Called to Care

No. 2

Making it Happen

A guide to help your congregation do HIV/AIDS work

by Lucy Y. Steinitz

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Biblical passages quoted are from *The African Bible*, St Paul Communications/Daughters of St Paul (1999), and the *Good News Bible*, Bible Society (1976).

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Contents

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Many of the components of this guide can be found in other manuals on organisational development, but here they are adapted specifically for church congregations and other small, community-based groups. For assistance in pre-testing the contents of this manual I am particularly indebted to:

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Preface
About the CALLED TO CARE toolkit

In many countries throughout the world, churches and individual Christians are responding to Christ's call to 'love your neighbour as yourself' by undertaking community-based activities to address the massive challenges of HIV and AIDS.

In sub-Saharan Africa, churches have often been in the forefront of efforts to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS. They are demonstrating, in many practical ways, that they feel 'called to care' for those who are infected or affected by the HIV epidemic. They have, for example, pioneered ways of making basic health care available to people living with HIV, and of providing children orphaned by AIDS with education, social support and health care.

Churches have been much less effective, however, in addressing problems such as HIV prevention and HIV-related stigma, shame and discrimination, and cultural and gender issues associated with high-risk sexual behaviour. Denial of the reality of HIV and AIDS within church communities is also widespread. Moreover, although sex is the main means of HIV transmission in most countries, it is rarely discussed in church circles in an open, non-judgemental way.

Yet churches and other faith-based organisations have enormous potential for empowering individuals and communities with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and strategies they need to deal with issues related to sex, gender and HIV/AIDS. Moreover, growing numbers of church leaders have become aware of the need for a much more concerted effort to address the issues raised by the HIV epidemic in a broader, more comprehensive and open manner.

In order to support this effort, the Strategies for Hope Trust is developing the *Called to Care* toolkit. This consists of a set of practical, action-oriented booklets and guides on issues related to HIV/AIDS for church leaders (both clergy and lay people), especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The *Called to Care* materials are designed to enable pastors, priests, religious sisters and brothers, lay church leaders, and their congregations and communities to:

❖ Reflect on and understand the spiritual, theological, ethical, health, social and practical implications of the HIV epidemic and the Christian call to respond with compassion.

❖ Overcome the stigma, silence, discrimination, denial, fear and inertia that inhibit church and community action to address HIV/AIDS-related issues more effectively.

❖ Guide their congregations and communities through a process of learning and change, leading to practical, church-based actions to help individuals, families and communities reduce the spread of HIV and mitigate the impact of the HIV epidemic.

The *Called to Care* toolkit will consist of several printed materials of various shapes and sizes, for use with church groups and communities at different levels of awareness and experience in relation to the HIV epidemic. This book, No. 2 in the toolkit, is a guide to help church congregations and groups plan and carry out HIV/AIDS-related activities.

Other *Called to Care* 'tools' will be developed in the course of the period 2005-2008. These will be on topics such as stigma and discrimination, pastoral care of people living with HIV/AIDS, HIV prevention strategies, living positively with HIV/AIDS, and working with young people on HIV prevention.

The *Called to Care* project is being implemented through a process of international, ecumenical collaboration between churches, faith-based organisations, international church organisations and networks, publishers, distributors and other partners.

We invite you to participate in *Called to Care*, not only by using the contents of the toolkit in your congregation or community, but also by writing to us about your experiences, which we would be pleased to post on the Strategies for Hope website: www. stratshope.org.

Yours in faith and solidarity,

Glen Williams
Series Editor
Strategies for Hope Trust

Introduction

God may inspire our beliefs and our actions, but we must take personal responsibility for whatever we do – as individuals and collectively. As a church congregation or community, we may feel 'called to care' about people infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS. But what can we do to assist and support such people? How can we address the broader issue of preventing the further spread of HIV? And how can we help our congregations and communities to deal with the sensitive and divisive issues of stigma, shame, discrimination and denial associated with HIV/AIDS? If you are a church leader, you know that many people will expect you to have answers to these questions.

This guide is designed to help you and your congregation address these issues. Step by step, we will go through various processes that will enable you to develop and implement a project that addresses some of the challenges of HIV/AIDS. As we do this, you will realise that not all the processes described here will apply to your congregation or church group. You should therefore pick and choose whatever feels relevant and helpful to you and your congregation or church group at the present time.

Starting a project is a lot like planting...

✿ **First you have to decide where to do the planting, so you need to study the soil and environmental conditions.**

✿ **Then you have to decide what you want to grow. Is it a tree? Some flowers? A food crop? The answer will depend on what your needs are, as well as on the type of soil you have.**

✿ **Once you have planted, however, you cannot stop working.**

✿ **Every seed must be nurtured, and every plant must be cared for. This is an ongoing process, and involves regular watering, applying fertilisers and digging out the weeds. Only then, can you begin to see the fruits of your labour.**

One of the most important steps for everyone who wants to start a community-based activity is to spend time PLANNING! This is where we shall begin.

Section 1

Spend time planning

1.1 Getting started

Much can be achieved by willing, enthusiastic, dedicated volunteers who have the time and energy to devote to activities that serve their communities. But if these activities are not properly discussed and thought-out in advance, they are likely to run into difficulties. Even with the best of intentions, the very people they are meant to serve might reject these activities; community leaders might also oppose them; or they might run out of money. No doubt all of us have had experiences of this kind of short-term thinking, which ends up wasting our precious time and resources.

All projects and organisations should therefore go through continuous cycles of planning, implementation and review (see The Project Cycle diagram below).

This can occur separately for each project, or for the organisation as a whole. In the case of a broader, multi-sectoral or organisational process, this is usually called **strategic planning** (see Box 1a, p. 8).

While this guide focuses primarily on planning and implementing a single project, the same principles can also be applied to strategic planning for your organisation as a whole.

To decide on a focus for your project, you should first gather together key stakeholders in order to carry out a situation analysis. 'Key stakeholders' are those people in and around your church who are important to consult in

REVIEW THE PROJECT AND SUGGEST IMPROVEMENTS

ANALYSE YOUR SITUATION AND PLAN YOUR PROJECT

IMPLEMENT YOUR PROJECT

The Project Cycle
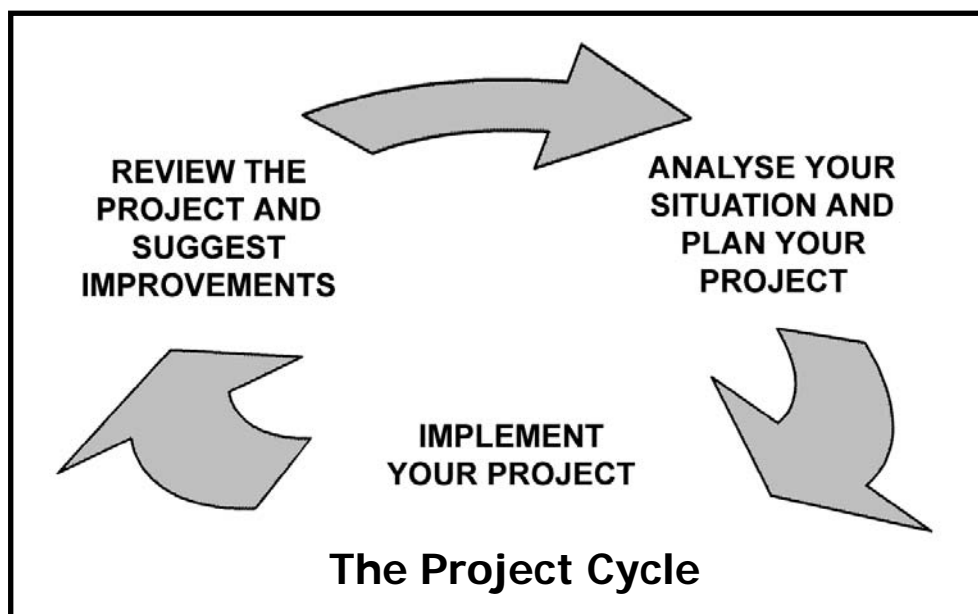
Box 1a: Strategic Planning

Sometimes you hear people talk about an organisational 'vision', 'mission' and 'values'. These terms refer to the way an organisation views itself and how it wants to develop in the future. In particular:

☆ **Vision** - the hope of what your organisation will be like in the future

☆ **Mission** - your organisation's values or guiding principles, and distinctiveness. What makes you special or different from other organisations?

☆ **Strategy** - the way you try to live by your mission, to reach your vision.

Another way to understand this is through the following example. Have you ever tried to balance a broomstick on one finger? If not, you should try. You will realise that it is much easier to keep good balance if you look at the tip of the stick and not at your finger. In other words, you always need to look at the top of things and have vision in life. In this example, the vision is the tip of the stick, the broomstick is your mission, and your strategy is to look up and not down.

Achieving an organisational understanding of these issues is generally done through a strategic planning process. This usually takes place over several days, weeks, or even months.

If your organisation already has a clear sense of identity, purpose and direction, it may not be necessary for you to undertake a strategic planning exercise. If this is not the case, however, you might find it useful to do some strategic planning before embarking on a new initiative, such as an HIV/AIDS project.

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your planning process. They could include, for example, office bearers in the church, elders, youth leaders, or important officials in your community who also happen to be church members.

Most churches and other faith-based organisations prefer to undertake this planning process by involving all key stakeholders in a series of meetings or workshops. In Section 5, question A, of this guide you will find suggestions for the sort of person who would be well suited to facilitating these meetings or workshops.

