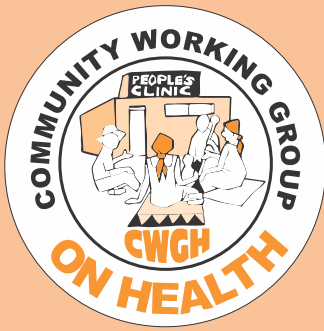


Community Working Group on Health



PVO 01/2014

CWGH Policy on HIV and AIDS



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Table of contents

1.0	Acronyms.....	5
2.0	About CWGH.....	6
2.1	Aim and scope of the policy.....	6
2.2	Objectives.....	6
2.3	Responsible persons.....	6
3	Explanations.....	7
4.	HIV and AIDS, poverty and human rights.....	7
5	HIV and AIDS Mainstreaming as a strategy.....	8
5.1	Challenges with Mainstreaming.....	8
6.	Principles.....	8
7.	Implementation of programme.....	10
8.	Confidentiality.....	10
9.	Testing.....	11
10.	Non-discrimination.....	11
11.	Present employees.....	11
12.	Employees who have disclosed their HIV status.....	12
13.	Colleagues of employees identified as HIV positive.....	12
14.	Employees at risk.....	12
15.	Public image, information and campaign activities.....	13
16.	Membership and network activities shall appeal to both men and women.....	13
17.	Human Resources.....	13
18.	CWGH will ensure a workplace free from stigma and discrimination.....	13



Acknowledgement

CWGH would like to acknowledge the immense support provided by the Board of Trustees, National Executive Committee members, the CWGH network membership and the secretariat in developing this policy.



1.0 Acronyms

CWGH	Community Working Group on Health
PVO	Private Voluntary Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
PLHWA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
HR	Human Resource



2.0 About CWGH

The CWGH is a network of civic and community-based organizations that aim to collectively enhance community participation in Zimbabwe, including social determinants of health and poverty alleviation. The network was formed in 1998 and currently has 40 national member organizations which represent various vulnerable social groups in Zimbabwe. It is registered as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) 01/2014 and operates in all the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, with a geographic presence in 35 districts through its community level structures.

Process of Developing the Policy

The policy was developed in consultation with the national memberships, board of trustees and staff members.

2.1. Aim and Scope of the policy

This policy represents the organizational commitment to HIV and AIDS in the Community Working Group on Health (CWGH). CWGH is committed to implementing this policy and the values upon which it is informed both in the way the organisation and its partners operate and in the objectives they seek to achieve. The scope of this policy applies to all staff.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity on CWGH's views and commitments with regard to HIV and AIDS and the comprehensive management of HIV positive employees and employees living with AIDS. The Policy is also aimed at focusing on aspects of HIV and AIDS which, if not carefully addressed may impact negatively on CWGH's business and/or the well being of its employees. CWGH recognizes the seriousness and implications of HIV and AIDS for the individual employee, as well as CWGH membership and families of the affected individuals.

2.3 RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

The Executive Director is the overly responsible for the implementation of the policy through members of staff.



3. Explanations

CWGH understands HIV and AIDS as:

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a condition that follows an infection with a virus known as Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV), which causes a breakdown of the body's natural defence mechanisms leaving the carrier increasingly vulnerable to opportunistic infections and malignant tumours. It is caused by our body being unable to fight infections. At present, there is neither vaccination nor cure for AIDS. HIV is transmitted mostly in four ways:

- Through unprotected sexual intercourse
- From an infected mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breast-feeding
- Through contaminated (infected) blood products
- Through sharing contaminated instruments such as needles/ injections

Not all individuals who become infected with HIV will develop AIDS, and some may experience no symptoms at all although they have the potential to infect others. HIV can live in our bodies without obvious effect. Most people with HIV feel healthy and are capable of living productive, healthy lives for many years. HIV does not usually cause immediate incapacity in a person.

4. HIV and AIDS, poverty and human rights

Although some progress has taken place during the last decade, HIV and AIDS continue to be important factors that cause stigma and discrimination among different categories of people. Throughout the organisation, CWGH will base its work on an understanding of HIV and AIDS as central to overcoming poverty as well as furthering human rights.

