



Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS
Caribbean Community
Department For International Development

THE CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE PROCESS

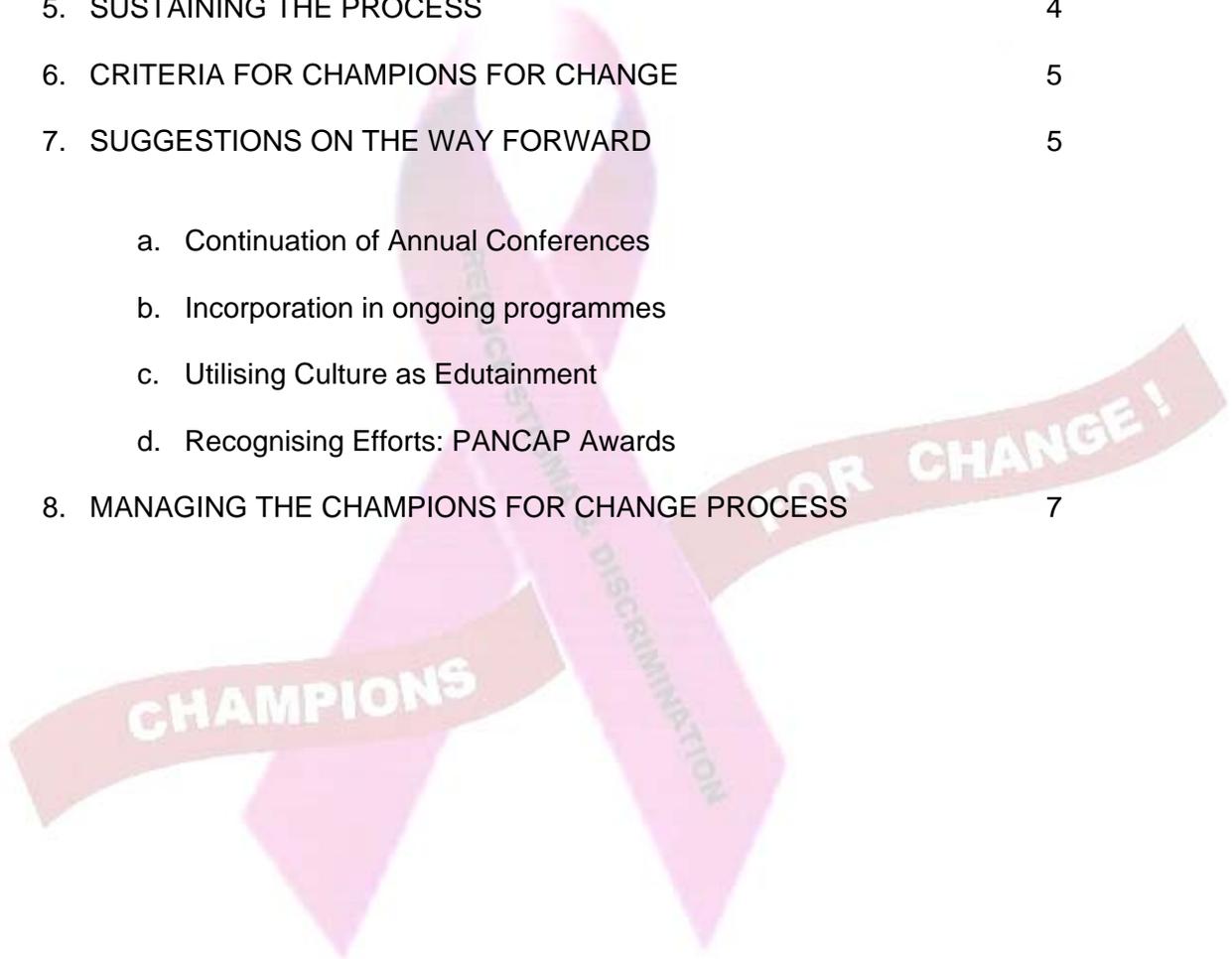
TACKLING STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION



PANCAP Coordinating Unit
CARICOM Secretariat
16 May 2007

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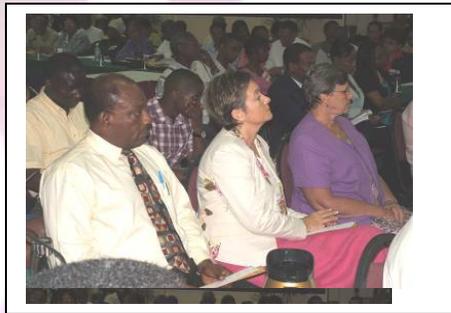


CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE: A PICTORIAL GLANCE

Champions for Change I



Champions for Change II

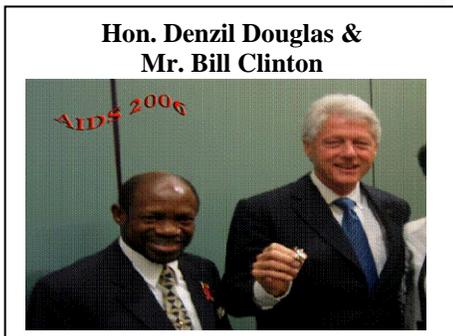


Champions for Change III

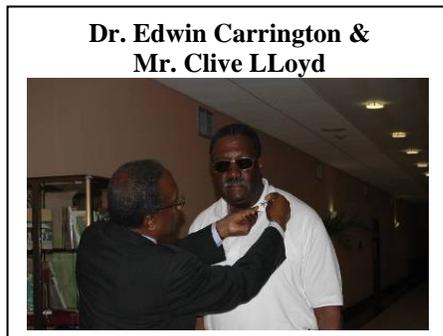


Six Champions for Change

Hon. Denzil Douglas & Mr. Bill Clinton



Dr. Edwin Carrington & Mr. Clive LLOYD



Ms. Claudette Francis & Courtney Walsh



BACKGROUND

The Champions for Change Initiative seeks to address the issue of stigma and discrimination through key advocates who are leaders in their communities and willing to be forerunners of the effort to change attitudes.

This Initiative has its genesis in the December 2003 Breakfast Meeting between the UK's Prime Minister Mr. Tony Blair and Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and was based on the identification by The Hon. Dr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis and Chair of PANCAP, that the issue of stigma and discrimination was a major gap in the Region's response to HIV & AIDS. Hence the explicit recommendation from that meeting was that a joint UK/DFID-CARICOM/PANCAP Conference be held with a view to establishing a programme for reducing stigma and discrimination against People Living with HIV&AIDS.

The thrust of Prime Minister Douglas' presentation formed the underlying justification for the UK's decision to support CARICOM/PANCAP. In the first instance, research was indicating that stigma and discrimination was emerging as a subsidiary epidemic fueling the further spread of HIV and AIDS and that among the mechanisms for coping with this dilemma was finding the formula to change behaviour combined with relevant ethical and legal reforms. The importance of this initiative is further underscored by the fact that stigma and discrimination was not explicitly included in the Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework, even though elements related to law, ethics and human rights formed part of the PANCAP work programme, supported by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Following up on the UK Breakfast Meeting, the Intersessional Meeting of Heads of Government (February 2004) mandated the Directorate of Human and Social Development, in collaboration with PANCAP, to work with UK/DFID to organise the Conference on Stigma and Discrimination.

Subsequently, the RCM/ PANCAP April 2004 established a Planning Committee¹ which in turn was broadened in August 2004 to include a technical group to assist in organising the conference.²

¹ (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) Douglas Slater Chair, (CARICOM) Edward Greene, (PANCAP) Cynthia Eledu, (CRN+) Yolanda Simon, (Jamaica) Peter Figueroa, (DFID) Jane Armstrong, Miranda Munro, Malcolm McNeil, (St. Kitts & Nevis) Elvis Newton, Oaklyn Peets and (CCNAPC) Rene West Mendoza

² Volderine Hackett and Sarah Adomakoh

OBJECTIVES

“Champions for Change” was conceived as a “brand”/approach for promoting the reduction of stigma and discrimination and was intended to complement other approaches. It was felt that given the sensitivities involved in stigma and discrimination, the use of “Champions” to advocate for a change in attitudes could have a positive impact.

Hence, venturing into uncharted waters, the Conference (November 2004), the first of its kind in the Region, was organized as a brainstorming, agenda-setting activity, bringing together a cross section of stakeholders including parliamentarians; policy makers in the fields of education and health; representatives of youth organizations, faith based organizations, the private sector and civil society; sport and cultural icons and PLWA.