The various steps you will take in your planning process will help you understand the problems your community is facing, and what your church can do to make a difference. This begins with a **situation analysis**, which considers issues OUTSIDE your church (i.e.

within your community), as well as issues INSIDE your church (i.e. in terms of how you operate). Later on, you may also need to clarify your values, for example, to make it clear that anything you do should be consistent with Christian teaching, as interpreted by your church or denomination. Thus, a situation analysis requires you to undertake the following steps:

First, an **external assessment**, to determine what NEEDS to be done;

Second, an **internal assessment**, to determine what CAN be done; and

Third, a **decision-making process**, based on the above and taking into account your church's values and the local culture, to determine what you PLAN to do.

1.2 How to conduct an External Assessment

Depending on how much information you already have about the impact of HIV/AIDS in your community, and the amount of new information you think you need, you can put a lot of effort into an external analysis, or just a small amount of effort. Here are two types of surveys which you may want to undertake:

♦ A house-to-house survey in the community, whereby interviewers ask a number of local residents the same set of pre-determined questions about various unmet needs in the community. You should also ask them what they think the church should do to address these needs. Depending on your community, you may want to ask a small number of residents (for example 30), or a much larger number (say, 200 or more), or something in between. The people you ask to respond to these questions are called 'respondents'.

♦ Key Informants: 'Key Informants' are people whose opinion you value because of the specific role they play in the community. You can ask them the same kind of questions as you would in your house-to-house survey. The key informants you should include are local community leaders, such as traditional headmen, church leaders from other denominations, and representatives from local NGOs and the government.

Before going out to conduct your interviews, you will need to prepare a list of questions (see Box 1b) which will help you collect information about how HIV/AIDS affects your community. You will also need a notebook and a pen.

You might also want to collect information in two other ways, namely:

♦ Statistical information on the impact of HIV and AIDS in your area, which you can get from your government's National AIDS Control Programme, local NGOs, or United Nations agencies. Two common measures are the HIV-prevalence rate and number of orphans who live in your neighbourhood,

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Box 1b: A sample External Assessment Survey

The following interview questions may be used to ask people what they see as the biggest unmet needs in the community, and what might be done to improve the situation. You can also change the questions or add new ones to fit your environment:

1. What do you see as the biggest problem facing this community?

2. What do you think is the main cause of this problem?

3. As you see it, what effect has this problem had on the community?

4. Specifically, how does this problem affect you and your family?

5. To what extent, if any, do you think HIV and AIDS make this problem worse?

6. What do you think the local church can do to improve this situation?

7. Can you make some suggestions about how this improvement should be done?

8. What more could you - personally - do to help your community deal with the problems caused by HIV and AIDS?

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village, town, region or country. (The HIV-prevalence rate means the percentage of adults – usually between the ages of 15 and 49 – who are HIV-positive. Many countries estimate this figure on the basis of an anonymous sampling of pregnant women either yearly or every second year.) Additional statistical information can be found on the Internet – for some useful Internet sites, please see Appendix 3.

♦ **Community Mapping** is a visual tool to help people assess the problems and resources in their community. It is an enjoyable group process, whereby people draw a map of their community and mark important features that will help them identify local resources, opportunities, threats and challenges. It does not matter how artistically or accurately the map is drawn. Rather, the idea is that, by drawing key institutions like the local school, the clinic, a bar and a market, discussion is triggered on some issue related to HIV and AIDS. Community mapping is a particularly good tool when you are trying to identify local resources – especially people and institutions – that can help with the implementation of a new project.

A Community Map
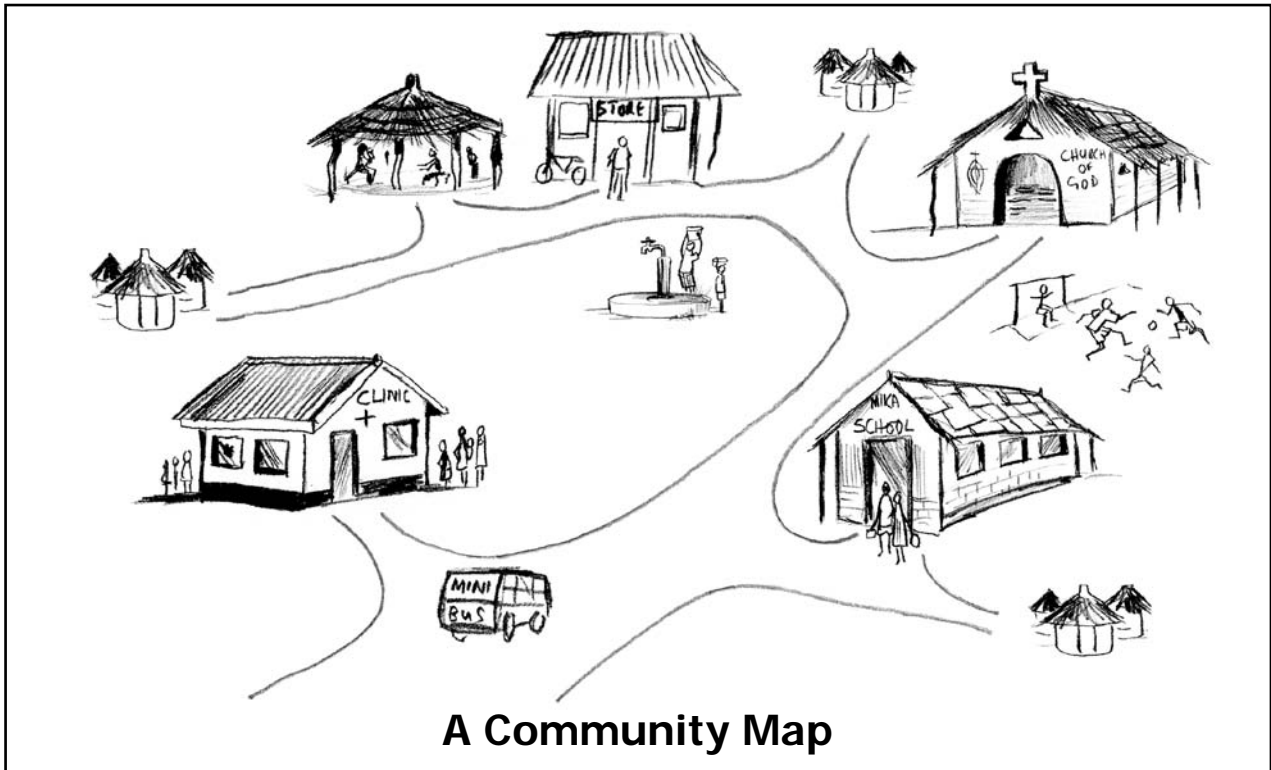
1.3 How to conduct an Internal Assessment

In an internal assessment, you are trying to assess the strengths and weaknesses within your church, as well as its resources and capabilities. By 'resources' we mean not only money, but also office space, transport, food and volunteers' time. By 'capabilities' we mean the know-how and experience of people involved in your church congregation or community.

Many church and community members believe that they are too poor to have anything to offer a new initiative such as an HIV/AIDS project. However, this is only rarely the case. Many churches have access to far greater resources and human capabilities than they themselves realise. In addition to funds, they can often draw upon 'in-kind' resources and capabilities, for which they do not have to pay (see box 1c).

The internal assessment is usually done as a group process, where you gather together those people in your church who know it

Box 1c: In-kind resources and skills

Here are some in-kind resources and capabilities to which your church congregation or group might have access:

☺ **PEOPLE:** The members of your congregation are worth their weight in gold! Some may have special skills, e.g. in financial management, nursing, counselling, or in facilitating meetings or training workshops. Others may have practical skills, such as being able to cook for large groups, to create and maintain a garden, or to organise youth camps.

☺ **SPACE:** The church itself or a member of the congregation may have land for a community garden, or office space. Meetings can be held (at no cost) in the church building itself.

☺ **PARTNER ORGANISA-TIONS:** Organisations such as local NGOs, international organisations and government bodies may be able to provide training, information materials, meeting places and financial support. Schools may be able to provide meeting places and willing volunteers. Local businesses (e.g. bakeries and supermarkets) could provide foodstuffs as well as financial support.

REMEMBER: Always start with local resources first - with what is already available in your community or neighbourhood.

well, and whose help you need in the planning process. Here are two group processes to consider undertaking:

◊ **Brainstorming** is an intensive, open-ended discussion to generate ideas or solve problems. All ideas are welcome. (The facilitator should be careful not to criticise any of the ideas, or get side-tracked by discussing the pros and cons of what someone has suggested.) A brainstorming session might start with the question: 'What are the best things about our church that motivate people to become members or participate regularly?' Later on you can ask something like, 'What are some of the problems that make people frustrated or prevent them from coming to church?' Still another follow-up question might be, 'Now that we know some of our strengths and weaknesses, what can we do to help our church grow stronger?'

When brainstorming, write down the answers people give on a board or a flipchart, so that everyone can see them.

Talk about which ideas are helpful. After some more discussion, decide on tasks for the next meeting.

◊ **A focus group** is a method through which a small group of people are invited to a meeting in order to give their input on one particular issue. The major difference from brainstorming is that you have to **decide ahead of time what the specific issue** is that you want to discuss. The people you choose to attend your focus group should have informed, useful things to say on the issue chosen. You might choose, for example, the issue 'How does our congregation deal with stigma against people with HIV and AIDS?'. You could invite church leaders, as well as people whom you know are infected or affected by HIV and are willing to talk openly about it. With a focus group, you should have a skilled facilitator, who makes sure that everyone involved has his or her fair say, and directs the flow of the discussion in order to come to some conclusion or key points of agreement.

