistance for the implementation of its Community Based Treatment Support Program. In this vein, PACANet was invited as one of the Faculty member Organizations to participate in the kick off meeting for the Faculty of the STF Technical Assistance Programme. The meeting was held from 23rd to 25th April in Johannesburg-South Africa, attended by 30 participants drawn from countries supported by BMS STF programs in Swaziland, Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and Namibia.

The Technical Assistance Program identified projects in Tanzania, including Kifaru Community Development in Tanzania-(KICODET), Indigo Women Project and Children and Youth Development and Initiative (CYDI) and TADEPA. PACANet was committed as the lead organization to support the partners receiving support from BMS in order to replicate skills and knowledge of community based treatment support program, in addition to providing Monitoring and Evaluation services.

Technical Assistance in Tanzania

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) - On 1st and 2nd April 2008, FGD were held among the End Users of health services in Mwanza and Shinyanga regions (Tanzania). Discussions covered areas including how service users made decision on whether to use community, private, public and or traditional health services. The findings were compiled in report submitted to BMS.

Community Based Organizations and NGOs meetings - In the month of April, meetings were held in Dar-Es-Salaam, Coast, Mwanza, Shinyanga and Kagera. They dealt with the role of the community health service and workers that relate to HIV and AIDS. Focus was on home based care, counseling and nutritional services and availability of support to People Living with HIV and AIDS. Participants were CBOs/NGOs representatives and people living with HIV and AIDS. The issues highlighted were fed into the Touch Foundation planning for the Lake Zone Initiative, which aims at strengthening health services.

Youth TOT for CYDI - A five day TOT workshop was conducted in collaboration with CYDI staff. The training took place in Dar-es-Salaam in Kinondoni Municipality. 15 participants drawn from different professions and had worked with schools HIV and AIDS intervention projects in various parts of the district attended the training. The intention was that in turn, the trainees would carry out training to the youth in and out of schools on life skills education to prevent HIV and mobilize the community towards VCT uptake.

INDIGO Women Training of Trainers-The training was conducted in collaboration with the Indigo Women staff as part of the agreement reached between BMS-STF-Technical Assistance Program and Indigo Women project. 14 people attended the training .The aim was to train TOT on VCT in order for them to conduct training for VCT promoters and lay counselors, but also mobilize community towards VCT uptake.

Monitoring and Evaluation System development for KICODET- A joint visit, comprising PACANet and GAPA was carried out at the Kifaru Community Development in Tanzania (KICODET). While the GAPA team trained HIV and AIDS, and elaboration of the Grandmother project, PACANet staff facilitated one week training in M&E and drafted the M&E framework for the project.

Work Plan for TADEPA - PACANet facilitated the development of the work plan for Tanzania Development and AIDS Prevention (TADEPA) in Kagera covering the whole region. The main goal is: To improve quality of life for people affected by HIV and AIDS in Kagera Region.

3.6 Limiting factors and the way forward

Scope of capacity building

The scope of capacity building was not articulated in the strategy as envisioned now. Most of the capacity needs were identified while working with specific projects through needs assessments, therefore more was done amongst those projects and to some extent the CCANets at their emerging stages. The expressions for capacity development reflected in the CCANet plans lays a basis for trainings at regional level. The capacity areas are now clear and

the approaches to address them has been well defined, informed by the realities on the ground and incorporated in the strategy for the next phase.

Training module development

Developing training modules, particularly in the area of HIV and AIDS required a lot of research, reading and writing, and therefore staff involved in the development of the modules needed to have a lot more time which was not possible considering the limited time available in the timeframe in which the planned activities had to be accomplished before the end of the year.

Language barrier

Particularly in Mozambique was a challenge were capacity building activity proceedings at Kubatsirana had to be translated into three languages, namely Portuguese, Shona and English for all participants and facilitators to fully understand and make valuable contributions. The process was slow as meanings had to be harmonized before proceeding. The language challenge affected the desired level of involvement with the West African partner projects especially in terms of the mentoring approach.

Activity schedules

Postponement and rescheduling of activities due to partners' local coordination problems was a challenge. At some stage plans were difficult to harmonize due to differing priorities and local realities related to the individual partner plans.

Transfer of funds

The process of transfer of funds delayed in some cases and definitely in away affected the activity targets as had been planned. This goes along with the cost of transfer charges. This remains a big challenge as mentioned in the introductory section of the report.

End of staff

The project officer capacity building's contract ended December 2007, yet no replacement was made for 2008, hence the programme officer managed the remaining part of the programme alone. The experience was quite stressing as activities had to be done concurrently to meet the performance targets before end of programme and funding phase.

4. PACANet INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

To strengthen the institutional capacity of PACANet to adequately ensure the attainment of the four sub-goals mentioned above.

