

April 1, 2009

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS - BONELA

Background of Organisation

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS is a non-governmental organisation committed to integrating an ethical, legal and human rights approach into Botswana's response to HIV/AIDS. Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS was registered under the societies act in early 2002. With a non profit mandate Bonela raises funds through the sale of publications, other activities and the support of individuals and members.

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS is governed by a board, which was elected in 2005 reflecting a range of professional experience. The daily work of Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS is carried by full time staff. Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS also serves as the secretariat for the National AIDS Council (NAC) sector on ethics, Law and human rights. The NAC Chaired by the former president of Botswana is the highest body in the country focused on developing strategies to combat the HIV epidemic. The sector is chaired by law society of Botswana and it aimed at facilitating respect for human rights enshrined in the constitution of Botswana and the international human rights instruments with respects to prevention, management and control of HIV/AIDS.

Governance

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS has organisational policies such as study leave, communication, transport, HIV/ AIDS, principles and procedures policy, code of conduct policies. The organisation adheres to its constitution and other organisational policies.

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS has a new strategic plan in place with measurable goals and objectives focusing on HIV/AIDS. Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS reviews the its strategic plan midway of the strategic plan tenure .

Institutional capacity

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS has developed leaflet in Braille format on routine testing and HIV/ AIDS. The leaflet will be launched soon. The organisation will request Disability HIV and AIDS Trust to be involved in the launch.

On overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, the respondent could not speak on disability since disability is not an area of focus. The Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS focuses on Human rights and Ethics, relevant to HIV/AIDS.

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In terms of litigation, Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS employs effective methods. The sustainability of its programmes depends on donor support. Donor sustainability is questionable in terms of making good impact. Currently government policies are being reviewed and the Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS is dialoguing with government on policy review.

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS has skilled human resource that has capacity to deal with and support activities to effectively perform its mandate. The organisation gives feedback to its affiliates by consultative meetings (AGM), newsletter, and its website.

Area of Focus

On understanding disability and HIV/AIDS Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS recognises and acknowledge that people with disabilities are at increased vulnerability. In addition people with disabilities have limited access to infrastructure and communication. Although services on HIV/AIDS such as Antiretroviral Therapy, Prevention of Mother To Child Therapy and Voluntary Counselling and Testing are open to the mainstream society, they are not friendly to people with disabilities.

On issues affecting persons with disabilities Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS said that there is no policy that addresses the issues of people with disabilities. Where there is need for people with disabilities to access health care services, communication is a major gap among service providers and people with disabilities. In education government must integrate schools for people with disabilities with those of the mainstream society. In reducing poverty government must ensure that people with disabilities have good and relevant education and have necessary skills. In areas of access to transport it is inaccessible to people with disabilities.

To address the issues mentioned above Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS implores the government to get involved and mentioned that legislation is crucial.

To better contribute to Disability HIV/AIDS response Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS requires sign language in their programming and in advocacy plans. Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS has produced Braille leaflets for the benefit of visually impaired and the blind as a contribution to interventions. Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS acknowledges that gaps exist in the production of Braille leaflets. The challenge was identifying someone to Braille the leaflet.

In order to effectively address the barriers Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS needs to Braille materials for the blind since Braille resources are available. People require to be educated to know that Braille resources are available.

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Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS is willing to start a sustainable collective effort to tackle disability and HIV/AIDS issues. On mainstreaming disability and HIV/AIDS in its programming Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS needs to identify areas that they can tackle. The core area is legislation and policy relating to disability.

A partnership with Disability HIV and AIDS Trust will help set up mechanisms as well as overcoming existing barriers. The highest priority for a partnership to be developed in line with Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS organisational goals is advocacy around advocacy and reviews. The expectation is that Disability HIV and AIDS Trust partnership help Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS in sign language. To ensure sustainability of the partnerships Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS expect communication and joint planning in areas of disability and HIV/AIDS.

Information and Networking

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS network with Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organisations, Botswana Network Peoples With AIDS, ForumSyd, United Nations Development Programmes, National AIDS Coordinating Agency. On issues of disability and AIDS the right actors to be involved are disability organisations, NACA, United Nations AIDS agency, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and AIDS Service Organisations.

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS collects data for advocacy. The organisation shares data with partners and stakeholders' by disseminating messages, newsletters, publications and information is shared internally by regular meetings, email briefs and memos.

General comments

Bonela is anxiously waiting to see the outcome of the mapping exercise. They hope to see the expected partnership with the Disability HIV and AIDS Trust fruitful.

Note

Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and AIDS Programmes officer Nthabiseng Nkwe provided the information on 1 April 2009 during mapping exercise visit. Robert Sinyinza and Shirley Keaogile conducted the mapping exercise.