1.4 What is a SWOT Analysis?

The most common way to conduct an organisational assessment is to undertake a 'SWOT' analysis. Here you look at both external and internal issues at the same time. 'SWOT' stands for:

<u>S</u> trengths
<u>W</u> eaknesses
<u>O</u> pportunities
<u>T</u> hreats

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
~	~
~	~
~	~
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
~	~
~	~
~	~

SWOT Chart No. 1

In a SWOT analysis, the discussion should remain focused on your own church congregation or group – not any other organisations or the wider community. One of the easiest ways to undertake a SWOT analysis is to ask your stakeholders to identify, first, the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation (which are internal), and then the opportunities and threats that they see (which are external).

To make sure that everyone's voice is heard, many facilitators like to ask the participants to answer these questions individually at first. The participants do this by writing

Box 1d: Tips on conducting a SWOT Analysis

☐ **If people are not familiar with how to do a SWOT analysis, remind them that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Rather, you are trying to solicit their perceptions and opinions.**

☐ **Suggest to participants that it could be useful to think**

of their local church as an organisation - not in terms of its beliefs but purely in terms of how it functions on a day-to-day basis.

☐ **To help participants feel more comfortable and open, make it clear that they should not write their**

names on their responses. The process of writing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats on small pieces of paper - and then sticking them on the wall - is done anonymously, so no-one knows who has written what.

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their responses on small pieces of paper or 'post-its', and then grouping these with the responses of other group participants on a large chart, a board or a piece of paper (see suggested SWOT Chart No. 1, p. 12).

To build momentum, you may ask participants to identify the Strengths and Weaknesses first, and then discuss these, before undergoing a similar process with the Opportunities and Threats.

Now, review what everyone has written for each box (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and see what patterns, agreements and areas of consensus emerge.

After you have had some discussion, you can make a second SWOT Chart, and then consider with the group how you might **develop** your strengths, **make use** of your opportunities, **improve** your weaknesses, and **control** the threats. Thus, you should redraw your SWOT chart, insert new headings (see SWOT Chart No. 2, right), and ask the participants to put their suggestions into the appropriate boxes.

How to analyse your results

Now ask the participants to explain how they would summarise the different SWOT

responses that have been placed on the wall or large chart. Several responses may be similar, which means that people think that those issues are the most important. As the discussion continues, what conclusions can you draw?

DEVELOP STRENGTHS	IMPROVE WEAKNESSES
~	~
~	~
~	~
MAKE USE OF OPPORTUNITIES	CONTROL THREATS
~	~
~	~
~	~

SWOT Chart No. 2

If analysis of your SWOT Chart No.1 shows exceptionally strong Strengths and Opportunities, then you are ready for growth, including a new project. If Strengths and Threats come out as the most dominant features, then you may want to apply some of your Strengths to deal with the Threats before embarking on any new initiatives.

A combination of prominent Weaknesses and Opportunities might suggest that your church should work in coalition with another organisation or church, rather than alone.

Lastly, if Weaknesses and Threats emerge as the most dominant features, then you may be advised to put aside a new project for the time being, or else to start something very small that will not further drain the resources of your church. Alternatively, you might decide to use all your resources to support a larger, well-established project run by another organisation or church group.

> 📖 **'To save one life is to save a whole world.'** *Talmud* **(Jewish Scriptural Commentaries)**

Section 2

Make your decisions

> 📖 'So then, as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without actions is dead.' – *James 2:26 (Good News Bible)*

2.1 Determine your focus

By this time you and your church might already have decided on the kind of project you want to do – or at least, where you want to focus your attention. Once you have agreed on your **focus, you will** find it useful to formulate a **goal** – that is, the long-term aim of your project.

If you have not yet agreed on the focus and **goal** of your project, now is the time to decide. You can choose from a huge number of possible issues and activities as the focus of your project, for example, orphan support, HIV prevention work with young people, income-generating activities or home-based care of people living with HIV/AIDS (Box 2a, p. 16).

When deciding on the focus of your project, involve as many key stakeholders as possible, and try to come to a **consensus**, or common agreement. Sometimes it is not easy to reach a consensus, so some additional steps are needed. If you have all the decision-makers in a room together, ask them to think back to everything they have discussed or learned about in your planning process so far. Then ask everyone to write down their own responses to the following questions:

1. What **group** within your church or community do you particularly want to reach? (For example: youth, orphans, people living with HIV, traditional leaders.)

2. On what **problem** or HIV-related issue do you think

your church or organisation should focus? (For example: prevention, care, advocacy.)

3. Based on this, what kind of **project** do you think is most feasible for your church or organisation right now? (Here is your chance to start getting specific, and identify priorities.)

4. Finally, what **goal** are you aiming to achieve through this project over a certain period of time? Is it to eliminate or reduce

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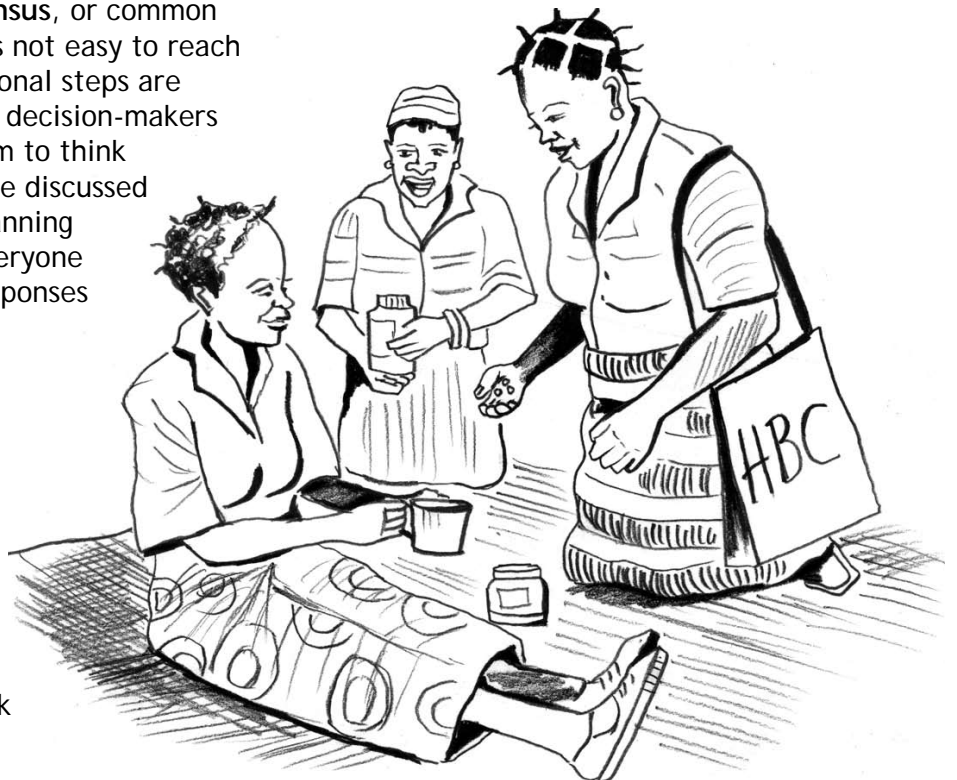
Box 2a: Projects that church congregations and groups can undertake

FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL

✝ **A home-visiting project, by home-based care volunteers**

✝ **A prayer and support group for people living with HIV and their family members**

✝ **Practical help, e.g. cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning the house.**

FOR ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN

✝ **A home-visiting project, by home-based care volunteers**

✝ **A food and clothing collection, by all church members**

✝ **An after-school or Saturday project with games, help with homework, and a bowl of cooked food.**

FOR CHURCH YOUTH

✝ **Peer education workshops on HIV prevention and care of sick family members**

✝ **Youth holiday camps, for both orphans and non-orphans, that offer support and help strengthen Christian knowledge, values and behaviour**

✝ **Income-generating projects (e.g. tailoring, selling second-hand clothes, running a vegetable garden) for youth to help their own families and other members of the community.**

FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

✝ **A Bible study group on key issues, e.g. HIV-related**

stigma and discrimination, Christian love and support for others

✝ **A prayer workshop to devise new forms of worship (e.g. hymns, prayers, Bible readings) on HIV-related themes**

✝ **Holding a regular healing service, for anyone who is ill or has a close friend or relative who is sick**

✝ **A workshop on issues such as traditional culture, gender and HIV**

✝ **Advocacy on a local HIV-related issue, for example, a march on World AIDS Day (1 December) for improved access to medical treatment for people living with HIV, or support for orphans and other vulnerable children.**

HIV-related stigma and discrimination in your community, to make sure that no orphans go hungry, or to prevent the further spread of HIV? You might not expect to achieve your goal within a short period of time, but your project should be helping your community to move in that direction.

When everyone has written down their responses, ask each participant, one by one, to read out loud what they have written – first for question number 1, then number 2, then number 3 and finally number 4. Write the answers on a large board or flipchart. If two or more people read out more or less the same thing, don't rewrite it but point out that it reinforces what has already been said. At the end of each go-around, see if you can blend what most people are saying into a single response for that question. As the discussion continues, usually one idea will emerge as the top priority. However, to make sure that everyone feels properly consulted, it is best to

check if no-one has any major objection to the agreement that is emerging. Then you can say that the group has reached a consensus.

If it is still not possible to come to an agreement, be prepared for some more discussion or maybe a follow-up meeting. You may need to analyse more than one possible project for a while longer, to see which is the most important, realistic and easiest to start with. That process, following the SMART model, is described in sub-section 2.3. Start with something small, which increases your chances of a success and helps build up your experience. You can then start a second project later on.