4.1. Strategic Planning Meetings

A five-man team was constituted to prepare the draft framework of the strategic direction for PACANet for the period of 2009 – 2011. This was intended to guide the general staff planning meeting. On July 28 – August 7, 2008 the entire staff met and the plan was elaborated. The document was referred to a committee to refine it and develop the SIDA application. To achieve this, management solicited the services of Mr. Ignatius Kayawe, on August 25 – 29, 2008, who committed to the refinement of the plan and the other project documents. It is from these documents that applications shall be extracted for submission to SIDA and other development partners.

4.2. Data Collection Tools

To enhance Monitoring and Evaluation in PACANet, several tools for data collection were developed including;

- a. Quarterly Financial Reporting
- b. Monthly Staff Report Ledger
- c. Quarterly Activity Report Submission Ledger
- d. IOP Implementation Tracking Ledger
- e. General Work Plan Tracking Ledger

4.3. MTR Report review.

The initial draft of the Mid Term Review report that had been submitted by the consultant was reviewed by staff members and issues raised further discussed when findings were disseminated. These processes helped inform and reshape the copy of the report earlier submitted to the Board for decision making, but also influenced the refinement of the strategy for the next phase.

4.4. Finance and Administration

4.4.1. Financial Management

The Office of the Executive Secretary continually worked closely with staff, Finance Committee, and the board in maintaining and enforcing sound financial policies and practices, which provided checks and balances and ensured that the organization operates within budget and budget guidelines.

Through these initiatives, PACANet engaged with SIDA and secured the approval and remission of funding for implementation of the program activities. Additionally, financial reports were produced and submitted and though extremely delayed, the 2007 Audit Report was received from the audit firm – Deloitte.

4.4.2. Recruitment of Finance Manager

To address the personnel gap created by the passing on of the former Finance Manager, PACANet outsourced services from ACCLAIM. However, during the period the management completed search for a competent replacement. Interviews of the shorted listed candidates were

held on July 21, 2008. Terms of reference and job description was developed, discussed and agreed, and the services of the identified staff contracted beginning on October 1, 2008.



Mrs Prossy Mutumba Besigye

4.4.3. Audit Report 2007

The Management persisted in the pursuit of Deloitte and Touche regarding the delay in the submission of the final audit report. The report was finally produced and sent to the Treasurer of Board for signature. The document was returned to Deloitte and Touche and submitted to the strategic partners.

4.5. Administration

4.5.1. Maintenance of office Records and Documentation

The Communications Department in collaboration with administration ensured that the organization's database is maintained. This allowed for the categorization of contact information, at the same time maintaining office records and documents, filing and printing official documents, reports, contracts, insurance, log books in addition, PACANet data was backed up on CD plates for storage with proper records kept for easy reference in both soft and hard copies.

4.5.2. Staff Performance Appraisals

The periodic staff performance appraisal was conducted for improvement and monitoring staff achievements in task performance. However, unlike previous ventures which were concluded, not all appraisals were filled in, received, signed and sent in for action on time. One factor that may have induced this drawback is the fact that supervisors had relocated and worked from their home countries, narrowing the possibilities of holding discussions with staff at the time of the appraisals.

4.5.3. Legal Affairs

A one year contract was signed with MMAKS advocates to cover all PACANet legal matters.

4.5.4. Acquisition of Staff Work Permit

After many months of delays caused by different challenges related to immigration procedures and processes, management finally secured a 36-month work permit for Mr. Pascal Ngona, the project officer francophone countries.

4.5.5. Staff meetings

During the year, staff meetings were held aimed at improving effective internal communication and resolving emerging issues that required their attention and input. Initially these were planned to be convened by Administration on a monthly basis, but this was not possible due to the tight schedule especially during the second part of the year, with most staff on assignment in different countries. For the meetings that were held, the agenda was developed in a participatory manner. Meeting minutes were then circulated to all staff including those not based at Uganda secretarial office. The management team, composed of international staff also had interactions via telephone on critical issues that required management attention.

4.5.6. Staff Contracts

The administration worked with staff members whose contracts expired on December 31st to wind up as per procedure. This involved completion of staff exit forms, end of contact reports, outstanding activity reports and staff departure and handover checklists. These were for submission to administration to facilitate the remission of gratuity by the Finance Department.

4.6. Governance

4.6.1. The Executive Board meeting

The meeting was held in Kampala from 14th – 15th April, 2008. Presentations made included the Financial Report, the audited accounts and the draft report of the Mid Term Review Assessment. A number of concerns were raised about staff capacity in observance of set targets and time lines. The ES requested to revisit the approaches used in program implementation and reassess the structure with the view to ensure that processes are accelerated to meet targets.

