

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

NATIONAL STIGMA FRAMEWORK

Introduction

HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination have been identified as a major obstacle in combating HIV/AIDS. Efforts to improve prevention care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHAs) have been impacted on negatively by HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination. The lack of concepts and theoretical tools for measuring and understanding stigma has exacerbated the situation. This is a summary of the development of the National Stigma framework and Sector plans.

From 2003 progress was made in the development and testing of theory as well as stigma reduction interventions. This process consisted of three components: a baseline study in each setting, followed by the development and implementation of a stigma-mitigation capacity building interventions. And a follow-up study was conducted. This was done through careful analysis and strategic partnerships with PLHAs and others in the workplace setting and in a faith-based organization (FBO). In 2005, emphasis and a lot of effort was put on developing and refining a Stigma Resource Tool -- a resource document for trainers, opinion leaders, PLHAs, community members and anyone interested in finding out more about HIV/AIDS stigma and how to challenge and address it. In the same year 2005, The National Department of Health National Chief Directorate: HIV, AIDS and TB in collaboration with the Centre for the Study of AIDS University of Pretoria and The POLICY Project (now Health Policy Initiative) under USAID brought together key partners nationally, these included researchers in both universities and research institutions, government, NGOs, policy makers and programme planners, to harmonise and build on existing efforts to mitigate HIV related stigma as a first step towards developing a national stigma mitigation. Key objectives of the first Indaba were mainly to highlight the importance of addressing HIV and AIDS related stigma across sectors, to come up with a national framework and plan of action for stigma mitigation, to promote networking among stakeholders involved in stigma irrigation programmes and develop a data base of.

A second consultative meeting (stigma indaba), was held in 2006. Out of the second indaba, a technical team was set up to further refine the Stigma framework and sector plans. The technical team meetings were hosted by the National Department of Health National Chief Directorate: HIV, AIDS and TB.

Two key questions from the second meeting, which would need to be taken forward and remain relevant in the present planning, were:

Who will drive the process of implementing the National Stigma Framework and Plans and
Who will fund the Stigma framework and Sector plans