Sometimes participants in a workshop or meeting may feel inhibited about asking questions, voicing a criticism, or even expressing their enthusiasm. To enable everyone to make a contribution to the organisation and dynamics of a workshop, you can create a 'Parking Lot' (see Box 2b).

Box 2b: Create a Parking Lot

A 'Parking Lot' is an opportunity for participants in a workshop to communicate anonymously with facilitators or group leaders. This can help to improve the dynamics of the workshop and can lead to a much better outcome.

To create a Parking Lot, copy the design below onto a large piece of paper and fix it to the wall, or draw it on a board. Explain to the participants that they can fill in the boxes with their own comments at any time. As the workshop facilitator, you should check the comments every now and then to find out how the participants feel about the workshop. This will help you to decide whether any changes are necessary.

A Parking Lot can also be used for projects and ideas that you can't address right now, but which you want to remember for the future.

Parking Lot

+ What is going well?	**▲** What needs improvement?
? What question do you have?	***** What ideas do you want to save for the future?

2.2 Agree on specific objectives and activities

Once you agree on where you want to put your emphasis (that is, your project focus), whom you want to help (that is, your target population) and what you want to achieve in the longer term (that is, your goal), then you need to decide exactly what type of project you want to implement right now. This means that you should decide on specific objectives and activities that you will implement – as well as when and how.

The word 'objectives' is critical here, because it means that you need to define what outcome or result you want to achieve, so that you can look back at your project in six months or a year and say, 'Yes, we met our goals', or 'No, we

didn't quite achieve everything that we wanted.'

You may now brainstorm different project objectives and activities, and consider the pros and cons of each option. As with the last discussion on determining the focus of your project, it is important to involve as many church leaders as possible in this decision. It is also important to be as **specific** as possible, so there is no confusion or lack of clarity later on.

Whatever your decision, **start small!** A small project is easier to start up and sustain. You can always expand your activities later on, once you get the hang of what you are doing. Starting small also gives you the advantage of working through the initial problems before they get out of hand, and it gives you some **solid experiences** upon which to modify the project as needed, without having to go through a major reorganisation.

For each activity you agree upon, here are some questions you will have to answer:

1. **What** should the project achieve?
2. **How** will you know that is has been successful?
3. **How many** people should it serve?
4. **When** should the activities take place?
5. **Where** will the activities take place?
6. **Who** should be involved?
7. **Who** is the person in charge?
8. **How much** will it cost?

It may also be helpful to ask everyone who has been involved in the process, 'What additional questions do you have?' Write all the unanswered questions on a board or a flipchart to make sure that everyone's concerns are taken into consideration. You might want to discuss some of these straight away. Alternatively, you can return to them at the next meeting, or at a later stage in the planning process. In some cases you might refer them to a sub-committee or the governing board of your congregation. If you have created a Parking Lot (see Box 2b), you might also consider the suggestions which participants have made.

2.3 Get SMART

When planning how to carry out your project, try to ensure that all your objectives and planned activities are 'SMART'. To do this, review each of the objectives and activities you have decided upon, and check that each one is:

Simple: easy to understand and specifically related to one problem

Measurable: possible to assess using indicators that can be counted, so you can know whether you have succeeded or failed

Achievable: not too easy, but easy enough for you to have a good hope of success

Relevant [1]: really important to your congregation and community

Timely: given a date by which your objectives should be met.

An example of 'SMART' planning:

HOPE CHURCH'S SATURDAY AFTERNOON HEALING SERVICE

Simple = a weekly Saturday afternoon 'religious healing service' with special prayers and songs designed to promote spiritual healing for anyone in the community who is ill or has a sick family member or friend.

Measurable = Data will be maintained on the number of people attending the Healing Service each week; and their level of voluntary participation (speaking out and sharing).

[1] Some training manuals use the term 'Realistic' here.

Achievable = All the resources needed are available in the church to implement this project. Several lay leaders have received special training in counselling and HIV/AIDS, and have researched several sample Healing Services which could be used or adapted to this church.

Relevant = Many people with HIV and AIDS who are ill or stigmatised yearn for spiritual healing and acceptance, as do their family members and close friends.

Timely = The project is held on Saturdays only, and will be reviewed every three months by the Church Council.

2.4 Build partnerships

What if starting small is still too daunting? That's where partnerships come in. It is always better to work together with other organisations that complement your strengths and give you access to different people and ideas. Building partnerships with other churches and organisations also allows you to share information and resources, and increases your impact at both the local and regional level.

But how do you decide with whom to build a partnership, and for what purpose? As part of your SWOT analysis, you may have already identified key partner organisations – other churches and other faith communi- ties, government institutions and businesses, universities, schools and colleges, NGOs and individuals – with whom your church could work. Through an additional brainstorming exercise, even more potential partners may

Box 2c: Working to build partnerships			
Name of key partner	Current situation with partner	What we want to do with our partner	Who will approach our partner and how
1.			
2.			
3.			

be identified. The above template (Box 2c) can serve as a guide for the kind of process that can help to build new partnerships.

Examples of partnerships are:

✳ Two or more congregations in the same community, working together on an awareness and advocacy campaign.

✳ A church and a local NGO doing an after-school project together, where the church recruits the children, provides volunteers and donates the site for the project, while the NGO raises the funds, provides the professional supervision, and handles the administration.

✳ Church volunteers together with a local group of people living with HIV/ AIDS, who run a bakery as an income-generating activity, with flour donated, in part, by a local mill.

2.5 Choose the right project leader

The most important determinant in the success or failure of your project is the person who is in charge. Be sure to select this person very carefully, taking character, key skills and past experience into account:

Critical traits
It is essential that the project leader:

☑ Is honest

☑ Is reliable

☑ Has the community's respect

☑ Lives ethically and sets a good example to others.

'Soft' skills
The leader also needs to have at least one of the following skills:

☑ Negotiating skills, i.e. can motivate others, including people outside the organisation

☑ Good listening and communication skills

☑ The ability to find and manage resources

☑ Human relationship skills.

'Solid' skills
The leader also needs to have at least one of the following skills:

☑ Budgeting and cost skills

☑ Scheduling and time-management skills

☑ Technical skills related to the type of project that is being implemented

☑ Marketing, contracting, and negotiation skills.

A good leader promotes community ownership of the project and always remains open to new ideas that will improve the project in the future.

Section 3

Put it down on paper

3.1 Make an Action Plan

Don't let good ideas die, but make an action plan and implement them. When the group makes a decision, write this on the board or on a flipchart. Then, before the workshop or meeting is over, agree upon a brief action plan. This will help you to implement your decisions, so that they don't get lost or forgotten. Here are some sample questions to answer about each action that needs to be taken:

◇ Who is involved?
◇ Who needs to be consulted?
◇ What additional resources are needed?
◇ Who is in charge?
◇ What communication mechanisms are in place?

◇ What feedback is expected?
◇ By when is the feedback expected?
◇ Who is overseeing this action, if there is a problem? (This may be an existing group or a new committee.)

A SAMPLE ACTION PLAN:

Don't let good ideas die! Make an action plan and implement them!

TO RECRUIT YOUTH PARTICIPANTS FOR A 5-DAY HIV-PREVENTION YOUTH CAMP

Who is involved?	— All members of confirmation classes (limited to 35 participants)
Who should be consulted?	— Head pastor and parents/guardians
What additional resources are needed?	— X-amount per youth in local currency; some money may have to be raised for those who can't afford to pay
Who is in charge?	— Confirmation class teacher
Communication?	— Weekly announcements after church service or Mass; application letters to parents & guardians
Feedback?	— Discussion in confirmation class; meetings with interested young people and parents/guardians.
By when?	— Applications and money must come in 3 weeks before camp starts
Oversight?	— Youth Pastor

SHARPENING THE FOCUS:

'ROADBLOCKS AND RESOURCES' EXERCISE

Step One: At a church Planning Workshop involving Parish Council members and several community representatives, participants shared their perceptions of what many orphans and other vulnerable children **need** in their community. They decided that key elements are:

1. food – getting at least one healthy meal a day
2. counselling
3. income-generating activities
4. support for orphan caregivers
5. spiritual support
6. access to education
7. blankets
8. recreation – for the children to have fun
9. health care.

Step Two: Participants then brainstormed about 'roadblocks' or barriers to providing support to orphans and other vulnerable children. They wrote down the obstacles on folded cards and then placed them on the floor to represent roadblocks on the road to access to treatment, for example:

