



# HOPE & LIFE

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## 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT

PROJECT TITLE: NETWORK OF PLWHA  
PROJECT NAME: HOPE & LIFE  
PERIOD COVERED: JUNE 07 – JUNE 08

### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

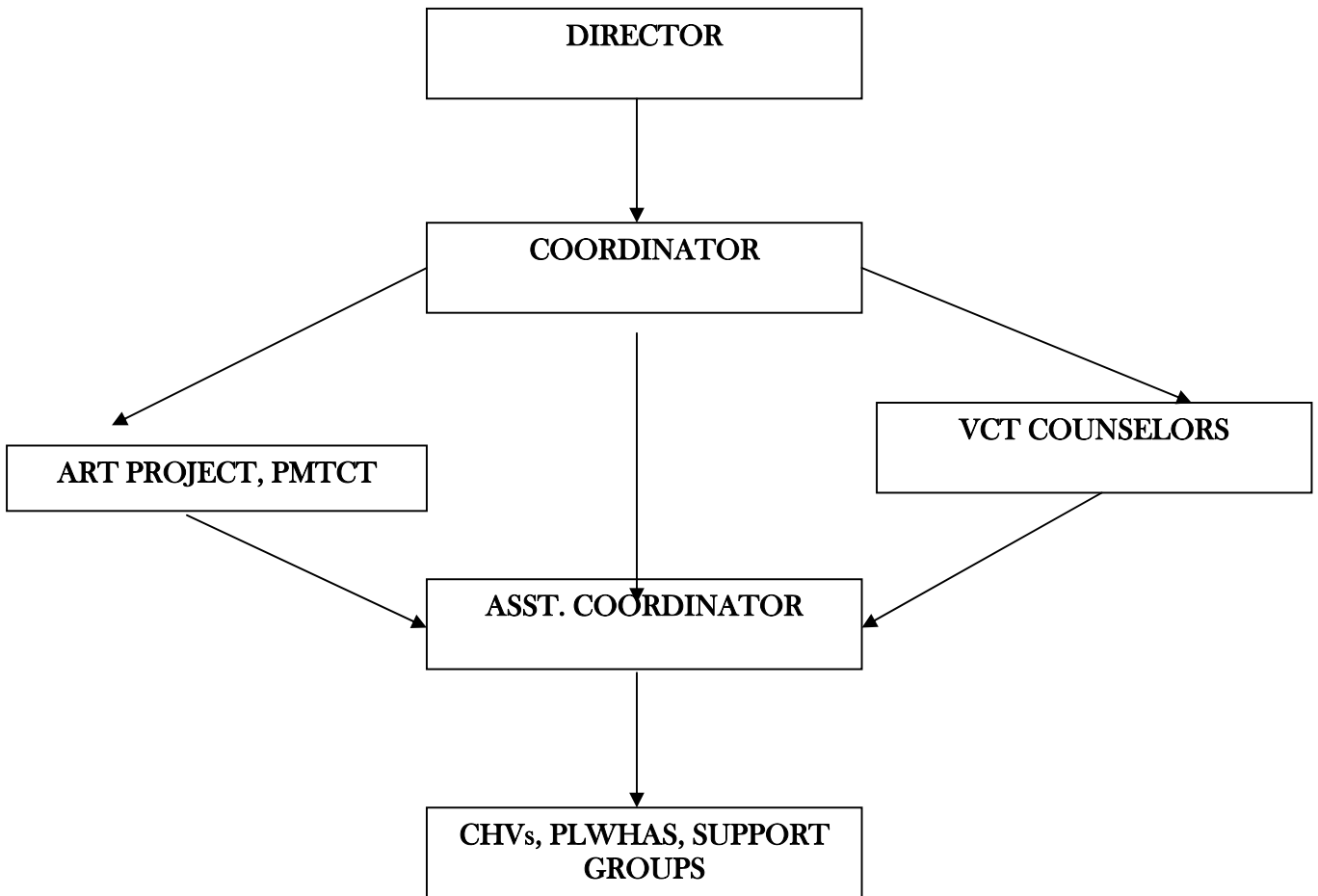
The mission of Hope & Life is to empower and support people affected by and living with HIV/AIDS by reducing mortality and morbidity rate within our society and district at large.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hope & Life is the only organization dealing specifically with people affected and infected with HIV/AIDS. It has increased the involvement of programmes which reduce stigma and discrimination. Hope & Life operates within Nyatike constituency and around the neighboring districts which include Suba and Homa Bay.