CWGH recognizes that unequal power relations between men and women are major drivers of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. A strong HIV and AIDS perspective is therefore critical in CWGH's work on organising the people's power for health through building the capacities of communities to engage in health policy & practices debates on HIV and AIDS at all levels.



5. HIV and AIDS Mainstreaming as a strategy

CWGH adheres to the HIV and AIDS mainstreaming approach as HIV and AIDS should not be seen as a separate topic but indeed be integrated part of all work. However, at the same time CWGH acknowledges that HIV and AIDS mainstreaming is not the only strategy for ending HIV and AIDS. CWGH will therefore adopt a twin track approach of integrating HIV and AIDS into all existing operations as well as developing specific initiatives that address HIV and AIDS as a problem.

5.1 Challenges with mainstreaming

The general criticism of HIV and AIDS mainstreaming is that it has led to a reduction in funding of other health problems like Maternal and Child Health issues. It is then important that CWGH will implement HIV and AIDS programmes in relation to other pressing health problems.

6. Principles

The overall principles for how CWGH will work with HIV and AIDS are as follows:

CWGH acknowledges the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and seeks to minimize the social, economic and developmental consequences to the company and its employees through comprehensive, proactive HIV and AIDS workplace programs, therefore committing itself to providing leadership in implementing such programs. CWGH is fully committed to protect its employees, create awareness, encourage behaviour changes where necessary as well as ensure that all employees are treated with the necessary dignity, fairness and equality.

CWGH commits itself to the following in as far as HIV and AIDS are concerned.

- HIV positive employees will be governed by the same contractual obligations as all other employees.
- HIV/AIDS education and awareness training will be made available to all employees.



- Employees requiring professional Pre and post-test counselling services will be referred to appropriate organizations as CWGH does not offer these. However CWGH will train staff and members community based counselors. The organization will also ensure that affected employees are referred to appropriate professionals.
- CWGH will ensure that where necessary/appropriate, affected employees and their colleagues receive appropriate advice and guidance should such a colleague wish to disclose their status. Consultation with affected employees in managing their illness will also be ensured.
- CWGH recognize the importance of actively engaging both men and women in promoting HIV and AIDS.
- CWGH believes addressing structural HIV and AIDS inequalities requires working with HIV and AIDS at the household, the community and societal levels. CWGH will work with both women and men to address stereotypes, including traditional belief system CWGH and practices that create and reinforce HIV and AIDS.
- CWGH will build the capacity needed to address the fundamental causes of HIV and AIDS in. CWGH will seek to influence the policy and practice of partners and organisations with which we work and encourage them participate in relevant HIV and AIDS networks.
- CWGH recognizes that HIV and AIDS is not just about designing programmes and policies or ensuring personnel balance. It is also implementing programmes that address major drivers of HIV and AIDS.
- To limit HIV transmission through sexual intercourse, condoms will be made available, accessible and affordable to all sexually active individuals.



7. Implementation of programme

All programmes will include explicit HIV and AIDS specific objectives.

Strategic Plans and Action plans of CWGH will include concrete and measurable HIV and AIDS specific objectives. Resources necessary for establishing the capacity to achieve this will be allocated. Indicators for all programmes and projects and projects shall be developed. Initiatives and objectives for promoting HIV and AIDS in the programme/project cycle will be carried out. Tools and methods for ensuring HIV and AIDS mainstreaming in programmes and projects will be made available to staff and CWGH members & partners.

When CWGH is establishing partnerships and recruiting members into the network, the commitment and capacity of potential partners and members to adhere to the CWGH's HIV and AIDS policy will be assessed. The commitment and capacity of partner and member organisations to implement HIV and AIDS policies that live up to CWGH's HIV and AIDS policy will be an important criterion for entering into a partnership with CWGH. Whether CWGH secretariat, board or district level structures adhere to the HIV and AIDS policy will be monitored on a continuous basis and this will be supported by an ongoing dialogue on challenges and opportunities.