1. Organisers don't know what to do

2. Not enough volunteers willing to act as caregivers

3. Lack of money to carry out the project

Roadblocks to Orphan Support Project
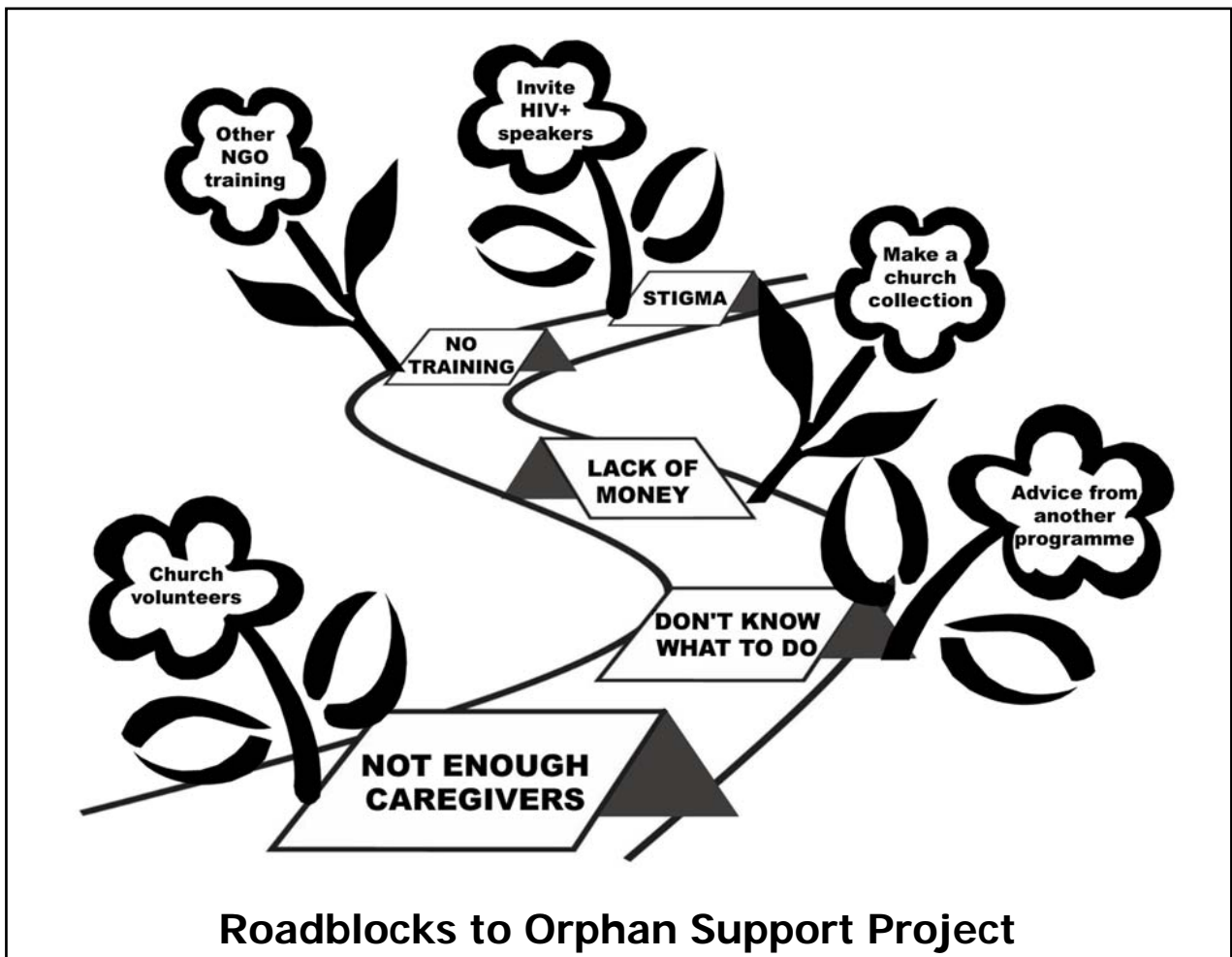
4. No training available for volunteers who are willing to become caregivers

5. Stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.

Step Three: The participants then identified local **resources**, which would enable them to overcome the roadblocks. These resources were depicted as 'flowers' and placed near the roadblocks, as in the Illustration on page 22.

The Parish Council then discussed how they could pursue these resources for assisting orphans and other vulnerable children. They decided they could:

❀ Visit a church or community group already doing orphan support work and ask them for advice

❀ Ask for volunteers from the church women's organisation

❀ Make a special collection, e.g. once a month, at different churches in the community

❀ Ask an NGO or another church or community group to provide training

❀ Ask the government AIDS Control Programme and NGOs for information and training materials on HIV-related stigma; invite a person living with HIV/AIDS to speak at a community meeting.

Step Four: As a final step, the group returned to their list of what orphans need (Step One). Based on their discussion of Roadblocks and Resources (Steps Two and Three), they made a SMART **plan** for meeting some of these needs.

If you feel that your planning efforts need more focus, you can follow the same 'Roadblocks and Resources' exercise. Afterwards, turn to the practice exercise, 'Planning by Action-Steps' (Box 3a).

Box 3a: Planning by Action-steps – a practice exercise

No:	Describe your action-steps	Who should be involved?	What special efforts would you make to ensure that this action-step is implemented properly?	What are the dangers or pitfalls?
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

📖'**For you will surely have a future, and your hope will not be cut off.**' – *Proverbs 23:18 (The African Bible)*

3.2 How to write a Funding Proposal

At some point, you might decide that you need financial support from an 'outside' donor organisation. If so, you will find that most donors require a written proposal, containing many of the elements described in this guide. The format of the proposal will vary, however. Depending on the donor's requirements, you should be able to provide the following information:

⇨ **Covering letter** - Write a letter that contains a brief summary of the proposal, and add why you think your project will be particularly interesting to the donor. (It is usually best to write this as the last thing you do.)

⇨ **Title page** - Include the project title, plus contact names and details on your congregation and how you can be reached.

⇨ **Background information** about the problem you are addressing, which you can draw from your External Assessment (see sub-section 1.2, above). This should not be very long – no more than one page.

⇨ **Goal**: A goal is a general statement that describes what you want to achieve over several years. Thus, goals are usually long-term, and may require the efforts of several different organisations working together. Typical goals for church groups would be: (a) to eliminate or reduce the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS within faith communities; and (b) to ensure that all orphans in the community at least complete their primary school education (see sub-section 2.1).

⇨ **Objectives**: Now we are getting specific to your project. Who is your target group, and what exactly will your project achieve (see sub-section 2.2)? Remember to focus on your own project only, and to be 'SMART' (see sub-section 2.3) about your objectives.

⇨ **Action Plan**: How will you achieve your objectives (see sub-section 3.1)? To explain, describe your planned activities, in as much detail as possible. Who are your partners, and how will you work with them? This is the most important part of your funding proposal, so be as specific as possible.

⇨ **Timeline**: Be sure to explain when you plan to undertake the different activities (usually, month by month). Here it could be useful to insert a Logical Framework (see sub-section 3.3) and a detailed Work Plan (see Appendix 2).

⇨ **Sustainability**: What will you do after the funds for your project have been spent? If the activities you are undertaking are only short-term, this issue is probably not relevant to you. However, if you are planning a long-term project and people in your community become dependent on your resources, you need to consider how the project can be sustained in the long term. Outside donors are generally unwilling to fund projects on an open-ended, indefinite basis (see sub-section 3.5).

⇨ **Capacity of your organisation** to achieve your objectives: Your Internal Assessment (see sub-section 1.3) will enable you to address this issue. Explain why you believe that you have the strengths, skills and resources to be successful. Explain also who will be involved in the project and who will be in charge of it – that is, describe your organisational structure and how your proposed new project fits into it.

⇨ **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Describe your plan to collect data and other information to monitor and evaluate your project (see sub-section 4.3).

⇨ Budget: Be sure to include the resources you are getting from other partners, or in-kind from within your own church or organisation. (See sub-section 3.4 on how to prepare a budget.)

⇨ Appendix (optional): Here is where you can add any other important information that you want the donor to see. This can include a newspaper article about your church or organisation, or letters of support from the partners with whom you plan to be working and/or from a prominent community member or church leader. Finally, you can list the personnel who are involved, their responsibilities, and their qualifications (their background experience and/or education).

3.3 What is a Logical Framework?

Some donor organisations may ask you to provide a 'Logical Framework', or a 'logframe', as part of your proposal. The purpose of a logframe is to help you outline your goals, activities, and expected results. There are many different types of logframe. Box 3b is one relatively simple example:

Box 3b: Logical Framework – a template

	Indicators of Achievement (your expectations, i.e. what you want to accomplish through your project)	**Sources and Means of Verification** (how you will be able to demonstrate that your project has succeeded)	**Timing** (by when you expect to have this completed)	**Assumptions and Risks** (what you have to rely on outside your church for the project to succeed, or what some of the dangers are that you cannot control)
PROJECT GOAL No. 1:				
ACTIVITIES	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
PROJECT GOAL No. 2:				
ACTIVITIES	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

To compile a logframe, start by filling in the left-hand column first, and then fill in the other three. After completing this exercise, you will have a constant reminder of how you want to implement your project – and how you expect to monitor its success or failure. It is good to involve as many stakeholders as possible in deciding how to compile your logframe.

Another useful exercise is The Five 'Whys?', which you can use to review the reasons why you have made particular decisions, e.g. on your choice of objectives or activities (Box 3c).

Box 3c: The Five 'Whys?'

These are simply a process of asking 'Why?' at least five times in a row to detect the root cause or meaning of a particular problem or situation. Copy this on to a piece of paper and hang it on your wall to remind your-

WHY?   WHY?
WHY?
WHY?   WHY?

self, or the members of your group, that you should always feel free to ask the question, 'Why?'. The same process can be used to remember other critical questions, too - such as, 'How?' or 'When?' or 'By Whom?'.

3.4 Prepare a Budget and stick to it

Many project planners are nervous about making a budget, but it can be very simple. If you have computer expertise, use a spreadsheet such as Excel. Otherwise, use a calculator to ensure that your columns add up correctly. You will find a sample budget and a sample financial report on the following two pages for your consideration.

First, make a list of what you will need to carry out the project. Include such things as the time that people will spend on the project, transportation, office supplies, training expenses and food, and the unit costs of these items.

You can then make three columns next to your list of items (see Box 3d, p. 28, for an example). In the column 'Total Anticipated Project Costs', put the cost for each item you have to pay for, as well as the value of items that you will receive in-kind from the community or other sources. In the next column – 'Community Contributions' – write the amount that your project already has, or that you will be able to get from other local resources. In the final column – 'Funding Requested' – subtract the Community Contributions column from the Costs column. Then add up the items in each column to make a total at the bottom. The very last cell of the last column (that is, the one in the lower right hand corner) tells you how much money you still need for the project. This is the total amount of money you need to request.

