

AIDS

Supporting Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV (PLWH)

In 1994, 42 countries prevailed upon the Paris AIDS Summit to include the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS Principle (GIPA) in its final declaration. However, even though the numbers of people living with HIV (PLWH) have been growing in many countries, their participation in the planning and implementation of AIDS programmes at local and national level is often hindered by stigma and discrimination. GTZ is therefore strengthening the capacity of PLWH organisations and helping them to set up effective national networks. Getting organised in this way is an important precondition for PLWH participation in national responses to AIDS and for ensuring their human rights. With focussed technical advice and capacity development, PLWH organisations can be empowered to make crucial contributions to the global initiative towards universal access to prevention, treatment and care.



GTZ's approaches and their results

In **Cameroon**, GTZ supported the establishment and capacity development of more than 70 PLWH organisations with over 5000 members and of their national network, Réseau Camerounais des Associations de Personnes vivant avec le VIH (**RéCAP+**). While the local organisations

provide members with mutual support and facilitate their access to prevention, treatment and care, RéCAP+ representatives ensure that PLWH take part in defining the national response to the epidemic at all levels of policy-making (community, provincial, national and international). In recent years, RéCAP+ has increased public awareness of the rights of PLWH: for instance, by effective lobbying for the reduction of the fees for antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. Its member organisations play an important role in Cameroon's national AIDS programme, providing counselling, homebased care, prevention campaigns and treatment literacy programmes, which are crucial to ensuring ARV treatment adherence and to avoiding the development of drug resistance.

In **Guinea**, GTZ supported the country's first PLWH organisation, **Association Guinéenne de Personnes vivant avec le VIH (AGUIP+)**. By involving them directly in the advocacy and counselling components of Guinea's first ARV treatment programme, GTZ built on the special expertise that only PLWH can bring to such interventions. With the slogan "Breaking the Silence", AGUIP+ ensures that in Guinea, the voices of PLWH are listened to – not just on World AIDS Day, but all year round – by the National AIDS Council, the Ministry of Health and Guinea's Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

In cooperation with UNAIDS and with the Global Network of People Living with HIV, GTZ supported the development of the handbook "Challenging, Changing, and Mobilising: A Guide to PLHIV Involvement in Country Coordinating Mechanisms"¹. The publication aims to increase and improve PLWH's meaningful involvement in CCMs worldwide, suggesting models for good practice that PLWH from around the world have agreed on.

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In **Latin America** the GTZ BACKUP Initiative supported the **Latin American Gay and MSM network – ASICAL** – and the **International HIV/AIDS Alliance** to jointly conduct an 18-months training programme for civil society organisations. The three-module training programme covering the topics organisational development and sustainability, focused interventions and advocacy was simultaneously rolled out in three regions and followed by subregional exchange visits between organisations mutually benefitting from the experience by sharing lessons learnt and good practice. As a result of the training programme, two new networks were founded: The Coalition of Gay and MSM groups (CONGA) in Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and the Andean Alliance to Promote the Citizenship Rights of Gay and other MSM (ALANPROC). Furthermore, participation and engagement of gay and MSM groups in Global Fund mechanisms were clearly strengthened: HMNP, a gay organisation in Paraguay which participated in the training programme, contributed to the development of the successful HIV proposal to the Global Fund submitted and approved in Round 6. In Ecuador, there is now a gay seat in the country-coordinating mechanism (CCM) currently occupied by one of the trainees of this programme.

GTZ's service package

Capacity development for PLWH organisations

GTZ is experienced in providing capacity building and technical assistance to civil society groups, community initiatives and NGOs. Strengthening self-help initiatives of people, who are directly affected, whether by HIV, AIDS and/or by other diseases or social challenges, is regarded as particularly important for an effective civil society response. Technical support measures include organisational development, training and coaching on project management, the setting up and use of management information systems as well as effective communication and advocacy.

Network building

GTZ supports civil society groups and NGOs in setting up their own national, regional and international networks. By strengthening such networks through regular meetings and joint training, GTZ experts ensure ongoing coordination, exchange and mutual learning between these groups. In addition, such networks are an important step towards the effective empowerment and political participation of these groups at the national level.

Supporting civil society participation in national coordination and management

Given that GTZ experts in many partner countries provide technical advice to national AIDS coordinating authorities (NAC) and CCMs, they are in a good position to promote the meaningful involvement of civil society groups in general and of PLWH organisations in particular in the coordination and management of AIDS responses at the national level. At the same time, they can provide the technical advice these organisations must have to gain the knowledge and skills they need to play an effective role in CCMs and NACs.

Facilitating access to global finance mechanisms

Through its BACKUP initiative, GTZ offers technical support to government institutions, civil society and private sector organisations, enabling them to make effective use of global financing mechanisms such as the GFATM, the World Bank Multi-Country AIDS Programme (MAP) and other international funding sources in responding to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other priority diseases. For more details, refer to the info sheet on the BACKUP initiative in this folder.

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1) www.gnpplus.net/cms-downloads/files/handbook-EN.pdf

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