



ENLISTING 

religious, cultural &  
traditional LEADERS

in HIV/AIDS prevention in Africa

Regional Programme to Prevent HIV/AIDS Through  
Advocacy & Media Networking with Non-Formal Structures



CALL *for*  
PROPOSALS

Deadline: 30 May 2003



*After years of work with government and other formal institutions in Africa, it is becoming clear that effective advocacy to prevent HIV/AIDS must be expanded to include operational partnerships with non-formal power structures. Such structures, which include religious, ethno-cultural and traditional leaders as well as other socially accepted loyalty systems, wield enormous authority at the grassroots and can strongly influence individual and group behaviour. Halting the spread of this epidemic will require direct and active collaboration with these diverse non-formal structures.*

## **E x p a n d i n g** the circle o f **PARTNERSHIPS**

Through this call for project proposals, UNFPA aims to identify, enlist and engage non-formal leaders as principal actors and advocates for change in the prevention of HIV/AIDS at the community level. Funding is available primarily for intercountry advocacy and/or media projects. The objective is to reach ethnic and other groups whose bonds may extend across national boundaries. Proposed projects should be:

- ☀ **COMMUNITY-FOCUSED:**  
involving community members in the design, implementation and management of project activities
- ☀ **REALITY-BASED:**  
utilizing to the maximum extent possible trained and committed peers who can speak and relate to leaders within religious, traditional and other socially accepted loyalty systems of men, women and youth
- ☀ **SYNERGISTIC:**  
featuring approaches that are complementary to ongoing UNFPA programmes or that fill the gap in its work with non-formal structures
- ☀ **TRANSPARENT:**  
documenting project development and implementation processes thoroughly
- ☀ **ACCOUNTABLE:**  
incorporating results-based monitoring and evaluation
- ☀ **MULTIDISCIPLINARY & GENDER BALANCED:**  
representing a variety of disciplines in the choice of project staff; demonstrating gender sensitivity and balance in all aspects of the project
- ☀ **FORWARD-LOOKING:**  
building local and national institutions and capacity within non-formal power structures

### **NON-FORMAL STRUCTURES INCLUDE:**

Religious and inter-faith institutions; ethno-cultural institutions, such as elders councils, chiefdoms and ethnic associations; civic groups within socially accepted loyalty systems; community-based organizations and development associations; and community-based non-governmental organizations, including self-help groups, youth, women's and sports organizations. Other non-formal structures that can have considerable influence on the socialization process include: professional and occupational groups; modern and folk entertainment and media organizations and networks; private sector organizations; political parties; and trade unions.

**WHO is eligible?** *Submission of project proposals is open to public and civil society organizations, institutions and networks that are either Africa-based or that have a track record of working successfully at the grassroots with African partners.*



# Eligibility CRITERIA

Groups applying for funds should be prepared to fully complete their projects by December 2003, since funding for this initial phase has only been approved through the end of the year. Consequently, projects should be modest in scale and scope. Lessons learned from these pilot projects will inform UNFPA-funded activities under the Africa regional programme in 2004-2006.

## **WHAT are key selection criteria for proposals?**

All proposals, which should be in the form of a UNFPA project document, will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- ☀ Was the suggested operational framework (see back cover) utilized? If not, why is the proposed approach the best technical means for achieving the desired results?
- ☀ Have cultural, technical, managerial and institutional constraints been recognized and addressed?
- ☀ Does the project promote "ownership" among non-formal structures by involving them in project design and execution?
- ☀ Does the project reflect a systematic planning process? That is, do proposed activities and outputs follow logically from stated problems and objectives?
- ☀ Is the project technically sound, cost-effective and sustainable over the long term?
- ☀ Has the potential for gender equity been exploited to the maximum?
- ☀ Have mechanisms been established for regular review, performance assessment and follow up?
- ☀ Have indicators been defined for measuring results?
- ☀ Are project activities the first of their kind or do they complement those of donors working in the target communities? If so, how?

For more detailed information about the regional programme, please see the complete project document at: [www.unfpa.org/africa](http://www.unfpa.org/africa). Or contact a UNFPA Country Office or Country Support Team in Africa.

The review process could involve a request for revisions. Once the proposal is regarded as complete, a UNFPA decision, which is final, will be conveyed formally. Approval for funding could include conditions pursuant to UNFPA policies and guidelines.

