

# Presentation on Teaching adults to communicate with Youth from a Christian Perspective

*By Jacinta Maingi*

*Regional Program Coordinator*

*Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAA)*

*Eastern Africa region*

*Youth Conference in Abuja, Nigeria*

*25 – 30 April, 2008*



# INTRODUCTION OF EHAIA

- Is a project of World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva
- EHAIA operates only in Africa and works with all churches whether they are members of WCC or not
- Builds the capacity of the church to be AIDS competent with positive attitudes towards those infected and affected – eradicating stigma, discrimination and denial
- Provides opportunities for training churches on various aspects depending on identified needs
- Produces HIV and AIDS related material
- Promotes networking at various levels
- Works towards involvement and participation of PLWHA in HIV and AIDS activities at all levels.

# HOW EHAIA HAS USED THE CFLE MANUAL

- Distribute to churches,
- FBOs,
- institutions of higher learning i.e. Bible schools, universities, Theological colleges,
- secondary and primary schools,
- anti-AIDS youth clubs etc.
- Youth peer groups in churches or communities

# HOW EHAIA HAS USED THE CFLE MANUAL (2)

- So far we have distributed over 300 copies throughout Africa
- 1 Bible college in Rwanda is using the manual in their institution to prepare their pastors to communicate with young people
- 1 Church Council for Independent churches in Burundi is using the manual as guide to Bible studies
- Others select a component of the manual and use it during workshops or meeting depending on the theme of the meeting – they do it in phases

# FEEDBACK

- Most of those who have used it say the training period recommended is rather long to be done continuously – hence spreading the workshops
- Church leaders are pleased with it because of the Biblical references used
- The format makes it easier for the facilitator because of the detailed step by step guidance
- The language is clear and friendly to all users whether youth or adults

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND CULTURE

- Young people are the hope, strength continuity of generations – pass on knowledge and values to the next generation
- Cultural inhibitions to talk about sex and sexuality/family life issues pose a threat to a sustainable healthy generation
- Young people in Africa and elsewhere in the world are yearning for honest information
- Parents, guardians, teachers and religious leaders place more emphasis on formal education but leave out sex and family life education for young people

# SOURCE OF INFORMATION

- Billboards, movies, magazines, television, newspapers and music
- Peer, entertainment idols, word on the street
- Very few named churches leaders, parents, teachers, or family member
- Teachers are in a dilemma because they are not prepared on methodologies and strategies of communicating with youth on sex, sexuality and family life issues
- Urbanization vis a vis rural life differences
- Shifting of responsibilities to issues close to them is leaving youth confused and desperate for information

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND RELIGION

- “GOD” and “SEX” cannot be used positively in the same sentence – leaving youth feeling guilty of their sexual feeling
- The church was mentioned as the last place youth would go for information – “your morals and discipline would be questioned...”
- Addressing step 4: Exploring Values (p 81) – this was very challenging for the youth who are torn between being “Cool and popular” vis a vis having acceptable values
- **Whose values do they follow?**  
Some religious leaders do not display themselves as role models,
  - If they follow the Bible or adult prescribed values and end up losing friends, where is their alternative support?
  - Some church leaders would not even talk about sexuality matters inside the church building
  - Some youth have been abused by religious leaders – losing confidence in adults
  - Some parents also do not project values that would bring forth youth with sound moral values
- **WHO TEACHES WHOM?**

# YOUNG PEOPLE AND SEXUALITY

- **Sex Education:** emphasizes basic information about sexual anatomy and physiology, body development, biological reproduction development etc.
- **Sexuality Education:** emphasizes a broad approach to sexuality, focusing on the whole person and presenting sexuality as a natural and positive part of life
- The two are frequently misunderstood by adults especially those uncomfortable with the subject
- Misconception that talking about sexuality would make young people promiscuous
- Parents should be the first to talk about it

# OBSERVATIONS

- Emphasis should be on:
  1. **behaviour formation**
  2. **behaviour change for those who need to change**
  3. **Positive BEHAVIOUR SUSTAINABILITY mechanisms**
- Youth friendly programs in churches and communities are in short supply in most places in Africa
- Let the youth take leadership in their programmes
- Language used should be youth friendly
- Too much emphasis on Behaviour Change leaves those who are not misbehaving feel lost (**“What should we change?”** they asked)
- Youth in refugee and IDP camps are usually forgotten

# Sexuality is a gift from God

- it begins at conception,
- is manifested at birth
- blossoms at puberty
- Is exploited in adulthood
- Therefore, Communicating with youth on family life and sexuality is a way of exalting and preserving God's creation

# FINALLY



Asante  
sana