

Using the Framework for Dialogue

The creation of a national working group to oversee the implementation of the Framework for Dialogue is a central pillar of the methodology and upholds the fundamental principle of equal partnership between people living with HIV and faith communities from the very beginning.

The working group will ideally include:

1. A representative of the national network of people living with HIV
2. A religious leader (e.g. member of a national network of religious leaders responding to HIV)
3. A religious leader living with HIV (e.g. an in-country member of INERELA+)
4. A representative of a faith-based organization responding to HIV
5. A technical partner, such as a representative from the UNAIDS country office or another inter-governmental body or development agency.

If you are interested in initiating the Framework for Dialogue in your country, please contact Ruth Foley at rfoley@e-alliance.ch or one of the four organizations on the international steering group. Please note that the implementation of the PLHIV Stigma Index is a prerequisite for using the Framework for Dialogue tool.

For more information about the Framework for Dialogue, including the outcomes of the pilot test processes, go to www.frameworkfordialogue.org



I have never once heard a religious leader speak out publicly against stigmatizing and discriminating attitudes and actions towards people living with HIV. This would make a difference, not only to me personally as a person living with HIV but also in terms of the attitudes that others in my faith community have towards me.

— Ma Thida, Myanmar

Eliminating Stigma Together

The People Living with HIV Stigma Index (www.stigmaindex.org) measures and detects changing trends in relation to stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV. A multi-country "faith-based lens" analysis of People Living with HIV Stigma Index reports showed that:

- Stigma and discrimination continues to be faced by people living with HIV within their faith communities.
- Stigma and discrimination experienced by people living with HIV in their wider communities is something that they believe faith-based actors can help address.



The fact that the Stigma Index shows that 20% of people living with HIV have had suicidal feelings really shocked me, and makes the need for my faith community to do more to support people living with HIV all the more urgent.

— Orthodox representative, Ethiopia

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Introducing the Framework for Dialogue between Religious Leaders and Networks of People Living with HIV

A tool for dialogue and joint action at the national level.



Why a Framework for Dialogue?

The active and meaningful participation of people living with HIV is essential to a comprehensive and effective response to HIV. So too is the active and informed involvement of religious leaders and faith communities. Working together, people living with HIV and religious leaders can bring experience, knowledge, reach and passion that can significantly enhance what both partners can do separately as well as collectively in response to HIV. Such collaboration is not new, but has often been ad hoc and informal.

Thirty years into the HIV epidemic, strengthened partnerships between people living with HIV and religious leaders remain crucial. Stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV persist in faith and wider communities, and there is much more

that faith communities and people living with HIV could be doing together to improve access to HIV-related services for all. In addition, networks of people living with HIV are more and more aware of the necessity to meet the faith-related needs of their members.

The Framework for Dialogue is a tool for increasing systematic, inclusive and sustained dialogue and collaboration between people living with HIV and religious leaders at the national level. It aims to support both faith communities and people living with HIV to more effectively address the key issues of concern to them, and helps both constituencies – as equal partners – address perceptions, experiences, beliefs, and common goals in order to build new or stronger partnerships between them.

Principles of the Framework for Dialogue process:



The dialogue is driven by country partners and country priorities.



All actions and dialogue are based on evidence, both quantitative and qualitative.

What is the Framework for Dialogue?

The Framework for Dialogue uses evidence as the starting point of all dialogue and future joint actions.

The process begins where the People Living with HIV Stigma Index has been implemented by the national network of people living with HIV. It then uses this evidence - complemented by other evidence from the country - as the basis for guiding participants

from informal to formal discussions and actions, and from bilateral conversations to comprehensive and inclusive dialogue and collaborations.

The Framework for Dialogue process is divided into six key steps that aim to ensure proper planning, follow-up and sustained, ongoing dialogue.



PEOPLE-CENTRED

The dialogue does not begin with what faith institutions are doing on HIV, but begins with the experiences of people living with HIV in practicing their faith and the impact of the work of faith institutions on their lives.



'DO NO HARM'

All participants in the dialogue process agree to a 'do no harm' approach, especially in areas of disagreement.



EQUAL & MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

All stakeholders enter into the dialogue as equal partners, allowing full participation and involvement in decision-making throughout the dialogue and emerging joint actions.

How the Framework was developed

Four international partners, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA), Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+) and UNAIDS came together in early 2011 to move the concept of the Framework for Dialogue - which emerged from the Summit of High-Level Religious Leaders held in The Netherlands in March 2010 - from an idea to a reality.

The development of the Framework was informed by evidence that was gathered and analysed by the four partners (including an online survey to assess perceptions and expectations of dialogue stakeholders), as well as by three country-level pilot tests that took place in Malawi in June 2012, in Myanmar in November 2012 and in Ethiopia in April 2013. The Framework has been revised and finalized based on lessons learned from these pilot dialogues.



This dialogue meeting has reaffirmed my commitment to lift up the experiences of people living with HIV by, for example, using my sermons to denounce HIV-related stigma and prejudice.

— Imam Islam Shiekabdulla, Myanmar



INNOVATION

New partnerships are formed, and 'out-of-the box' thinking and solutions are encouraged.



ACTION-ORIENTED

The focus of the process is to move beyond dialogue to collaborative and constructive actions.



SAFE SPACE

The methodology and facilitation of the dialogue aims to create a space where all entering into dialogue can be sure that they will not meet discrimination or judgement.