



HOUSING IS A HEALTH ISSUE!



HIV/AIDS IS A HOUSING ISSUE, especially among women and children who constitute the majority of the world's 1.2 billion slum dwellers. Families coping with HIV/AIDS are not able to contribute to housing because of lost income and medical expenditures. Governments are unwilling or unable to provide housing or sufficient social subsidies to people living with HIV/AIDS. Often children have to drop out of school to care for sick parents. When parents die children end up living with grandparents who are often not able to care properly for them. Too many children end up living on city streets.



Without proper water and sanitation, the risks of opportunistic infection are greatly increased. People who are homeless and living in great poverty do not receive proper nourishment, are more susceptible to infections and much likelier to experience a speedy decline into AIDS related illnesses. In Africa, there are few housing support services in general and almost none for the sick.

Many Aboriginal communities in Canada are faced with similar struggles as they deal with some of the highest HIV/ AIDS infection and poverty rates in the country. Aboriginal and social housing groups are confronted with

long wait lists for affordable housing and HIV/AIDS support services.

There is an increasing recognition and understanding of the impacts of HIV/AIDS on housing and human settlements. Cooperative and non-profit housing groups are developing innovative responses to address the need for good housing as well as and basic services.

For the past five years Rooftops Canada and its partners in Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Cameroon, have been developing programs and working on strategies to respond to the AIDS crisis in these countries. This approach involves both working with local NGO's and municipal authorities to develop and implement HIV/AIDS programs and consolidating Board, Agency and Staff understanding, commitment and leadership. We attempt to build a better understanding of the issue by linking Canadian organizations with overseas partners through technical assistance, networks, exchange and study visits.



Efforts focus on finding ways to protect and ensure the tenure rights of surviving family members and orphans who cannot afford loan payments or are at a disadvantage because of traditional inheritance practices. Other goals include, responding to the loss of leadership in cooperatives and community housing based movements, and working with coalitions to secure people's rights to housing and health care.

We aim to develop and foster on-going networking between groups working on these issues. An example of our efforts is our recent participation in the third World Urban Forum, Vancouver, 2006.

Adequate Housing Sustains Health!

HOUSING IS A HEALTH ISSUE!

Rooftops Canada, its partners, representatives of Aboriginal health and housing organizations, social housing providers, and others, participated in both a pre-WUF Workshop and a Networking Session during the WUF which looked at the issue of Housing and HIV/AIDS. These events aimed to get participants together to share their experiences working with HIV/AIDS and housing, facilitate action plans and to build an international network of housing organizations responding to HIV/AIDS.

Overseas partners exchanged strategies and ideas with Canadian housing and HIV/AIDS service organizations such as Wings Housing Society, Lu'ma Native Housing, Healing Our Spirit, Maclaren Housing Society and Dr Peter Center.

The Networking Session brought together over 60 people from 15 countries. Using training material developed in South Africa, the sessions helped participants examine the impact of HIV/AIDS on housing groups, and draw on their experience to suggest how housing organizations can respond. Participants in the Networking session expressed their desire to work with UN Habitat both to acknowledge the direct link between HIV/AIDS and housing, and to find suitable and effective responses.



Some of our partners work and response to HIV/AIDS and housing is described below.

COALITION DE ORGANISATIONS NON GOUVERNEMENTALES ET ORGANISATIONS COMMUNITAIRE DE BASE DU CAMEROUN OEUVRANT DANS LE DOMAINE DES ETABLISSEMENTS HUMAINS (CONGEH), Yaounde, Cameroon

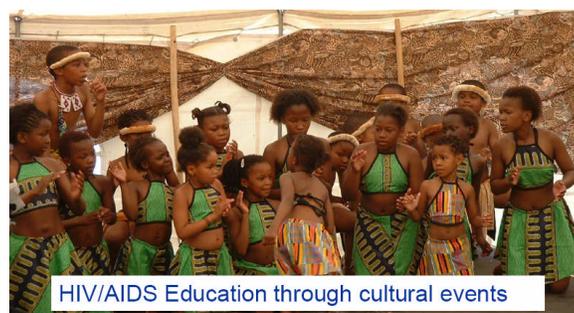
CONGEH is a coalition of NGO's and CBO's, committed to gender equality. CONGEH's focus is on Gender, HIV/AIDS and Habitat (GSH), as women are the group most at risk of infection. CONGEH's approach considers the role of women in improving habitat in the context of HIV/AIDS which include, the training of primary actors, the production of educational materials, awareness raising, sensitization of local populations, and advocacy to local authorities and government. The organization also has a micro finance project to respond to local living conditions.

For more information: human_aid_action@yahoo.fr ; www.congeh.kabissa.org/preseng.html

JOHANNESBURG HOUSING COMPANY (JHC), Johannesburg, South Africa

JHC focuses on rental accommodation to regenerate the inner city, serving low to middle income groups. The company's HIV/AIDS Policy and Aids Charter calls for no discrimination, maintenance of confidentiality and provision of education for tenants. JHC is training volunteer tenant counsellors and promotes education and awareness through cultural and sporting events. The company has also created a tenant hardship cover which assists families with rent, has installed "condom cans" in housing communities and continues to distribute educational material.

