



# YouthNet



## It Takes a Community: A Faith-based Program in Namibia

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YouthNet

# Rationale for Faith-based Program



- Conducted country assessment (2002)
- Held consultation meeting with NGOs, CBOs, and FBOs
- Established strategy for strengthening churches' response to HIV prevention for youth

All led to work with:



- **Changes of Life Styles (COLS) CFLE program**
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church In Namibia (ELCIN)



# How the CFLE Program Gained Community Support

- Conducted participatory assessment with youth and adults
- Shared findings and held consultative meetings
- Worked with 19 pilot churches and one FBO to determine program strategies and activities





# About the Participatory Assessment...

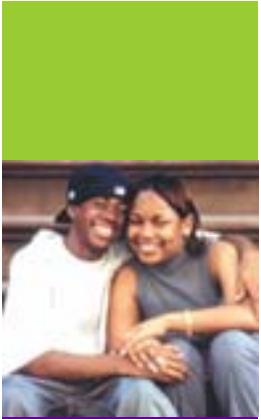
- Used to determine the perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of youth, parents, and religious leaders on RH and HIV/AIDS
- Trained 59 youth; reached 600 youth
- Disseminated findings to community stakeholders, NGOs, FBOs, youth, parents, etc.
- Provided the basis for curriculum content and program activities

# Findings from PLA



- Youth spend a lot of time in church and Sunday school
- Church leaders seldom talk with youth about RH and HIV/AIDS issues
- Adults and youth thought it would be appropriate for pastors and Sunday school teachers to reach young people with RH and HIV/AIDS messages





# Complimentary Community-based Activities

- Panel discussions
- Church and public forums
- Youth camps
- School-based activities
- Parent-youth weekend activities
- Short courses for youth and parents on RH, VCT, ART, and PMTCT
- Information, education, and communication materials



# Results of Activities



- Created awareness about youth RH and HIV needs among church leaders, including parents
- Increased active participation of churches – including church members, parents, and youth



# Results of COLS' CFLE Program

- 30 master trainers received specialized TOT and RH and HIV/AIDS training
- Master trainers trained 128 family life educators
- More than 3,000 youth aged 8-16 years were reached
- Nearly 4,000 parents reached through public and church forums and weekend church activities
- 19 churches and one FBO continue to implement the CFLE program even after project has ended





## 2005 Mid-term Findings

- More open about discussing sex, sexuality, abstinence, and drug abuse
- Increased application of life skills – communication and personal safety tactics
- Greater self-esteem and increased self confidence
- Enhanced ability to choose ‘better friends’
- Improved cooperation with family members and teachers
- Strengthened values – kindness, respect, honesty



# Lessons Learned (1)

- Community buy-in is more likely when a program works within existing structures at the community level
- The “learning process” cannot be rushed – communities must be empowered to lead the process

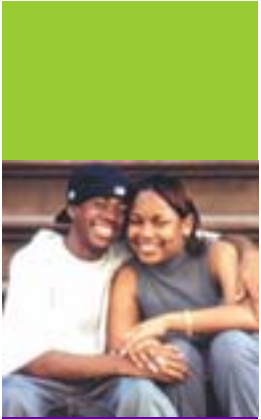


# Lessons Learned (2)



- Communities require opportunities to explore their own creativity in conducting program activities
- Supportive environments can be built by simultaneously reaching out to youth and adults
- Empowering communities to make decisions about when, where, and how a program will be implemented leads to greater ownership





## Lessons Learned (3)

- Coaching and mentoring youth and adults separately can lead to increased and more effective dialogues
- Continued capacity building is essential to sustain supportive environments