Sometimes, a simple budget consists only of a list of items and the amount of money you are requesting from a particular donor. Other times, you may need to make a budget for each month or each quarter (i.e. every three months) and then add these up for a total (annual) budget.

In the example budget (Box 3d, p. 28), the total cost of the project – including the value of in-kind support – is 47,850 units of the local currency. (This figure is at the bottom of the first column of figures.) Community contributions (mostly in-kind) are expected to be worth 10,500 units. By subtracting this figure from the overall total, you arrive at the amount of funding requested from the outside donor organisation, namely, 37,350 units of local currency.

Once you have been able to secure sufficient resources, you can begin your project. By adding more columns to the budget, you can create a form on which to record how much is spent for each item, within a specific time period (e.g. each month, every three months, or every six months).

You will need to report on all your expenditure to your Parish Council or other church management body, as well as to any outside donors who are contributing funds for the project. Your report should list how much you have spent on each item of your budget. There is a sample financial report on p. 29 (Box 3e).

You should also keep receipts for all items of expenditure – many donors will ask you to provide these. Remember also that, if you are receiving funds from an outside donor, you may need to follow a particular format and time schedule for your financial and progress reports. Some donor agencies will provide you with their own format for financial reports. Make sure that you are well versed in the particular requirements of your donor or donors. A reputation for good financial management will stand you in good stead with donors if you have to apply for more funds in the future.

Box 3d: A sample Budget

After-School Project for 50 Orphans and Vulnerable Children at the Church (2 days per week, for 12 months)

ITEM	Unit	No. of Units	Cost per unit	TOTAL ANTICIPATED PROJECT COSTS	COMMUNITY CONTRIBU- TIONS	FUNDING REQUESTED
Project Running Costs - Personnel & Office:						
Project Coordinator	Daily rate	24	200	4,800		4,800
Community volunteers	Volun- teers	100	100	10,000		10,000
Project space provided by Church	Monthly	12	500	6,000	6,000	-
Transportation for volunteers	Monthly	12	500	6,000	1,000	5,000
Office supplies	Monthly cost	12	500	6,000		6,000
Other Direct Project Costs:	Unit	No. of Units	Cost per unit			
Cooking utensils (pots, pans, etc)	Once	1	550	550		550
Soup ingredients	Monthly	12	500	6,000	3,000	3,000
Sports equipment for games	Once	1	1,000	1,000		1,000
Stationery, paper & crayons for after-school centre	Once	1	1,000	1,000		1,000
Holiday parties (Christmas, Easter, etc)	Per party	5	500	2,500	500	2,000
Training workshop from local NGO for volunteers	Per work- shop	2	2,000	4,000		4,000
TOTAL COSTS				**47,850**	**10,500**	**37,350**

Box 3e: A sample Financial Report

After-School Project for 50 Orphans and Vulnerable Children at the Church (2 days per week, for 12 months)

ITEM	TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENDITURES				TOTAL EXPENDED	TOTAL REMAINING
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4		
Project Running Costs - Personnel & Office:							
Project Coordinator	4,800	300	200	100	400	1,000	3,800
Community volunteers	10,000	2000	2000	2000	2000	8,000	2,000
Project space provided by Church	-					-	-
Transportation for volunteers	5,000	1000	1000	2000	500	4,500	500
Office supplies	6,000	3000	2000	500	500	6,000	-
Other Direct Project Costs:							
Cooking utensils (pots, pans, etc)	550	550				550	-
Soup ingredients	3,000	1000	500	800	500	2,800	200
Sports equipment for games	1,000	1000				1,000	-
Stationery, paper & crayons for after-school centre	1,000	1000				1,000	-
Holiday parties (Christmas, Easter, etc)	2,000	1000		1000		2,000	-
Training workshop from local NGO for volunteers	4,000		4000			4,000	-
TOTALS	**37,350**	**10,850**	**9,700**	**6,400**	**3,900**	**30,850**	**6,500**

3.5 What happens after the money runs out?

One important question you have to face is, 'What happens after the money for the project runs out?' To answer this question, you have to deal with the issue of **sustainability**, as you cannot always remain dependent on outside resources or assistance. Feeding projects are particularly susceptible to this problem, unless you can identify a long-term source of food, such as local donations or a community garden.

There are basically two ways to deal with the issue of sustainability. One way is to start with a short-term project that you know will end on a certain date, and does not need to continue long-term. This could be, for example, a training course for church volunteers in home-based care, a drama performance on HIV prevention, or a holiday camp for orphans and other vulnerable children.

Some projects, however, need to continue for several years. You may therefore need to develop special skills to generate the resources you need in order to maintain the project on a long-term basis. In this way, the end of outside funding need not mean the end of your project, because you have become self-supporting. A nutrition project, for example, cannot rely for long on food aid from an outside donor, but may be sustained through regular donations from local suppliers, and by produce from a garden maintained by people living with HIV (where the donor provides fencing, tools and seeds).

Sometimes a project needs substantial input from an outside donor to get started, but can then continue with a small amount of local support. To train a group of home-based care volunteers, for example, may require outside funding (e.g. for transport, food, hire of hall, purchase of information and training materials), but can be sustained by small but regular contributions from the church congregation and the community.

> 📖 **'Do right, love goodness, and walk humbly with your God.'** – *Micah 6:8* (*The African Bible*)

Section 4

Keep up the momentum

4.1 Never stop training

Often, the first step in implementing a new project is to get training for the people who will be involved. If you don't feel able to provide the training yourself, check if there are NGOs or government ministries that can help. You may also be able to join in some training that is being organised elsewhere. Perhaps you can offer to add an extra session, based on your own church's perspective or practical experience.

Good training usually has three main goals:

⊙ To increase knowledge

⊙ To develop and improve skills

⊙ To change attitudes.

Try to ensure that the people you train make a definite commitment to **implement** what they have learned, and to **share** their knowledge and skills with others. If people are literate, it is usually helpful to have a training manual or hand-outs (in their own language) in order to reinforce what has been learned. Like everything else, the implementation of what has been learned requires follow-up by the project leader or manager.

Most importantly, remember that you never stop learning, so you should never stop training. Keep adding follow-up sessions and short refresher courses to keep everyone updated, enthusiastic and on-track.

Box 4a: Tips on training

If you are planning to organise or conduct a training workshop, consider the following:

➢ **Set clear goals - that is, be clear about what you want the participants to learn by the end of the training.**

➢ **Work with members of the community to choose a place for the sessions, and the dates of when they would like it to be held.**

➢ **Know your community - that is, keep the needs of your participants in mind, as well as the level of their existing knowledge.**

➢ **Think about who should best lead the training, and make sure that person (or that organisation) knows exactly what you want.**

➢ **Make sure that the training schedule is planned ahead of time, share this with the participants, and then allow for their input and questions.**

4.2 Keep on communicating

It is important that all stakeholders in the project hear regularly about what is going on. If things are going well, share the good news with them. If there are problems or delays, let them know – they might be able to advise or assist in dealing with them. You can inform your church or community through announcements after church services or at meetings, through a newsletter, posters, or photographic displays, or perhaps even an Internet website or listserve. Make the project part of your regular conversation within your church and your community. This builds up a sense of community ownership and helps to generate ongoing support. By contrast, if no information about the project is available, people lose interest and commitment. This can also lead to rumours flying around about the project, leading to a collapse of community confidence and support.

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation are ways for you to be accountable to your congregation's leadership and members, as well as to any donors you may have. Both refer to methods of finding out how well your project is doing at any one point in time.

By **monitoring**, we mean the ongoing effort of collecting data or other information that tells you how well your project is going. This can be done on a regular basis, for example, every week or month.

By **evaluation**, we mean that, at pre-deter-mined points during the project (or at the end of a particular activity, such as a training workshop), you assess how well the project met the expectations that you had during your planning process, and which you listed under 'Indicators of Achievement' in your **logframe**. Of all the evaluation criteria you have, those that can **measure outcomes** – the final results or impact of your project – are the most important.

The results of your monitoring and evaluation should always be documented in reports, so you have a record of your project that you can check or show to others, including donor organisations. These reports are generally compiled on a monthly, quarterly or six-monthly basis. You will probably also find it useful to compile an annual report on your project.

Try to include photographs with your reports. They cannot substitute for the factual information you need to provide, but they are a great addition to your reports because they are so direct and graphic. Donor organisations also appreciate them, and may ask your permission to use them in their own publications.

Monitoring measurements

Before you start implementing your project, it is important to know how you are going to monitor and evaluate it. Here are some examples of data you can collect to help you monitor what your project is doing on a monthly basis:

❖ No. of people served during a set time-period (male/female; adults/children)

❖ No. of home-based care visits made (and by whom)

❖ No. of blankets (or food-parcels, or other items) that were provided

❖ No. of prayer sessions held, where, and with whom

❖ No. of sessions in the training project

❖ No. of people trained in new knowledge and skills

❖ No. of volunteers involved in the project.

You can also ask people who are being served by the project for comments on how it has affected their lives.

Evaluation measurements

Here are some questions you may ask, in order to evaluate an activity or project:

❖ How well did the project achieve what was expected?

❖ Where did it do better than expected, or worse? – and why?

❖ What was the best thing about this activity (or workshop, or project)?

❖ What was the most disappointing thing about this activity (or workshop, or project)?

❖ What did you learn as a result of this project?

❖ Do you think this project changed you or how you think, and if so, how?

❖ How can the project or activity be improved in the future?