# HOW to APPLY

## **Draft proposals should include:**

- ☀ statement of the problem and objectives
- ☀ review of recent and ongoing advocacy related to HIV/AIDS prevention in the target communities, including modern or folk media activities
- ☀ statement of knowledge about or activities under way involving religious or traditional leaders and other socially accepted loyalty systems of men, women and youth in proposed project sites
- ☀ a description of strategies and planned activities, which should be viable, phased and reflect lessons learned from previous advocacy or media efforts aimed at non-formal structures
- ☀ a description of national, provincial and community expertise and other technical partners that will be implementing the project
- ☀ a clear schedule of periodic technical and programme reports and reviews
- ☀ an operational work plan and time line
- ☀ a detailed budget

## **Additional elements of the proposal include:**

- ☀ cover letter from submitting organization, institution or network
- ☀ detailed curriculum vitae of the project's principal technical staff

Interested parties should send one copy of their proposal by **30 May 2003** to Ms. Fama Hane-Ba, Director, Africa Division, UNFPA, 220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017. An advance copy of the proposal, along with requests for additional information, if required, should be sent to Mr. Oyebade Ajayi by e-mail at [ajayi@unfpa.org](mailto:ajayi@unfpa.org). Decisions on proposals that meet the requirements described above can be expected no later than **30 June 2003**.

**Please note:** Project proposals that satisfy the requirements and criteria outlined in this brochure will receive priority attention.

*Leaders of religious, traditional and other socially accepted loyalty systems hold a special place in African society. They are often a source of moral authority and have the legitimacy, credibility and charisma to affect people's behaviour. Yet they have been marginalized in many HIV/AIDS prevention efforts, which have tended to concentrate on formal government institutions and structures. Following are descriptions of some identified gaps in current HIV/AIDS prevention programming for which innovative solutions are sought.*

## Possible FOCUS areas

### CULTURAL values & practices

The positive influences that traditional structures might bear on behaviour and socialization have rarely informed HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. Rather, researchers and programme managers have tended to focus on cultural practices, beliefs and norms that negatively impact the spread of the disease. In most cases, such information has not been combined with the analysis needed to shape effective strategies for change. A crucial gap in HIV/AIDS prevention has been *lack of dialogue* with non-formal leaders and their active involvement in finding solutions.

### DATA Collection

Policy making and effective implementation of programmes depends on evidence-based information. Yet the collection of sensitive information of an epidemiological, sociocultural and biomedical nature tends to be difficult, especially in remote rural communities. Creating genuine partnerships with non-formal structures to facilitate the collection of adequate and credible data is essential if evidence-based strategies and interventions are to be developed. Collaborators in the regional programme should also avail themselves of findings of the UNFPA-initiated Africa Social Research Programme or similar research in the countries of operation.

### Capacity-building & RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

As partnerships and coalitions with non-formal power structures expand, so will the need for human and financial resources. One of the expected outcomes of this regional programme is greater sharing of resources, responsibilities and tasks under the decentralization arrangements that most African countries already subscribe to. Within this context, training and capacity-building, which are now an important part of assistance to the public sector system, would have to be extended, in an appropriate manner, to targeted communities or groups.

### POLICIES, laws & legislation

At the national level, governments are responsible for developing public policies that civil servants carry out. Governments also administer justice through a modern court system. In many African countries, however, equal weight is often given to customary laws and traditional systems of justice—including the Islamic-based Sharia court system—that tend to be trusted and better understood by local people. This dichotomy between traditional and modern systems frequently gives way to confusion and contradiction over the interpretation of policies and the application of laws. A critical gap in HIV/AIDS prevention is inquiry into this area and operations research. Advocacy could also be carried out to inform communities and other stakeholders about legislation and public policies that relate to HIV/AIDS prevention and to their own health and survival. Folk media, which is anchored in traditional storytelling and dramatic techniques, can be a powerful tool for communicating such messages, using local languages, familiar images and local channels and networks for dissemination.