Integration of learning and experience on HIV and AIDS will be prioritized. CWGH will form appropriate structures to monitor implementation, provide support and facilitate the sharing of knowledge within the field of HIV and AIDS.

8. Confidentiality

Persons with HIV or AIDS have the legal right to confidentiality and privacy concerning their health and HIV status. Under no circumstances will employees be obliged to disclose their HIV status.

Where an employee chooses to voluntarily disclose his / her HIV status to the employer, this information may not be disclosed to any other party without the employee's expressed consent. Should any person within CWGH disclose confidential medical information, without legal authority or relevant consent from the employee, appropriate disciplinary action will be instituted.



9. Testing

Employment, training and promotion:

Statutory Instrument 202 of 1998 Labour Relations (HIV and AIDS) Regulations, sections 4, 5 and 6 provide for the condition under which testing shall be carried out. No CWGH staff member shall be required to undergo HIV testing, unless undertaken with the informed and explicit consent of the employee and with the objective being to assist the employee in obtaining the appropriate support and care. HIV testing will not form part of the recruitment and selection process.

10. Non-discrimination

HIV/AIDS is a disease that shows no racial, gender or class boundaries. CWGH believes that a person with the HIV or AIDS must be treated on a similar basis to any other employee suffering from a life threatening disease. As such, employees who are HIV positive or those with AIDS will not be subjected to any form of victimization or discrimination.

CWGH is committed to fair, sound and non-discriminatory employment practices. Employees who choose to disclose, or are diagnosed as HIV/AIDS positive will not be prejudiced, victimized or discriminated against on account of their medical condition or status. The presence of HIV and AIDS does not justify termination of employment, demotion, or discrimination in employment. The compulsory conditions of service, including medical aid, stated benefits, sick leave, training and development would continue, as amended from time to time. Employees living with HIV and AIDS, have the same rights and obligations as all staff. Employees affected by HIV/AIDS will be treated with respect and dignity.

11. Present employees

CWGH acknowledges that employees with HIV and AIDS as well as other life threatening diseases may sometimes need continued therapeutic assistance in order to continue performing their duties. CWGH commits itself to assisting employees wherever possible and necessary. Thus employees who are aware that they have a life threatening disease are encouraged to inform the organization through the Executive Director if they so wish.



This information will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. No employee will be victimized or discriminated against.

Although there is no cure for HIV/AIDS, good standard of care can prolong and improve the quality of life of PLWHA. CWGH operates a private medical aid scheme. This scheme contributes to the employee's treatment cover. Efforts should also continue to be pursued to identify feasible strategies to make ARVs more accessible to PLWHA.

12. Employees who have disclosed their HIV status

The diagnosis of HIV status is confidential. Should an employee wish to disclose to the organization that he/she is HIV positive, he/she will be referred for appropriate counselling.

13. Colleagues of employees identified as HIV positive

It is not possible for colleagues of an HIV positive employee to become infected through normal contact in the workplace. Educational programmes in the workplace informing employees of the facts of AIDS should encourage the appropriate attitudes in this regard. Unless the HIV positive employee is acting in an inappropriate manner, it is not acceptable for colleagues to refuse to work with that person.

Should an employee, after reassurance, remain unwilling to work with the HIV positive employee, he/she will be warned that his/her reaction is unreasonable, medically unjustified and that disciplinary action may be taken against him/her.

Any colleague of an HIV positive employee who embarks on any form of discrimination towards that particular employee will be subjected to the organizational's disciplinary procedure.

14. Employees at risk

CWGH engages in health promotional activities that pose no risk in normal circumstances. Should employees be involved into risks associated with CWGH related activities, appropriate procedures should be followed to ensure prevention and control of HIV infection.



15. Public image, information and campaign activities

Information and campaign activities in CWGH will reflect CWGH's commitment to promoting HIV and AIDS. Appropriate materials and general communications will be formulated to reflect CWGH goals and objectives on HIV and AIDS and equity. The information and campaign at CWGH play important roles in mainstreaming HIV and AIDS, as effective information flows are prerequisite for mainstreaming HIV and AIDS, including information about new and innovative HIV and AIDS programming internally and externally.