Outcome measurements

The most difficult – but important – measurements in monitoring and evaluation have to do with the outcome or impact which the project has had on people's lives. Some of these measurements may be difficult to gather information on, but it is worth making the effort. Examples are:

❖ How many more people have gone public about their HIV-positive status since your church implemented a project on reducing stigma?

❖ How many more orphans are attending school since your church started reaching out to orphans and other vulnerable children?

❖ How many more families are adequately fed, thanks to the food distribution or income-generating work supported by your project?

❖ Two years after the project, how many young people say that the HIV-prevention youth camp run by your church was a turning point in their lives?

> 📖 **"Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there is also disorder and every kind of evil. But the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy. And goodness is the harvest that is produced from the seeds the peacemakers plant in peace."**
> *– James 5:16-18 (Good News Bible)*

Section 5

Frequently asked questions

> 📖 'Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.' – *Luke 6:37 (The African Bible).*

This section is about common problems that come up in planning and implementing a new project within a church congregation or community.

A. How can we select the best facilitator to manage our decision–making process?

The role of a facilitator is to guide a group through a decision-making process. This is a time-bound role, not an open-ended or long-term commitment. The facilitator of your church's decision-making process on doing HIV/AIDS work will probably not be the leader or manager of your project.

Your facilitator does not have to be a technical expert in HIV/AIDS. But his or her attitudes, knowledge, and skills are important. For example:

☐ He/she should have positive attitudes, be respectful of culture, HIV status, and gender; and be self-aware.

☐ He/she should also be knowledgeable about the problem you are dealing with, and about local resources – or if not, then he or she should know where to get this information.

☐ With regard to skills, the following are critical: active listening and good questioning, open communication, ability to manage group work, conflict resolution, summarising, and time-keeping.

If you don't have someone in your congregation or church group who can do this for you, ask a local NGO, a community leader, or your national church body if they can help with some suggestions.

B. How can we get broad participation in the planning and implementation of a new project?

To get everyone you want involved and to foster community-based initiatives and ownership, try the following techniques:

1. Help people feel comfortable by using an inclusive approach, where everyone feels warmly welcomed and valued, and is encouraged to speak up.

2. Play get-to-know games, for example, by asking everyone to describe themselves as a favourite animal, or to talk about a favourite memory from their childhood.

3. Encourage people to share information, ideas, concerns and knowledge by putting the participants into pairs and small

groups; or else share in a go-around (where everyone is asked for input).

4. Use techniques such as dividing the larger group into smaller sub-groups for some activities.

5. Help people to communicate effectively by encouraging mutual respect within the group and reinforcing the key points that people make.

6. Manage group dynamics by setting up ground rules ahead of time, for the fair participation of everyone present. (See question D, below.)

7. Keep the work practical and relevant to the topic under discussion.

8. Wherever possible, invite the group to take control of the learning and sharing process.

C. What can we do if people are afraid to make a decision?

If the people who are supposed to implement a project don't feel that they have had sufficient input in deciding on the project to begin with, then you may face a lot of resistance and drop-outs later on. The same is true with other decisions that have to be made as the project gets rolled out. But many people don't feel that their opinions are valuable, so they just sit silently through meetings. They have never had much experience in making decisions in the past, so they don't trust themselves now.

The most important point here is good decision-making *can* be learned. Moreover, the process of decision-making creates a sense of

ownership and commitment among the people involved, and helps to sustain the project through any difficulties that might arise in the future.

If the people involved in the project don't know what to do and feel unable to make decisions, you may offer two or three options for them to consider. Then invite them to decide among these options. If this is done over and over as new issues arise, eventually they will come up with their own options and ideas. (This is not to suggest a free-for-all, that 'anything goes'. All decisions must be made within the generally accepted limits of the organisation or project.)

D. How can we manage quiet – or dominant – participants in a group setting?

If you have quiet participants:

☐ Break down into small groups, where quiet participants are more likely to speak

☐ Ask quiet participants to share their experiences in a discussion about their area of specific expertise

☐ Use activities whereby all participants are asked to make a small contribution

☐ Provide them with positive – but not patronising – feedback when they contribute. For example, try to build on or reinforce

what they have said, rather than just say, 'well done' or 'very good'.

If you have dominant participants:

☐ Give dominant participants positive feedback and involve other participants in responding to them. For example, say, 'Thank you for that interesting viewpoint. What do other people think about it?'

☐ Speak with them privately during a break, and ask them to allow others more time to participate

☐ Give them a job to do within the workshop, for example, providing the other participants with a 'recap' at the beginning of each day

☐ Draw their attention to established 'ground rules' about allowing everyone to contribute, or use games that encourage awareness of one's own behaviour.

E. What can we do to avoid conflicts within our congregation?

This is a common problem. It is best if you can agree on certain ground rules for communication before you begin your decision-making process. Getting input from the group on these ground rules helps to ensure agreement. For example:

☐ Don't interrupt when someone else is speaking

☐ Respect everyone's point of view as valuable

☐ If you disagree with someone else, stick to the facts – don't get emotional or bring up 'old history' (past issues that are not directly relevant).

Note: if there are serious differences between people, it may be useful to speak to them separately, for example, during a tea-break or after the meeting.

F. How can we get the wider church and the community to support our project?

☐ Meaningfully involve the people who will be affected by the project in the planning and decision-making process

☐ Meet with and negotiate with key stakeholders to gain their support

☐ Use dramatic ceremonies and symbols to mark the change or new project

☐ Commit enough resources (including

volunteer and in-kind support) for training and implementation

☐ Clearly inform the community about the new project, and be prepared to answer their questions

☐ Select a person to introduce the new project who is similar in background to the people who have to approve it. This will help to gain their trust more readily.

G. What can we do if we have planned everything, but still lack money?

Sometimes it is possible to go through all the right planning and budgeting steps, and still find that you are short of money to start the project you want. If this happens, the first thing you should do is review your planning process once again, and see if there are more in-kind resources you can draw upon. Alternatively, see if you can make the project a little smaller (without reducing its integrity or anticipated impact), or if there are any local donors or partnerships you can ask to help close your funding gap.

If you find that your project is still short of money, then you may have to submit a proposal to an 'outside' donor organisation. To do this, find out which donor organisations have an office in your country, or can be contacted through your church or other organisations. Then, find out what the requirements of the donors are, in terms of:

☐ What kind of project or targetgroup they are interested in

☐ How they want you to submit your funding proposal

☐ Time deadlines for funding proposals

☐ Legal requirements for organisations submitting funding proposals

☐ Upper and lower limits on the amount of funding they can provide.

Although the format may differ, most donors have similar requirements about what you need to include in a proposal. Follow the funding proposal outline in sub-section 3.2. Bear in mind that requesting funds from an outside donor will delay the start of your project by an indefinite period of time – possibly by several months.

If you can't get outside funding, try to start something anyway – but start with something small, or on a short-term or trial basis. However, don't do something just because the donor asks you to do it, if this does not fit into the goals and objectives that your congregation has already agreed upon. Donor-driven projects often end up causing a lot of resentment and problems, even though getting the money may be very tempting.

Now you are ready to begin your new project.

Why wait any longer?

Remember:

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago.
The second best time is now.

— *African proverb*

Appendix No. 1
A sample workshop

Workshop Goal: Participants should learn new skills to help them plan and implement an HIV/AIDS project through their own church congregation or group.

Time required: one day (7-8 hours).

Materials needed: flipchart paper, marker pen, biros or pencils, postcard-size pieces of blank paper (20 for each group of 5 – 8 people).

Background Information: This *Called to Care* guide is meant to be a self-teaching tool – that is, an experienced facilitator should be able to use it without special training. However, your church congregation or group might not be familiar with many of the concepts and participatory exercises that it contains. It might be useful, therefore, to do a 'trial run' with an imaginary church community before using this guide in your own congregation.

If you decide to do so, divide the participants into groups of 5 – 8 people each. After an initial prayer and introductions, begin with a discussion about what skills the participants think a church congregation would need in order to plan and implement an HIV/AIDS project. Write these down on a flipchart or board. Try to include as many of these skills as possible in your workshop.

Below is a case study and a set of tasks for four small groups. (Note: each group will undertake the same set of five tasks.)

Case Study: The Grace Love Church of Highlands

In the farming valley of **Highlands,** with its population of about 3,000, there are only three churches, including the Grace Love congregation. In this part of the country, with an unemployment rate of almost 20%, about 10% of the total population is estimated to be HIV-positive. It is known that there are already at least 12 child-headed households in the valley. But very few people talk about AIDS because of the associated stigma and fear.

When Jonas, one of the church's more active members, returned to Highlands after working in the capital city for two years, he decided that it was time for the Grace Love congregation to get involved in AIDS ministry. Jonas stood up at the Church Council meeting and said: 'It doesn't really matter whether we do AIDS prevention work, or we give support for people living with HIV and AIDS, or we offer care to orphans – but we must do SOMETHING.' After a long discussion, the Church Council agreed to set up a Church Committee, including Jonas and several other church members, to plan what exactly they should do.

Now pretend that your small group is that Church Committee. Your task is to design and recommend an AIDS project for the Grace Love congregation to carry out, using a small amount of money that Jonas said he could raise from contacts in the capital city, but also relying on church volunteers and other in-kind assistance. Note that in the next town there is a mobile health clinic that provides Voluntary Counselling and Testing

(VCT), plus an NGO that will provide training in skills related to HIV/AIDS activities at no cost.