#### MAKING THE MEDIA A STRATEGIC ALLY

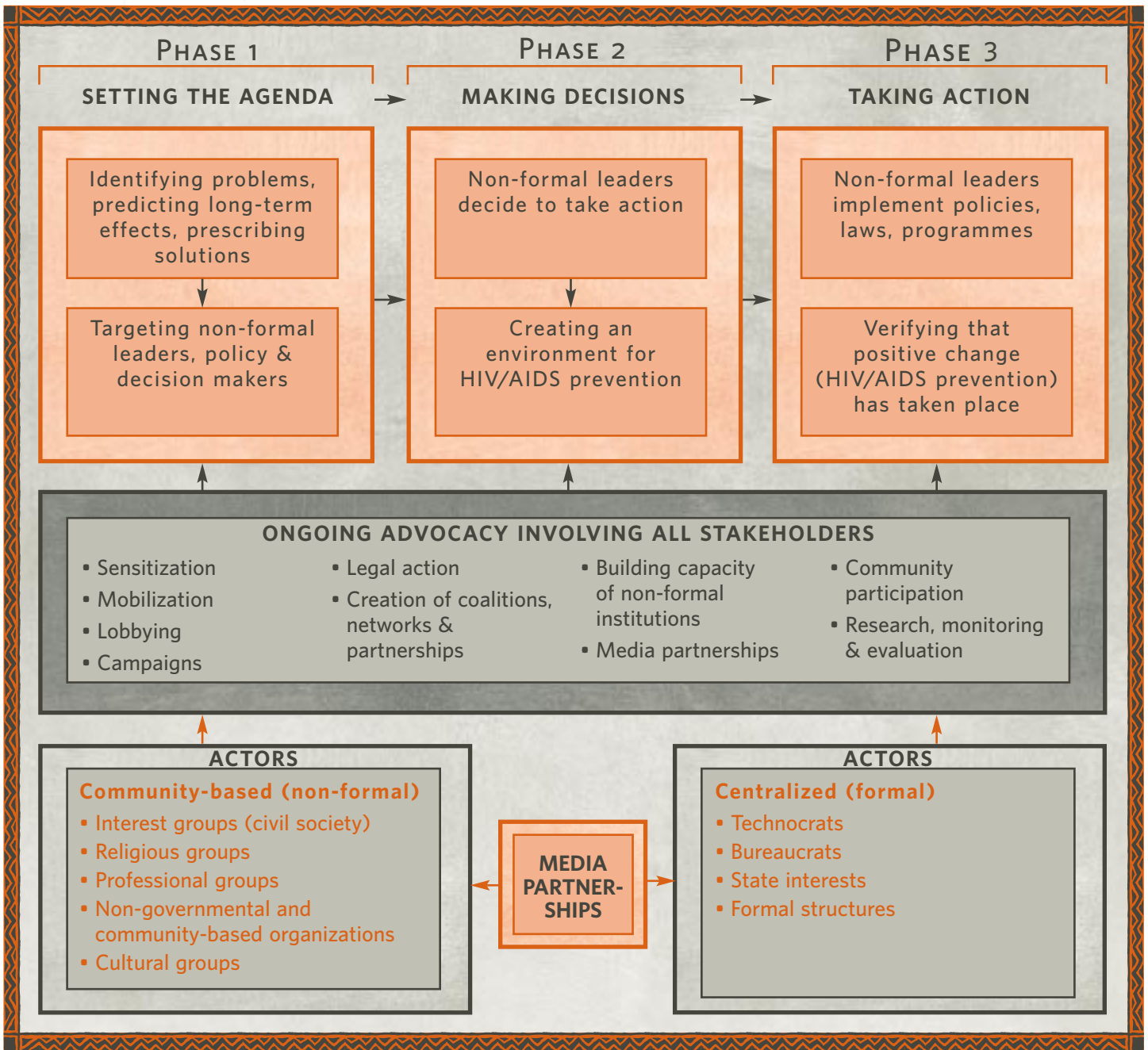
Advocacy in all of the areas described above can benefit tremendously from partnerships with both modern and traditional media, which are central channels for information, education and entertainment. The media partnerships in HIV/AIDS intervention should be broad-based, including traditional or folk media as well as radio, television, print and electronic media, such as the Internet.

*This suggested operational framework reflects lessons learned from HIV/AIDS prevention efforts over the last 20 years. It also takes into account the contributions and comments of participants at the HIV/AIDS Prevention Advocacy and Media Network programming workshop (Nairobi, July 2002). Throughout all three phases, continuous advocacy is required to reach the ultimate desired outcome: a reduction in the incidence and prevalence rate of HIV infections as well as a reduction in the rate of opportunistic infections and death, especially among young people, mothers and children.*

# Operational FRAMEWORK

before Unsupportive environment for HIV/AIDS prevention at the community level

after Supportive environment for HIV/AIDS prevention at the community level



\* Adapted from Meier (1991) and Grindle & Thomas (1991).