16. Membership and network activities shall appeal to both men and women

As a membership based organisation, CWGH wishes to be an organisation, which offers a variety of network activities that appeal to both men and women. HIV and AIDS sensitive language will be used in all internal and external communications. Languages and styles of communication must appeal to both sexes, and managers and staff members must have the capacity to communicate in this manner.

17. Human Resources

CWGH's Human Resources (HR) policy will reflect the HIV and AIDS principles of CWGH as organisation.

The existing HR policy will be extended with elements that ensure HIV and AIDS based on organizational development principles. HIV and AIDS perspectives must be incorporated into job identification processes, job descriptions and job advertisements. The Executive Director will report on the principles in the yearly HR policy report to CWGH board.

18. CWGH will ensure a workplace free from stigma and discrimination:

CWGH maintains a workplace free from stigma and discrimination and with respect for sexual integrity. CWGH condemns sexual exploitation, abuse and discrimination. CWGH will continuously take preventive initiatives in the secretariat and at and at the Head and regional offices to prevent stigma and discrimination of any kind.

CWGH will from time to time consult its membership and review the policy

Signed by Dr. Dickson Dick Chifamba **Board of Trustees Chairperson**.....
 Mrs Delphine Chirimuuta **Executive Committee Chairperson**.....
 Mr Itai Rusike **Executive Director**.....



List of CWGH National Members

Associated Mineworkers Union of Zimbabwe	(AMWUZ)
Bulawayo Health and Community Welfare Task Force	(BHCWTF)
Bulawayo United Residents Association	(BURA)
CARELITE Counsellors	
Combined Harare Residents Association	(CHRA)
Chinhoyi Residents and Ratepayers Association	(CRRA)
Conference of Religious RC Zimbabwe	
Consumer Council of Zimbabwe	(CCZ)
Counselling Services Unit	(CSU)
Diabetes Peer Educators Zimbabwe	(DPEZ)
General Agriculture Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe	(GAPWUZ)
Gweru Residents and Ratepayers Association	(GRRRA)
Harare Residents Trust	(HRT)
Informal Traders Association of Zimbabwe	(ITAZ)
Marondera Residents and Ratepayers Association	(MRRRA)
Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Association	(MRRRA)
National Council for the Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe	(NCDPZ)
Plumtree Aids Project	(PAP)
Public Service Association	(PSA)
Rusape Residents and Ratepayers Association	(RRRA)
Shiloh Zimbabwe	
The AIDS and ARTS Foundation	(TAAF)
Women and AIDS Support Network	(WASN)
Women's Action Group	(WAG)
Zimbabwe Aids Aid Organisation	(ZHAAO)
Zimbabwe Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe	(CCJPZ)
Zimbabwe Confederation of Midwives	(ZICOM)
Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions	(ZCTU)
Zimbabwe Council of Churches	(ZCC)
Zimbabwe Farmers Union	(ZFU)
Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation	(ZHPF)
Zimbabwe Network of HIV Positive Women	(ZNPW)
Zimbabwe Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS	(ZNNP+)
Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network	(ZWRCN)
Zimbabwe Young People Development Coalition	(ZYDPC)
ZimRights	



CWGH Districts

Buhera, Bubi, Matopos, Mutasa,
Bulawayo, Goromonzi (Chikwaka),
(Arcturus), Chimanimani,
Chinhoyi, Chipinge, Hwange,
Kariba, Chiredzi, Chirumanzu,
Chitungwiza, Chiwundura,
Filabusi, Insiza, Gweru, Kwekwe,
Masvingo, Marondera, Mutare,
Plumtree, Rusape, Tsholotsho,
(Sipepa), Chikomba, UMP,
Umguzi, Umzingwane, Victoria
Falls, Zhombe, Bindura, (Nyava)
and Zvishavane.





Community Working Group on Health

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Health
is your **right** and
responsibility