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Feed the Minds' Approach to HIV/AIDS

Feed the Minds recognises the importance of addressing the challenges of HIV/AIDS in its work with partners overseas.

We support a **holistic, inclusive and compassionate** approach to HIV/AIDS which is founded on **accurate and current information** and which recognises the need for **practical and realistic solutions**.

We recognise the value of different approaches to HIV/AIDS in different communities, with different age groups, lifestyles and livelihoods. We favour approaches which have been developed in response to the local context and which

- tackle discrimination, stigma and isolation of PLWHAs
- take a whole community approach, rather than focusing only on prevention or those who are HIV positive
- are based on ensuring dissemination of accurate, current information
- embrace the need for support for those affected directly and indirectly
- actively engage PLWHAs in all aspects of the project design, implementation and evaluation

Feed the Minds finds the ABC framework to working with HIV/AIDS (Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condom use) somewhat limiting and does not support the highly judgemental ways in which it is sometimes used, where A and B are portrayed as more morally sound and responsible than C. There can be a tendency for the ABC framework to limit the discussion to sexual activity and prevention of transmission, ignoring other important aspects of the HIV/AIDS debate.

FTM feels that the **SAVE** framework is more in line with our values and mission.

S – Safe Practices

Safe practices mean that individuals, families, communities and organisations are encouraged to adopt practices which reduce the chances of infection and appropriate in their particular situation. These will be different for different people.

For example

- for a pregnant woman who is HIV positive it will mean making sure she reduces the risk of mother-to-child transmission
- for a drug-user it might mean not sharing needles, as a first step
- for a hospital surgeon operating on a wide range of patients it might mean putting those with contagious diseases at the end of the operation list and taking extra precautions to avoid cross contamination or infection of the medical staff
- for children at school it might mean promoting abstinence and delaying the onset of sexual activity, and where appropriate, condom use

A – Accessing appropriate interventions (drug and non-drug)

Accessing appropriate interventions requires that organisations are fully informed with up-to-date information on the ways in which those affected with HIV/AIDS can increase their quality of life and actively encourage people to make use of these services. This will include access to Anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs), clinics to support drug users to address their addiction, access to improved nutrition and rapid referral to health services for HIV positive people who are also infected with TB. It will also mean actively encouraging families not to reject family members who are HIV positive but to provide ongoing care and support.

V – Verification

Verification encourages all at risk, however small, to access the testing facilities available. It also encourages organisations not to attach stigma to the process of testing, but to see it as a responsible action.

E – Education

Education recognises the importance of accurate information on a whole range of issues relating to HIV/AIDS and also opportunities to discuss and engage with these as part of the process of individuals, families and communities making informed decisions.

Conclusion

FTM will only support HIV/AIDS projects which are seen as practical and realistic and which demonstrate a holistic, inclusive and compassionate approach based on current and accurate information.

Preference will be given to those projects in line with the SAVE framework.

*PLWHAs - People Living With HIV/AIDS

This includes family members and the wider community.

education
makes a world of
difference