
BUILDING A FAITH-BASED RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS IN THE CARIBBEAN

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Implemented by the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC)

**GUIDELINES FOR CARIBBEAN FAITH – BASED ORGANISATIONS
IN DEVELOPING POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS
TO DEAL WITH HIV/AIDS**

Preface

This paper advocating the development and activation of policies and action plans for dealing with HIV/AIDS has been prepared by the Caribbean Conference of Churches through a consultative process with other Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) as part of a CIDA-sponsored project entitled “Building a faith based response to HIV/AIDS”.

A Policy Committee was established and commissioned to prepare a Policy Document and Action Plan which would serve as a guide for national and regional FBOs in dealing with the issue of HIV/AIDS. In the course of its work, the Committee recognised that it would be inappropriate to compose a definitive Policy and Action Plan document because each FBO has to ground its Policy and Action Plan in its own faith perspective.

Originally the Policy Document and Action Plan were expected to do the following:-

- Review the situation of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean.
- Identify a set of core values and develop a shared vision.
- Focus on the promotion of healthy life choices and behaviour change, including advocating abstinence where appropriate.
- Consider the region’s cultural, especially, religious diversity.
- Encourage FBOs to play a responsible, proactive role in public HIV/AIDS discussions.

The Committee agreed to be faithful to these parameters, but to recognise that its role would be as advocates for the adoption of Policies and Action Plans done by the several FBOs in the Caribbean.

The aim of the Committee, therefore, is to create a template for Caribbean FBOs at every level and to lay the groundwork so that FBOs will be able to quickly prepare, confirm or

update written Policies and Action Plans for responding to the crisis faced by the general community in the Caribbean, including FBOs themselves.

Background

About Caribbean Conference of Churches

The Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) is the development agency of thirty-four member churches in thirty-three territories across the region. It is also a member of CARICOM's Pan-Caribbean Partnership on HIV/AIDS. In referring to the CCC's HIV/AIDS involvement, the World Bank stated in its 2001 Country Study on HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean:

Religious institutions represent a major resource in the effort to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. Following the example of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, which is engaged as part of the Caribbean Task Force on HIV/AIDS, the creation of forums and formal alliances among the various religious organizations involved in the effort to combat AIDS at the country level ought to be given priority consideration.

Through the present project, the CCC seeks to facilitate the formation of a strategic alliance among Caribbean FBOs combat HIV/AIDS. It is anticipated that this alliance will encompass the CCC's member churches, as well as members of other religious organisations in the fourteen target countries which include Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

The organisation's policy is one of deeper ecclesiastical engagement with, and accompaniment of, its member churches, in responding to the complex social ills currently affecting the region. This means greater involvement with, and through, the existing agencies and institutions of the churches, right down to the level of local congregations as the churches together seek to live out their mission. Thus, a major objective of every CCC programme is the bolstering and strengthening of member church initiatives through education, advocacy and sensitization, with provision of funding and technical expertise where necessary.