

Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS

ABOUT THE CODE PROJECT

Please note that this document was last updated in June 2004

What the Code is for

The Draft *Code of Good Practice for NGOs responding to HIV/AIDS* provides guidance to the work of Supporting NGOs (see *Who is the Code for* below) and can be utilized in variety of different ways. NGOs may find the principles outlined in this Code of value in guiding their own work, as well as a useful statement of Supporting NGOs accountability that can strengthen the relationship between Supporting NGO and their NGO partners.

The principles set out in this Code can be used to guide:

- organizational planning
- the development, implementation and evaluation of programmes, including advocacy programmes designed to create and sustain a supportive legislative and policy environment for effective programming and that promote the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and affected communities
- advocacy efforts to ensure effective scaling up of HIV/AIDS programmes and
- allocation of resources based the principles the Code outlines.

The value of the Code is that it has the potential to improve equity and consistency of services and programmes by working to implement the good practice principles, the quality of services and programmes for PWHA and communities vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and the accountability of Supporting NGO's engaged in HIV/AIDS work. It can also express a shared vision among signatory NGOs about the principles and evidence base that guides our work.

Who is the Code for

It is envisaged that this Code can be used to support the work of NGOs undertaking HIV/AIDS work generally. However, given the diversity and complexity of the global pandemic and the wide variety of NGOs engaged in HIV/AIDS, this Code is focused on NGOs that provide technical, and/or financial and/or capacity development, advocacy. We refer to this target audience for the Code as 'Supporting NGOs'. The project is focussing on encouraging Supporting NGOs to become signatories to the Code. This approach does not preclude any NGOs from becoming signatories to the Code if they wish. (Also see *Future of the Code*).

Supporting NGOs that 'sign on' to the Code agree to be held accountable to the principles outlined in the Code and promote the utilization of the Code in their work with their NGO partners. Supporting NGOs may be international, regional and in country NGOs. Supporting NGOs may play different roles, some of these include:

- provision of HIV/AIDS services, programmes and advocacy initiatives in country
- provision of broader health, development, humanitarian assistance through services, programmes and advocacy initiatives that incorporate HIV/AIDS related work

- technical assistance, financial support, capacity development and advocacy in partnership with NGOs in country and
- financial support and operational assistance in establishing NGOs in country and provisions of technical assistance and capacity development to ensure sustainability.

It is not intended that signatory Supporting NGOs commit to delivery of the full range of activities outlined in the Code. Often Supporting NGOs assist other NGO to provide a range of programmes outlined in Chapter 4 of the Draft Code, so the Code includes good practice principles for programming, although Supporting NGOs may not provide these programmes directly. Some Supporting NGOs may also specialize in supporting NGOs to deliver specific types of services and programmes such as providing home care services or HIV prevention programmes. The comprehensive range of programmes outlined can also be used to guide advocacy efforts to ensure that the essential package of programmes and services are available where they are needed.

Project purpose

Through the development of this Code of Good Practice for NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS response this project aims to:

- outline, and build wider commitment to, the principles, practices and evidence base that underscores successful NGO HIV/AIDS work
- assist Supporting NGOs to improve the quality and cohesiveness of their work and their accountability to their NGO partners and beneficiary communities
- foster greater collaboration between the wide variety of Supporting NGOs now actively engaged in responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and
- reinvigorate the 'voice' of NGOs in the HIV/AIDS response by committing to a shared vision of good practice in our programming and advocacy agenda.

How the Code came about

New challenges

In last ten years there has been a considerable increase in the number and range of NGOs specialising in HIV/AIDS work. There has also been an increasing number of humanitarian and development NGOs taking on, or expanding their role in, HIV/AIDS work, as the impact of the pandemic deepens. This is likely to continue given the commitments set out in the *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, 2001* and the corresponding need to rapidly enlarge the scale of HIV/AIDS activities. This is presenting new challenges, particularly in ensuring that the lessons learnt over the last 20 years are used to guide the allocation of resources and the scaling up of HIV/AIDS programmes.

The proliferation of HIV/AIDS NGOs has, at times, occurred at the expense of accountability and quality programming. NGOs are often under resourced, and lack the technical skills or experience in applying the most effective methods for good programming, monitoring and evaluating their activities and supporting organizational development. There is also a sense that the changing nature of NGO involvement in HIV/AIDS and changes in the global funding environment, have led to fragmentation of the NGO 'voice' in the HIV/AIDS response.

New responses

With these challenges in mind, NGOs from around the world convened a Civil Society Consultation meeting in November 2002. A strong consensus emerged about the need to harness the growing global commitment to HIV/AIDS by supporting and strengthening the role of NGOs in the HIV/AIDS response. Initiatives such as the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* and the

Sphere Project's *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief* were considered valuable models for how this could be achieved. Drawing on the experiences of this work, NGOs present at this meeting agreed to develop a voluntary Code of Practice for NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS response. A steering committee of NGOs interested in supporting the initiative was formed.

Project governance and management

A Steering Committee comprised of members representing of twelve NGOs is responsible for the governance of the project. The Steering Committee is:

- ACTION AID
- CARE USA
- Global Health Council
- GNP+
- Grupo Pela Vidda
- Hong Kong AIDS Foundation
- ICASO
- Ivoirian Network of PLWHA
- International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies
- International Harm Reduction Association
- International HIV/AIDS Alliance
- World Council of Churches

The Project is hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies Ms Julia Cabassi is the Project Manager and commenced in the position October 2003. The Project Manager's role to date has included overall project design and implementation, research and writing of Draft Code, facilitating the Steering Committee's governance role and designing the consultation process.