Its stated objectives were: to review the factors underlying stigma and discrimination associated with HIV & AIDS and their impact; identify best practices and models of stigma and discrimination reduction; recommend policy options and develop a framework for a plan of action by which regional leaders could advocate for stigma reduction as *Champions for Change*.

OUTCOMES

The rich array of analyses and policy recommendations are adequately captured in a publication resulting from this event.³ Most important is the Plan of Action resulting from the Conference, the follow up directly related to the Plan and the initiation of a Champions for Change process that revolves around sector specific conferences, honouring of pledges by Champions and sensitisation of a variety of stakeholders on the pertinent issues. Those worthy of note, include:

- ◆ The establishment of the Pan Caribbean Business Forum in support of HIV & AIDS coordinated by the Caribbean Association for Industry and Commerce (CAIC) and launched at the Fifth Annual General Meeting of PANCAP in Port of Spain, 2005
- ◆ The hosting of sector specific conferences involving faith-based organizations (November 2005) and the Communications and Media Industry (December 2006)⁴
- ◆ Branding of the Champions for Change Initiative through the creation of a logo

³ Champions for Change : Reducing Stigma and Discrimination CARICOM/PANCAP and DFID, 2005

⁴ Report on Champions for Change II: Faith Based Organisations (2005) ; Plan of Action: Champions for Change III: Role of the Media 2006 circulated

- ◆ Development of criteria for the designation of Champions for Change at an Advocacy Workshop convened by PANCAP in collaboration with UNAIDS (March 2005)
- ◆ Identifying and vesting of “Champions for Change” as a result of recommendations from each Conference
- ◆ Advocacy by some Champions as illustrated in selected feedback in the issues of the PANCAP Enews
- ◆ Requests for the monograph on Stigma and Discrimination (2004) especially for use in a number of workshops and particularly by the American Peace Studies University for its HIV & AIDS Diploma programme. These and other requests have resulted in the dissemination of more than 2,000 copies of the publication in under two years. Further, traffic records indicate that there have been more than 160 downloads of this publication from the PANCAP website in just five months.
- ◆ The establishment of sub-committees for Champions for Change II (FBOs), chaired by the Caribbean Council of Churches and Champions for Change III (Media) in the process of being constituted as part of the PANCAP I & C work programme.
- ◆ A signature page in the Enews and the Website dedicated to follow up activities to Champions for Change and stigma and discrimination issues
- ◆ The use of the Champions for Change deliberations and the Plan of Action in the formulation of a regional Communications Strategy on Stigma and Discrimination
- ◆ Implementation of a programme of work by the Executive Committee for Champions for Change II on FBOs, including:
 - Translation of the Guidelines for Caribbean FBOs in developing Policies and Action Plans to deal with HIV/AIDS into Spanish, French and Dutch. The English and Spanish translations are already available on the CCC website and PANCAP websites. The French and Dutch versions are available but have not yet been posted to the websites.

- Home-based training for FBOs providing care for PLWHAs.
- In-country consultation convened by the representative of the Inter-religious Organization in Suriname with national FBO leaders to discuss adoption and adaptation of the Guidelines.
- Faith based organizations in several countries have used the CCC Guidelines and the PANCAP Declaration from CFC III to develop local programmes.
- Respective local committees have followed up CFC II with the designation of local CFC (e.g., Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago).
- Linkages established between HIV/AIDS, Hope Initiative, World Vision International, and ANERELA+ as a result of the participation of Rev. Canon B Gideon Byamugisha, Uganda and Rev. MacDonald S. Sembereka, Malawi. This has resulted in an exchange visit by four CFC II representatives to participate in the African HIV & AIDS Forum. Cooperation is on going.
- Production of Advocacy DVD using Clips and songs from Champions for Change I and II. The DVD was a part of the information and advocacy promotional tools used at the recently concluded 16th International AIDS Conference in Toronto.

SUSTAINING THE PROCESS

The proposal by UK Minister Gareth Thomas at the Inaugural meeting in St Kitts and Nevis (November 2004) that a stigma and discrimination entity be institutionalised was supported by Prime Minister Douglas in his role as Chair of PANCAP and by the Fourth Meeting of the RCM (April 2005) and the PANCAP V AGM (October 2005).

