

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY BASED INTERVENTIONS: THE ART LITERACY PROJECT EXPERIENCE

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The Department of Health in Mpumalanga Province, with the introduction of ARVs in the public health system in 2003, was concerned that care and treatment should be integrated with prevention efforts and linked to existing HIV interventions. In April 2005 a partnership was developed between the Mpumalanga Department of Health and HST aimed at strengthening the links between primary health care facilities and community based services through community mobilization.

Project goal

To use community mobilisation strategies in promoting ART literacy and treatment support in the clinic catchment areas (CCAs) of the seventy- two feeder clinics that supports the seven accredited ART sites in Mpumalanga Province. Expected outcomes of the project include: Early entry to treatment for STIs, AIDS, TB and other OIs; improved support of community members on ARVs; increased access to condoms in project communities; increased uptake of HIV testing; reduced stigma and discrimination in the communities in which the project is being implemented.

Strategy

The strategy is based on the rationale that treatment literacy is a key component of the ARV rollout. Accordingly the strategy aims to increase understanding about HIV transmission, prevention, treatment, care and support in order to effect behaviour change.

Methodology

HST's community mobilisation strategy encourages increased community participation by providing the interface between ART sites based in the hospitals, Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities and the communities in order to strengthen family and community awareness and support. HST facilitators work closely with and build the capacity of local partner CBOs and volunteers to act as facilitating and implementing agents within communities in which they reside. At the community level each partner CBO and volunteers are responsible for project implementation across 5 clinic catchment areas.

Project achievements

- Improved access to condoms
- Increased access to IEC
- Treatment support groups established in 23 clinics
- Increased number of community members visiting the resource centers to seek guidance and advice
- Increased support and advice to communities on ART and HIV and AIDS
- Increased collaboration between community and government structures
- Strengthened collaboration between ART volunteers and HBC