The Board meeting scheduled for November was postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. However, the minutes from the previous meeting and various reports were electronically dispatched to all members. The meeting was rescheduled for February 2009 in Kampala or Johannesburg. Copies of the Final audited accounts and MTR reports were sent to the Executive board members for input and approval.

4.6.2. PACANet US Sub-Committee Meeting

During the period, the PACANet-USA sub committee members were selected. The committee had its first meeting on July 8, 2008 at the Howard University campus in Washington DC

On November 6th, the committee held another meeting in Washington DC. Among the issues discussed included the adoption of the PACANet-USA Bylaws where a few amendments were made. It was also agreed that once the website is up and running, PACANet-Africa and PACANet-USA would both appear for purposes of identity and members requested that a list of potential funders already in contact be availed for follow up by the members where possible and necessary. This was prepared and a copy availed to each of the members.

5.0 Limitations and the way forward

Delays caused by the consultants

The slow pace of the outsourced resource person to refine and complete the strategic plan and develop indicators for the entire monitoring framework delayed the completion of the documents and hence submission of the funding application to SIDA. In addition, the 2007 audit report by the contracted auditing firm extremely delayed, yet some decisions had to be made based on the same

Staff adaptation to the task that totally required innovation

PACANet had very highly qualified staff but the work to be done lied entirely in the realm of work and thinking hitherto un explored. Its now clear that clear that there is no experience from other organisations which could be compromised for orientation, induction and acquaintance with networking and engagement of the church in HIV and AIDS in the way its appreciated by PACANet.

2008 showed improved understanding of vision and mission by staff which accelerated the targeted service delivery. This and a better understanding contributed to a qualitative review of the organisations' strategic direction. However, a concern of staff turnover negatively affected PACANet such that it would take much longer to replace the experience gained.

The organisational structure posed significant challenges. It had limitations in the chains of command, reporting and accountability which hampered the potential staff performance. Well as the structure would be excellent well and long established organisation, it was not compatible to an emerging organisation like PACANet. These concerns have been addressed in the new proposed structure

Appendix 1: Pre- ICASA Reflection Statement

REFLECTION STATEMENT

Churches and HIV and AIDS: Challenged or Changed?

Pan-African Christian AIDS Network (PACANet) Pre-ICASA Conference, 29 November – 1 December 2008, Dakar¹

1.0 Background

Out of a desire to strengthen the churches' response to HIV and AIDS in Africa, pre-conference participants started from a point of reflection, examining a summary document of various existing church declarations of commitment proposed. The overview clearly demonstrated that many of the declarations support an ecumenical response that is characterised by a commitment to holistic approaches.

Many declarations stated that much progress had been made in responding to HIV and AIDS by churches and church-based organisations, and identified a number of key challenges that remained, such as: addressing broader global injustices that fuel the pandemic, engaging church leadership in advocacy for just policies and government accountability, reducing stigma and discrimination, promoting the meaningful involvement of people living with AIDS (MIPA), addressing gender and age biases, mainstreaming church responses, deepening theological and ethical reflection, examining socio-cultural issues, developing a new culture of interfaith co-operation, promoting closer partnerships with other stakeholders, and strengthening the technical and management capacity of church programs.

2.0 Outcomes

Participants reflected on the churches' continued response to the challenge of HIV and AIDS, and felt it important to emphasize the churches' key strengths as well as the challenges that remain, relating to both specific church interventions and cross-cutting issues.

2.1 Key Strengths In the Churches' Response

- **Theological Mandate and Spiritual Inspiration**

The core principles of love, care, support and justice have engendered a compassionate response, that promotes the churches value for life and full well being. Furthermore, their messages offer a strong pillar of hope, and have the potential to help people make significant life-style changes that reduce their risk of HIV infection.

- **Holistic Approach**

Ecumenical responses characterise churches' commitment to holistic approaches embracing the need for global access to prevention, care, treatment, support and social ministry.

- **Extensive Reach and Networks**

Churches have extensive reach and are broadly represented and deeply rooted in local communities. Ecumenical and interfaith networking further strengthens their reach and accountability.

- **Leadership and Public Credibility**

¹ This reflection statement was ratified by participants representing 26 African countries.

Church leaders are often seen as people of integrity and credibility in their communities. Through developing the capacity of church leaders in HIV, much needed guidance is provided to build compassionate, engaging and competent church responses.

- **Experience and Capacity**

Churches have traditionally defended the promotion of health for all, in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable. The same is true in meeting the needs of individuals, families and communities infected and affected by HIV since beginning of the pandemic, through skilled human resources, many volunteers, and extensive infrastructure. Church antiretroviral therapy (ART) programs demonstrate high levels of adherence, thus preventing viral resistance to current regimens.