Since 2003, the project has been focusing on creating and sustaining a network of PLWHA. This has prompted us to form more support groups (45 groups, each with a minimum of 25 participants), giving us a total of 1,125 PLWHA. The expansion of the project has bettered the attitude and involvement of PLWHA.

## **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**



By empowering our support groups with follow-ups, capacity building skills, and group dynamic ethics along with involving complementary resources, the general attitude and behavior/knowledge of HIV/AIDS has increased. These efforts have helped each person in a support group become a role model in his or her community.

With new interventions in place, the coverage area of Hope & Life is becoming a fairly broad network due to the positive response from the community. It is evident that Hope & Life is making an impact and we are actively moving from good to better.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Hope & Life is a frontier project in Migori district which reaches out to people living with HIV/AIDS. The project has tried to combat the stigma and discrimination associated with assisting the target groups. The project is located at St. Camillus Mission Hospital along the shores of Lake Victoria, neighboring Tanzania and Uganda.

Having the movement of migration, exchange business, inter-marriage, different customs, more non-job people and lastly sex for fish workers around Lake Victoria have been some of the causes linked to high prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To spread awareness on HIV/AIDS
- To provide capacity building and lobbying for meaningful involvement of PLWHA.
- To promote access and availability of anti-retroviral drugs and medication for the treatment of opportunistic infections.
- To encourage the formation of new support groups for PLWHA & strengthen those which already exist.
- To emphasize the importance of associated projects such as Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), and Anti-Retroviral therapy (ART)
- Enable PLWHA to sustain themselves through Income Generating Activity (IGA).
- Raise the quality of life of PLWHA.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

### ***INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING***

- Provided on a voluntary basis.
- Has enabled couples to be introduced to Anti-Retroviral Therapy.
- Enables individuals to understand more about HIV/AIDS and decrease stigma.
- Empowers individuals interested in starting IGAs .

### ***GROUP FORMATION***

- Sharing experiences and networking on exchange programs.
- Creating cohesive relationships between group members.
- Empowering the group with skills on community development programs.
- Motivation and empowerment on IGA skills.
- Open atmosphere on capacity building for PLWHA positive living.
- A place for learning about public disclosure of HIV/AIDS status.



*Fig. 1: A moment of group formation*

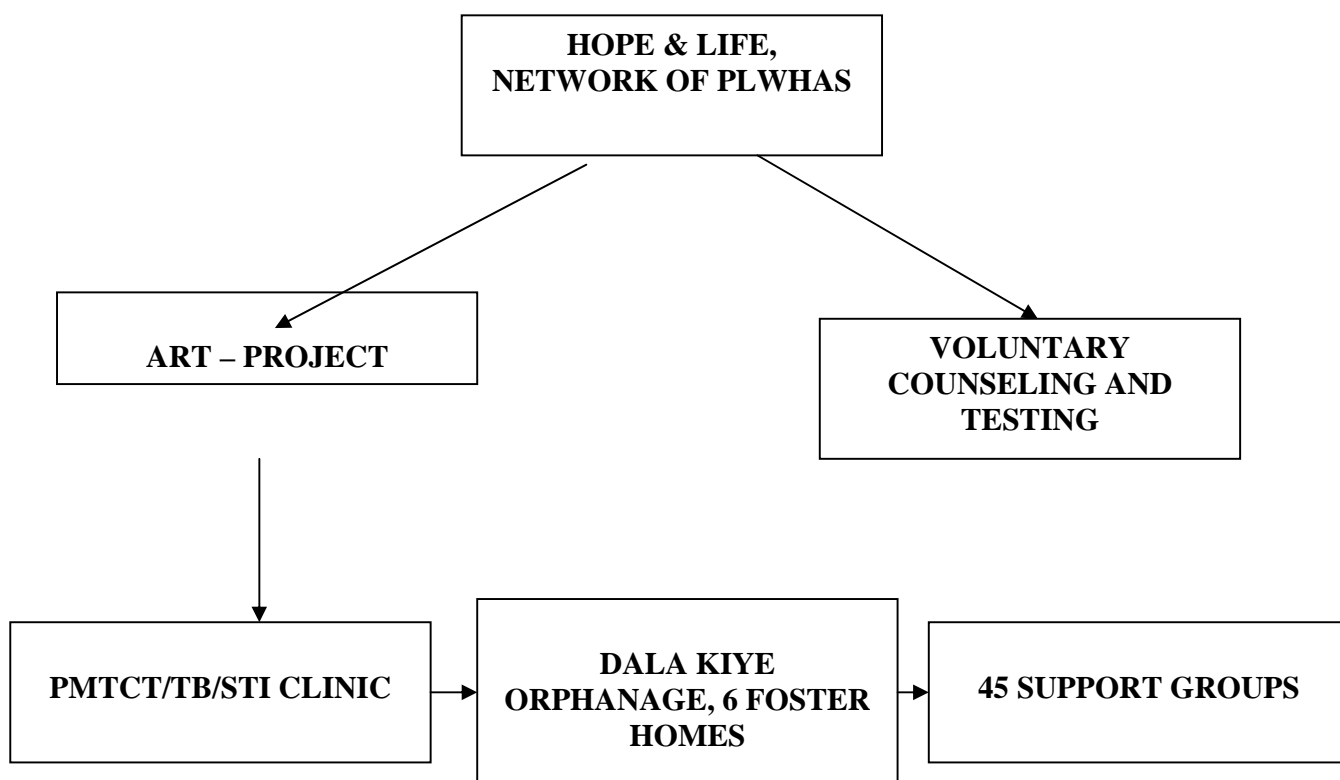
### ***PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT***