For more information: info@jhc.co.za; www.jhc.co.za



Adequate Housing Sustains Health!

HOUSING IS A HEALTH ISSUE!

HOUSING PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE (HPZ), Harare, Zimbabwe

HPZ is committed to improving human settlement conditions for Zimbabweans. This includes addressing HIV/AIDS issues as they relate to housing and particularly displacement through eviction. Through a multi faceted housing intervention program, HPZ mainstreams HIV/AIDS in key activities such as, advocacy, information and education, psycho-social support, enhancing food security, livelihood, and capacity building programs.

For more information: tariro@housingpeople.org.zw; hpz@mweb.co.zw

THE SOCIAL HOUSING COMPANY (SOHCO), Durban, South Africa

SOHCO is a non-profit housing company which aims to provide quality and affordable housing with a mix of instalment sale, and rental options. SOHCO integrates HIV/AIDS programs into its projects with the understanding that improving social stability will improve its business and help ensure financial stability. As part of its immediate plan, the company is providing condoms and gloves on site, and ensuring it has next-of-kin information. The company is also working towards establishing pre-schools in housing projects, providing after care and homework clubs, facilitating HIV/AIDS awareness activities, creating recreational activities and more.

For more information: martin@sohco.co.za, <http://www.sohco.co.za>



WAT HUMAN SETTLEMENT TRUST (WAT), Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

WAT's vision is to promote adequate, affordable shelter for low income earners, and improved human settlements. WAT's key responses to HIV/AIDS include organising workshops for target groups, creating awareness around the spread and prevention of HIV, addressing stigmatisation, networking and organising a campaign on inheritance rights. WAT also supported a community based housing cooperative to produce a video to raise HIV/AIDS awareness.

For more information: wat@raha.com; www.wat.kabissa.org

PLANACT, Braamfontein, South Africa

Planact, an NGO, works primarily with informal settlements around Johannesburg that have been dramatically affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Planact's goals around HIV/AIDS in these communities are education, training in home based care, and creating sustainable projects- such as food gardens which provide nutritional support to HIV/AIDS infected persons as well as the unemployed or pensioners who work in the gardens.

For more information: shumani@planact.co.za; www.planact.org.za

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE HOUSING UNION (NACHU), Nairobi, Kenya

NACHU is a national umbrella organisation for housing cooperatives in Kenya with a membership of over 200,000 people. In 2003, NACHU began its HIV/AIDS intervention program with training of trainers in an attempt to sensitize the Board and staff members of cooperatives. NACHU's program is geared towards community based approaches and its methodology includes the incorporation of games, the idea that information is power and training in the use of condoms.

For more information: nachu@nachu.or.ke; www.nachu.or.ke



Adequate Housing Sustains Health!

HOUSING IS A HEALTH ISSUE!

MAZINGIRA INSTITUTE/SETTLEMENTS INFORMATION NETWORK AFRICA (SINA), Nairobi, Kenya

SINA is a regional network which focuses on information and knowledge sharing as well as providing educational and training materials. SINA produces issue based, easy to read news letters with particular efforts to keep HIV/AIDS on the housing agenda. Many of SINA's training materials are earmarked specifically for youth.

For more information: mazinst@mitsuminet.com; <http://www.mazinst.org>

In Canada some cooperatives dedicate units for people living with HIV/AIDS and network with available support services. Several housing organisations offer a range of options including transitional or continuous housing along with support services. Examples of this include: Wings Housing Society which manages a unique Portable Subsidy Program specifically geared towards people living with HIV/AIDS. The Dr. Peter Centre provides a day health care program as well as a 24-hour care residence for people infected with HIV/AIDS. Lu'ma Native Housing Society provides emergency housing for Aboriginal people who come to Vancouver from outlying areas to receive medical treatment for AIDS.

HOUSING AND HIV/AIDS RESOURCE MATERIAL

Rooftops Canada has gathered a range of resource material on housing and HIV/AIDS including:

- CD of training and resource material on HIV/AIDS and housing
- Detailed presentations on African and Canadian Housing Groups' work on this issue
- Report of the World Urban Forum Networking Event - Overcoming Barriers: Housing and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa and Aboriginal Communities in Africa, June 2006
- Report of pre-WUF Workshop - Housing and HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, Aboriginal Communities and Social Housing in Canada, June 2006-08-10

Rooftops Canada welcomes the opportunity to network with other groups, sharing our interests and concerns.

For more information about Rooftops Canada and its work on this issue please contact:

Rooftops Canada
720 Spadina Road, Suite 313
Toronto, ON M5S 2T9
Canada
info@rooftops.ca
www.rooftops.ca

Rooftops Canada is a member of the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development. (ICAD)
www.icad-cisd.com

Financial support for Rooftops Canada programs is provided in part by the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

Adequate Housing Sustains Health!