How the Project is being resourced

To date Steering Committee organizations have contributed \$200,000 USD to fund the project from their own resources and provided in kind support to the Project. The Project employs one person, the Project Manager.

The Committee is committed to the independence of the process, by ensuring the development of a Code by NGOs for NGOs. Nonetheless, the Committee also recognizes that adequate resources are needed to support an effective consultation process, to ensure the necessary capacity to analyse all the inputs on the Draft Code and revise the Code for launch on World AIDS Day 2004. Further funding will be sought in coming months to support the Project to the end of 2004, including costs associated with editing, designing, printing and distributing the Code in five languages – English, Spanish, French, Russian and Mandarin. Also see separate document - *About the consultation process* - available on www.ifrc.org regarding translations of the Draft Code.

What the Code covers

The Draft Code:

- outline the unique and essential role of NGOs in the HIV/AIDS response
- provides *guiding principles* and *operational principles*
- outlines *good practice principles* for HIV/AIDS services, programmes and advocacy work in key areas of activity.

Guiding Principles

The *Guiding principles* include the centrality of human rights principles and a rights-based approach and public health principles and evidence based approaches to HIV/AIDS work.

Operational principles

The *Operational principles* outline the principles that need to underscore *how* NGOs go about their work. For example, the Draft Code enshrines explicitly and with specificity, the central role of people living with HIV/AIDS and affected communities at all levels in the work of NGOs. The *Operational principles* provide good practice in areas such as:

- programme planning, implementation and evaluation
- the need to address gender inequities and take account of particular needs of young people, for example
- good governance and organizational management.

Programming Principles

The Draft Code provides *Good Practice Principles* for services, programmes and advocacy in key areas of activity:

- prevention
- treatment, care and support
- stigma and discrimination
- impact mitigation

These *Good Practice Principles* serve a range of purposes, such as providing guidance on:

- the principles and evidence base for specific kinds of services or programmes, for example for specific treatment care and support services and programmes such as voluntary counselling and testing, treatment support, treatments advocacy
- the complement of service and programmes required to comprehensively address stigma and discrimination, for example
- improving integration HIV/AIDS work into broader human rights, health and development work and
- preserving and strengthening NGO values and capacity, within the scaling up of the response.

Participating in consultations on the Draft Code

See separate document - *About the consultation process* - available on www.ifrc.org

Key milestones

Given the level of interest the Code has generated in recent months, the Steering Committee has decided to extend the time frame for the project to ensure sufficient time for consultations and for analysis of the inputs in order to revise the Draft Code. The Key Milestones below have been amended accordingly.

Phase 1: November – February

- Project plan and consultation strategy approved
- Secure funding and in kind support in line with project plan
- Develop Draft Code
- Draft Code approved by Steering Committee ready for consultation phase
- Agree key Supporting NGO networks, partner NGOs and NGO networks to target for consultation purposes and opportunities that could be utilized for consultation purposes

- Steering Committee organizations commit to conducting Supporting NGO, partner NGO, NGO networks consultations and analysis of and report on consultations inputs
- Establish centralized analysis and collation of email inputs
- Raise profile of project and opportunities for input through International Home and Community Care Conference, Health and Development Network postings, Federation and links with Steering Committee organizations websites

Phase 2: March – May

- Preparation to conduct Supporting NGO, partner NGOs, key networks of NGOs consultations
- Draft Code available on Federation website
- Explore resources to support translation of Draft Code and analysis of inputs on Draft Code in to Spanish, French, Russian and Mandarin, and if feasible translate and provide email address for inputs in these languages
- Steering Committee Organization convene targeted face to face and email consultation with Supporting NGO, partner NGO, key NGO networks consultations
- Engage Supporting NGO, partner NGO, key NGO networks in commenting on Draft Code to centralized email address, which will be available for inputs through to Friday 20th August 2004
- Reports from Steering Committee organization conducting consultations and email input provided to Project Manager by end May
- Explore options for implementation of the Code
- Promote Supporting NGOs signing on to the Code during consultation phase

Phase 3: June – July

- Steering Committee to consider and determine approach to implementation of the Code
- Position on implementation and what 'signing on' will mean available on Federation's website prior to Bangkok International AIDS Conference (IAC)
- Analysis of Steering Committee consultation reports to inform the planning for a symposium on the Draft Code at the Bangkok IAC in July 2004
- Prepare an document symposium at Bangkok IAC and utilize the conference as an opportunity to build wide support for and 'sign on' to the Code
- On going opportunities to contribute views on the Draft Code via centralized email

Phase 4: August – December

- Comments by email in English provided by Friday 20th August 2004 (English)
- Comments by email in English provided by Friday 6th August 2004 (Russian, French & Spanish)
- Analysis of inputs and revise Draft Code
- Steering Committee agree final Code, dissemination strategy and consider future of the project – 30th September – 1st October
- Final text of Code available on Federation's website – week of 11th October
- NGOs wanting to 'sign on' to submit pro forma letter by 29th October
- 1st edition of the Code edited, designed and printed
- Launch – World AIDS Day
- Implement dissemination strategy and plan for project stage two.

Implementation of the Code and future of the Project

See separate document: *What will 'signing on' to the Code mean for NGOs?*

Contact

Please note that the Project Manager is the only employee of the Project. Julia will be involved in consultations extensively over the March – August 2004 period and will be responsible for analysis of inputs and revising the Draft Code thereafter.

We ask that you please ensure that comments on the Draft Code are directed to the centralized email address – NGOHIV.code@ifrc.org Please also see the separate document - *About the consultation process* - available on www.ifrc.org

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