- PLWHA learn how to handle problems, critically weighing advice and solutions.
- Special needs of PLWHAS have been identified through this tool.
- PLWHA frequently encounter challenges of drugs adherence and stress.
- Community health workers have been trained to offer this support.

### ***REFERRAL***

- Cases referred to us are handled appropriately with and any necessary follow-up measures taken.
- We link new clients to support groups respective of the individual's needs.
- The average number of clients visiting VCT sites through our network has risen from 7 to 10 per day.

## UNIT TEAM & COLLABORATORS



## COLLABORATORS WITH OTHER CHANGE AGENTS

- Hope & Life has networked with other agencies in order to better serve our support groups of PLWHA.
- Working together has allowed us to exchange ideas during this shared process.
- The collaborators have been providing funds, capacity building, material support and also an office space.

### *Some of our collaborators are:*

- St. Camillus M. Hospital
- NACC (National AIDS Control Council)
- AMREF (African Medical Research Foundation)
- MEDS (Mission for Essential Drugs Supply)
- K-REP Bank (Kenya Rural Entrepreneurship Program Bank)
- Kenya Red Cross
- CARE- Kenya

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **1. Behavior change**

- Increased numbers of people visiting VCT centres have been noted.
- Rates of wife inheritance have decreased.
- Use of safer sex methods ( i.e. male and female condoms has increased).
- Disclosure rates have also gone up
- Harmful traditions and cultures have been diminishing with the improved awareness of HIV/AIDS.

### **2. Adherence to ARVs**

- Most of our clients have become compliant with ART.
- Adherence classes are well attended.
- We have had very few cases of defaulters compared to the previous project period.
- Clients have shown increased interest in taking their prophylaxis seriously and hence their ARVs.

## **CHALLENGES**

One challenge is the occasional failure to complete project activities in the community due to lack of funds. Other challenges are as follows:

### ***Support group sustainability***

1. A group visit and follow-up monitoring by Hope and Life is necessary, if not followed the groups relax.
2. Youth groups cannot be formed due to several requirements which are essentials for motivation and behavior change (e.g. video shows, IEC materials)
3. Discordant couples are much stigmatized and need additional capacity building which can enable them to form support groups.

### ***Poor economic status of PLWHAS***

1. Most of our PLWHAS depend on farming and fishing but unfortunately a season does not always prove successful.
2. Lack of employment opportunities has made many PLWHAS resort to risky behaviors for income sources.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

### ***Empowering sub-support groups***

- Support groups need to be motivated by several materials which can help/assist them on HBC or sustainability of their support groups.
- Several workshops and seminars concerning HIV/AIDS prevention and control need to be offered for community development.

### ***Youth post-test club***

- Two different groups need to be formed, one designed for positive youth and one for those testing negative.
- Exchange programmes among youth are important and need to be considered.

### ***Improving the project sustainability (IGA)***

- Enlarging several IGA activities (e.g. bead making, medicated and detergent soap production, juice making)
- Several support groups will have an activity to sustain their group.



*Fig. 2: A member of Hope&Life wash her clothes with the detergent soap produced by the group*

## **CONCLUSION:**

Hope & Life has found that although the morbidity and mortality rate has been reduced, there remains much to be done on prevention and protection from HIV/AIDS infection.