- **Growing Advocacy**

Churches are praised for ecumenical initiatives and advocacy work (including support of movements led by Persons Living with HIV - PLHIV), where churches exercise their role as advocates for just policies. Churches enjoy a growing number of partnerships and alliances with diverse stakeholders working on HIV advocacy issues.

2.2 Challenges That Remain

2.2.1 HIV and AIDS interventions

Prevention

- There is a need for training and teaching to better inform messages suitable for different audiences.
- Churches need to develop practical tools on Positive Parenting that will help parents and children to establish mutual communication on issues of family life, sex and human sexuality.
- Existing emphasis is on individual morality, and often overlooks addressing underlying issues of gender inequality, poverty, social stability, etc.
- There is insufficient promotion of various Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) approaches as a tool for prevention.
- Prevention messages often focus on sexual transmission, omitting transmission by blood and vertical transmission.
- Churches need to create a safe and welcoming environment for PLHIV and sero-discordant couples.
- Churches need to engage and understand traditional cultural practices, so as to develop and deliver messages that take advantage of traditional protective practices and avoid those practices that facilitate HIV transmission;
- Churches need to engage and understand post-modernism—the predominant world-view of many people around the world, so as to develop and deliver messages that can positively impact life styles that will prevent HIV transmission.
- Many members of churches have not made life style changes consistent with current knowledge of HIV transmission.

Treatment

- There are not enough facilities or personnel are qualified to provide Antiretroviral Therapy - ART (as per government standards).
- Churches need training in VCT in order to promote adherence to treatment and respect for confidentiality.
- There is growing resistance to some ARVs, and it is a challenge to deliver a wider range of ARVs.

- HBC services are provided through church institutions, but often the community is not engaged.
- Churches often absent themselves or is excluded from involvement in planning public/national programs.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

- Churches do not have clear strategies to respond to the holistic long and short term needs of OVC—*protection of child rights, parenting, psychosocial, economic, and spiritual support.*
- Children are seldom included in identifying their needs or in designing programs to respond to their needs.

2.2.2 Cross-cutting issues

- **Lack of clarity in advocacy messages**– Churches need to look both inside and outside of the congregation, and take a global social responsibility.
- **Perpetuation of stigma and discrimination** – Strengthen the message that HIV is not a punishment from God. Further training is required, particularly on expanding and challenging knowledge, attitudes, and understanding of HIV and transmission.
- **Inconsistent involvement of PLHIV** – Churches need to advocate for their meaningful involvement, and provide a welcoming environment that offers hope and help for positive living.
- **Unaddressed gender issues**– There is a general ambivalence and silence regarding women’s roles in some churches, where dialogue and openness could enhance understanding. In addition, men need to be more proactively involved in the HIV and AIDS interventions.
- **Some churches do not yet provide a safe environment** – Making many girls and women vulnerable, especially young single women, divorced, and widowed.
- **Limited involvement of Children and youth-centered HIV and AIDS initiatives**– Especially in planning projects targeted to meet their needs.
- **Limited mainstreaming of the issue of HIV and AIDS** – HIV and AIDS is often seen as something other than an integral part of its ministry. Churches could better integrate HIV/health activities across other community and development activities.
- **Continued internal theological politics exist between churches** –That result in different and often confusing messages. There is a need to overcome conflicts and come to common understandings, while recognizing and allowing for diversity.
- **Limited sensitivity to social/cultural diversities** – Many taboos and misperceptions remain. Churches need to more deeply unpack the socio-cultural context within which they work and bring harmony between culture, science and faith.
- **Zeal and passion without competence** – There is limited management oversight, monitoring and evaluation, and a lack of commitment to and tools for research documentation. Further capacity-building is required among church leaders and program workers.
- **Limited mobilisation of resources** – To support and increase the effectiveness of church HIV and AIDS interventions.
- **Fragmentation and lack of coordination of church responses** – Lessons learned and best practices could be more broadly shared among stakeholders, and networking strengthened.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The churches' spiritual mandate provides their core motivation for the delivery of a holistic response to HIV and AIDS. Furthermore, churches' key strengths including extensive reach, credible leadership, experience, capacity, and growing advocacy, place them in a strong position to take a lead in addressing the pandemic, at both a local and global level.

As churches intensify their efforts, it is imperative that they respond to identified key challenges identified related to specific interventions areas, such as in Prevention, OVC, and Treatment and Care, as well as cross-cutting challenges, in particular gender and the meaningful involvement of PLHIV, to further strengthen the impact of their response.

In summary, churches have improved and/or changed their approach, teaching and practices in many areas related to HIV and AIDS. In addressing the challenges that remain, it is essential that churches engage in deeper dialogue and collaboration in and amongst themselves, strengthen partnerships with other stakeholders, and strongly advocate for a broader compassionate, engaging and competent response.