

April 1, 2009

## **Botswana Network of People Living With HIV/AIDS-BONEPWA**

### **Background of Organisation**

Botswana Network of people living with HIV/AIDS is a national umbrella network formed by and for people living with HIV/AIDS in Botswana. It was founded in 2000 through a motivation by the need to provide leadership and a common forum for concerted advocacy efforts to provide a united voice for people living with HIV/AIDS. The network is represented in the national AIDS council. BONEPWA has a national executive board comprising of ten members elected by people living with HIV/AIDS support groups across the country. BONEPWA is a membership organisation.

### **Governance**

BONEPWA is going through a transformation process. The organisation is working towards putting in place of all necessary policies. An example was cited that a communication policy would also be put in place.

BONEPWA has a constitution that it adheres and also has a strategic plan that was reviewed during mid-term of the strategic plan tenure. Disability is not an area of focus in the strategic plan. However, BONEPWA would like to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and have a disability office.

### **Institutional Capacity**

BONEPWA has no information on disability and HIV/AIDS. During the interview it was stated that BONEPWA sees it as a requirement to include disability in their training packages. BONEPWA has seen that there are glaring gaps at national level in terms of advocacy for disability. It was stated that advocacy for disability at national level is all rhetoric. As a result, disability mainstreaming in programming is not present.

In terms of capacity, BONEPWA has the technical human resource. However, the technical staff are not skilled in matters of disability. Therefore, human resource gaps are available. BONEPWA has also identified unimplemented policy areas. In the organisational mandate disability is not included because of lack of advocacy. BONEPWA stressed that they need programming in the area of disability.

BONEPWA carries out support visits to its affiliates and acknowledges that feedback is a major gap. They have recognised that affiliates require feedback. BONEPWA is supported by Skill share international Donor.

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## **Area of Focus**

Disability is a gap that is already identified in BONEPWA strategic plan and programming. BONEPWA stated that there must be deliberate conscience about disability at all levels. Currently that is missing.

On stigma and discrimination of people with disabilities, BONEPWA has encountered advocacy challenges. The political and civil society advocacy efforts are little. BONEPWA is of the opinion that there is a need for conscience and willingness to address and meet the needs of people with disabilities.

To better contribute to disability and HIV/AIDS response, skilled human resources in disability, financial resources, sign language, Goodwill and a good spiritual wellbeing are required by BONEPWA. BONEPWA does not have interventions in response to HIV/AIDS and disability.

Lack of advocacy is the identified barrier to disability and HIV/AIDS response. This is already highlighted above. BONEPWA has recognised the Disability and HIV and AIDS Trust as a necessary organisation to assist in addressing the barriers. BONEPWA is willing to start a sustainable collective effort with DHAT.

The BONEPWA strategic plan is ending this year 2009. BONEPWA intends to include disability in their programming. The Partnership with Disability, HIV and AIDS Trust will help set up mechanisms to overcome the barriers. As a contribution, BONEPWA will include disability in programming and the strategic plan.

BONEPWA would like the partnership with the Disability HIV and AIDS Trust to dwell in the areas of training and support, skills sharing and transfer. BONEPWA also mentioned that cost sharing initiatives must be taken into consideration in certain programming. The expectation is that the partnership will be sustainable.

To ensure the sustainability of the partnership, DHAT and BONEPWA must own the partnership. The ownership must be supported through skills transfer and sharing, mainstreaming disability in support groups, CBOs and government programmes and also increasing awareness about disability at all levels.

## **Information and Networking**

BONEPWA networks with the Government of Botswana, Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organisations (BONASO), Botswana Network of Ethics Law and AIDS (BONELA), Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (BOCONGO). ForumSyed and Community Based Organisations.

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BONEPWA believes that the right actors in the realm of HIV/AIDS are people with disabilities, government (Ministry of Health), Community Based Organisations, AIDS Service Organisations and disability advocates.

BONEPWA collects data and general information on prevention and behaviour change response process. Information is shared through reports and meetings with partners, Mentoring and Evaluation with technical teams and peer mentoring processes. The information is shared internally through internet to individuals, meetings and project offices.

### **General Comments**

*BONEPWA stated that people with disabilities rights must be advocated for. The advocacy must be carried out in league with the government and other groups of people.*

*The BONEPWA/DHAT partnership must be done correctly and it is expected that the two will prepare and publish advocacy materials in both electronic and print media.*

### **Note**

The mapping exercise information was provided by Lorato Sakufiwa, Dr Simon, Loruno (American Peace-Corp Volunteer). Robert Sinyinza and Shirley Keaogile carried out the mapping exercise on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009.