FIVE SMALL GROUP TASKS

Introduce each task with a short explanation, referring to the relevant pages of this guide. After the groups complete their tasks, they should come together and report on their decisions, followed by a discussion. (Note: Each small group should have at least one copy of the case study and of each small-group task, below.) Here are the five tasks:

1. Spend time planning
(See Section 1, p. 7.)

Your committee should begin with a planning process. Start by choosing a chairperson for your group and someone to report back to the full workshop. Now, based on what you know about Highlands and the Grace Love congregation, and on your own experiences and what you have learned, describe the planning process you will undertake:

First, describe how you would conduct an **External Assessment** to determine the NEEDS of the Highlands community. What Opportunities and Threats do you see?

Second, describe how you would conduct an **Internal Assessment** to determine the ABILITY of the Grace Love congregation to take on an AIDS project. What Strengths and Weaknesses do you see?

Third, list four different kinds of projects or activities that you think the Grace Love Church congregation can carry out. Be sure to be realistic about each of these ideas:

☦ One dealing with HIV-prevention

☦ One dealing with stigma reduction

☦ One dealing with care for people living with HIV/AIDS, and

☦ One dealing with orphans.

2. Make your decisions
(See Section 2, p. 15.)

Based on the four different kinds of projects or activities that you discussed before, choose one of these to recommend back to the Grace Love Church Council, and explain why this is your first choice. Then, you should become more specific by answering as much as you can about your project in the time allowed:

1. What should your project aim to achieve (your 'SMART' objectives)?

2. How many people should it benefit?

3. How often should the activities take place, and where?

4. Who should be in charge of the project (i.e. what position does that person have in the congregation), and who else should be involved in the project?

5. Will your project cost any money, and if so, for what? What other resources are required?

6. Where and how do you think the Grace Love congregation should get the money or the resources you need for the project?

If there is time, list the activities, step by step, that you plan to do. You can use a **log-frame** (see sub-section 3.3) and a **work plan** (see Appendix 2, p. 43) if you wish. Remember to be as specific and detailed as possible.

3. Make an Action Plan
(See Section 3, p. 21.)

This is a team-building exercise that familiarises participants with the steps needed to plan a project, but it is also a lot of fun!

Each group should write down on 20 different pieces of paper the tasks or action-steps that are needed for your planning process to be successful. Write one task only on each piece of paper. Each group should compile a list of 20 tasks – see the following 'Action Plan

Tasks' for suggestions. (Note: the facilitator can substitute other tasks if he or she wants.)

Action Plan Tasks:

Do a Situation Analysis

Play 'Get-to-know-each-other games'

Ask yourself 'WHY?'

Allocate tasks (who does WHAT?)

Agree on objectives for the project

Recruit volunteers

Do a SWOT analysis

Share ideas, concerns & knowledge

Create a Parking Lot

Evaluate your project

Spend time planning

Monitor your project

Assess the project's sustainability

Ask yourself 'HOW will we do things?'

Review your objectives (SMART)

Consult with elders on the project

Prepare a budget

Compile your logical framework (logframe)

Elect officers of the project

Draw up a work plan

Now each team should spread its 20 pieces of paper (representing 20 different tasks) out on a table, on the floor or on the ground. Instruct each team to arrange the 20 tasks into the order which they think makes most sense for their project planning process.

This is a group exercise, so all members of the group should participate. However, there is a catch in this : **YOU CANNOT TALK TO ONE ANOTHER!** You have 10 minutes to complete the exercise – in complete silence!

Remember that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Groups can arrange their tasks in any order they wish, but everyone needs to agree on the outcome. **HINT**: Everyone should smile as much as they can when doing this exercise!

Now, share your experience with the members of the other groups. The facilitator can

assist the discussion by asking the following questions (20 minutes):

◈ How did you find the experience of doing this exercise as a team, in silence?

◈ Did you get upset sometimes?

◈ Did you feel strongly attached to your own ideas?

◈ How did you feel when other people moved your cards?

◈ Did you feel tempted to act instead of consulting with others?

◈ Why is it important to listen to other people's opinions?

◈ What have you learned from this experience?

Your responses to these questions should give you some insight into how people need to work as a team when planning and implementing a project.

Notes to the facilitator:

1. You can try this exercise every once in a while. It will help the participants to stop and reflect on what they are doing – and why. It also helps to create or strengthen the sense of unity amongst the members of the group.

2. You can vary the tasks listed on the pieces of paper, depending on where the project has reached. For example, it may be helpful to use it at the start of a new phase in the project, or if the congregation wants to start something new.

3. If questions arise during the discussion at a time when it is not convenient to answer, put these into a Parking Lot (see sub-section 2.1) so you can address them later on.

4. Prepare a Budget
(See Section 3, p. 27.)

Use the following budget outline to prepare a budget for your project. You may use rough estimates (they do not have to be accurate) for this exercise.

BUDGET OUTLINE:

ITEMS (Description)	A: COSTS or value in the local currency	B: COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS expected	C: Outside/Donor FUNDING REQUESTED (Subtract B from A to get this amount)
PROJECT			
TRAINING			
PERSONNEL			
TOTAL			

5. Monitor your project

(See Section 4.3, p. 32.)

Finally, how will you know if your project is successful? Be specific about which indicators or measurements you will use in your monitoring and evaluation plan, and how you will you get the data or other information you need.

📖 **'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' –** *Matthew 22:37-39 (The African Bible)*

Appendix 2
How to schedule your time

A detailed **work plan** – sometimes known as a 'Gantt Chart' – is a handy tool for planning schedules and managing projects. It is particularly useful when doing a project in which one stage depends on another. It also makes clear which steps can be done simultaneously, and is a good way to keep a time-line of a particular activity.

WORKPLAN:

ACTIVITIES	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Activity 1												
Step 1												
Step 2												
Step 3												
Activity 2												
Step 1												
Step 2												
Step 3												
Activity 3												
Step 1												
Step 2												
Step 3												

EXAMPLE:

ACTIVITY	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Outreach talks	x	x	x
Select speakers	x		
Train them		x	
Supervision			x

If you compile a work plan, make a copy and keep it on your wall for future reference. Activities that extend over one month should be marked accordingly. List each activity and the steps that need to be taken in order to make it happen.

Appendix 3
Additional Resources

Websites

www.aidsalliance.org: See especially *Raising Funds and Mobilising Resources for HIV/AIDS Work: A Toolkit to Support NGOs/CBOs*, and *Building Blocks in Practice: Participatory Tools to Improve the Development and Care and Support for Orphans and Vulnerable Children.*

www.christianaid.org: Lots of good resources from a religious perspective.

www.fhi.org: This website offers many excellent publications. See, for example, two practical guides developed by Catholic AIDS Action in Namibia: *Community-based Counselling for People Affected by HIV/AIDS* and *Building Resilience in Children Affected by HIV/AIDS (www.fhi.org/en/HIVAIDS/guide/caacoun selling.html).*

www.kit.nl: Books and toolkits on the role of faith-based organisations and others, by the Royal Tropical Institute in the Netherlands.

www.msh.org: See in particular, the *Health Managers' Toolkit*. This material makes the important distinction between facilitating a planning process and managing a young organisation or project.

www.networklearning.org: Materials for the NGO needing new skills on topics such as how to run a workshop, a guide to fund-raising, the project management cycle and micro-finance.

www.religionnews.com: A website and subscription for a compilation of news addressing faith issues.

www.stratshope.org: The Strategies for Hope Trust has produced 16 case study books, five videos and the *Stepping Stones* training package on community-based responses to HIV/AIDS, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa.

www.satregional.org: Experience-based, user-friendly training materials on community-based approaches to HIV/AIDS care, support, advocacy and prevention, produced by the Southern African AIDS Trust.

www.steppingstonesfeedback.org: Excellent guidelines and other materials for community groups using the *Stepping Stones* training package on gender, HIV/AIDS and relationship skills.

www.thegaia.org: The Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance.

www.unaids.org: For statistical data about HIV/AIDS in your country, plus background information and other useful resources.

Training materials

The author gratefully acknowledges the following resources in the preparation of this manual, and recommends them for more in-depth information and support:

HIV, Health and Your Community: A Guide for Action, by Reuben Granich and Jonathan Mermin, Stanford University Press, Stanford, USA, 1999.

Raising Funds and Mobilising Resources for HIV/AIDS Work, Alliance Technical Support Publications, Volume 2, International HIV/AIDS Alliance, Brighton, UK, 2002.

Techniques and Practices for Local Responses to HIV/AIDS: Part I - Techniques, United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS & KIT Publishers, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2004.

The New Toolbox: A Handbook for Community Based Organisations, by Camilla Symes, The Barnabas Trust, Walmer, South Africa, 2002.

Called to Care toolkit

No. 1: *Positive Voices: Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS*, ANERELA+, Strategies for Hope Trust and World Vision International, Oxford, UK, 2005.

The **CALLED TO CARE** toolkit consists of practical, action-oriented booklets and mini-manuals on issues related to HIV/AIDS, designed for use by church leaders, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of the materials is to enable pastors, priests, religious sisters and brothers, lay church leaders and their congregations and communities to:

❑ **Reflect on and understand the spiritual, theological, ethical, health, social and practical implications of the HIV epidemic and the Christian call to respond with compassion.**

❑ Overcome the stigma, silence, discrimination, denial, fear and inertia that inhibit church and community action to address HIV/AIDS-related issues more effectively.

❑ Guide their congregations and communities through a process of learning and change, leading to practical, church-based actions to help individuals, families and communities reduce the spread of HIV and mitigate the impact of the HIV epidemic.

CALLED TO CARE is an initiative of the Strategies for Hope Trust, which produces books and videos that promote effective, community-based strategies of HIV/AIDS care, support and prevention in the developing world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

CALLED TO CARE is implemented through a process of international, ecumenical cooperation involving churches, other faith-based organisations, international church bodies, publishers, distributors and other partners.

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