The developments on the establishment of a stigma and discrimination unit resulting from a Report of a DFID consultancy are being presented as a separate item. Suffice it to say that arising out of the Champions for Change process to date, there is significant need for dedicated resources to sustain the process. Hence a Stigma and Discrimination Unit in collaboration with the PANCAP Coordinating Unit (PCU) is expected to also focus on the recommendations from

the Champions for Change Conferences, strengthening the mechanisms for collaboration between the regional and national programmes where targeted implementation is essential, contributing to empowerment strategies for Champions, contributing to the establishment of tools to support the work of Champions and to monitoring and evaluating the process. The foregoing activities, among others, were discussed as necessary at the first Conference and the March 2005 PANCAP/UNAIDS workshop.

In this regard the criteria for Champions for Change identified in Figure 1, which were developed on the basis of consultation involving the core institutions of PANCAP (CRN+, CARICOM, UNAIDS, UWI, CHRC) at the March 2005 PANCAP/UNAIDS workshop, should be discussed with a view to establishing a RCM position on this issue.

CRITERIA FOR CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influential, credible and respected members of communities• Evidence of strong commitment to fight against HIV and AIDS and willingness to expand knowledge in the area• Open to constructive feedback• Communicate consistent messages in the reduction of HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination• Champions should be selected from all segments of society reflecting a diversity of disciplines and interest groups

Figure 1

SUGGESTIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

There are several activities that could enhance the Champions for Change process that may be executed consecutively or simultaneously.

i. Continuation of Annual Conferences

Champions for Change Conferences should be continued. As part of the sector-specific conference, consideration may be given to a Conference focusing on Youth and/or Sport. The former is particularly important at this juncture when the CARICOM Heads of Government have established a Commission for Youth and Development to consider those issues that would

reduce the vulnerabilities of youth and empower them to play a more critical role in the future development of the Region.

Sport is a very useful tool for promoting stigma and discrimination reduction that would attract the attention of youth. The promotion of the HIV & AIDS awareness with special reference to children, sponsored by UNAIDS/UNICEF in collaboration with ICC during CWC 2007, was quite effective. While the CARICOM/PANCAP/DFID attempt to promote anti-stigma and discrimination initiatives during the CWC 2007 was not optimally realised, consideration should still be given to the distribution of a 2008 PANCAP Calendar utilising Champions for Change in various categories including youth and sports persons.

Feedback from the Law, Ethics and Human Rights project activities seem to suggest that a Champions for Change Conference focussed on the legal fraternity is also in order.

ii. *Incorporation in ongoing Programmes*

The development of new programme thrusts within CRN+ and the Caribbean Broadcasting Media Partnership on HIV & AIDS require that the Champions for Change process should seek alliances so that the programmes within these organizations actually embrace and help to promote the Regional Plans of Action.

The vital link with the research and training institutions is also an essential component of the sustainability of the reduction of stigma and discrimination process and the current emphasis on strengthening research on social statistics in support of HIV & AIDS policy, is a step that can help build a solid foundation for the Champions for Change process.

iii. *Utilising Culture as Edutainment*

The planning for CARIFESTA X in the Bahamas in the summer of 2008 provides a good opportunity for implementing some key elements of stigma and discrimination reduction and identifying Champions for Change among cultural icons. In particular, it offers a unique opportunity to encourage the performing arts in the region to produce material on stigma and discrimination reduction for popular dissemination. This is included in the Plan of Action from the Conference for the Media.

iv. **Recognising Efforts: The PANCAP Awards**

The work programme for I&C within the PCU makes provision for a PANCAP Community and Media Awards for HIV & AIDS issues, especially for reducing stigma and discrimination. The award initiative was informed by both the Regional Communications Strategy and elements in the Plan of Action for Champions for Change III. It is expected that this initiative will further solidify the Champions for Change process.

MANAGING THE CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE PROCESS

Strengthening the PCU as the focal point for Champions which primary responsibility will be to develop empowerment mechanisms for Champions, including the formal development and functioning of network with continuous interactions among Champions; integrating Champions into new thinking emanating from the research agenda of the S& D Unit, and the CIDA/PANCAP Law, Ethics and Human Rights project, among others; creating awareness of PANCAP's policy; and providing technical support and strategic information, among other initiatives.

The focal point will also be responsible for garnering the necessary funding for the work of Champions and for monitoring and evaluating the process.

