



HOW TO ENGAGE 'NON-COMMUNITY' STAKEHOLDERS IN HIV PROGRAMMING FOR KEY POPULATIONS?

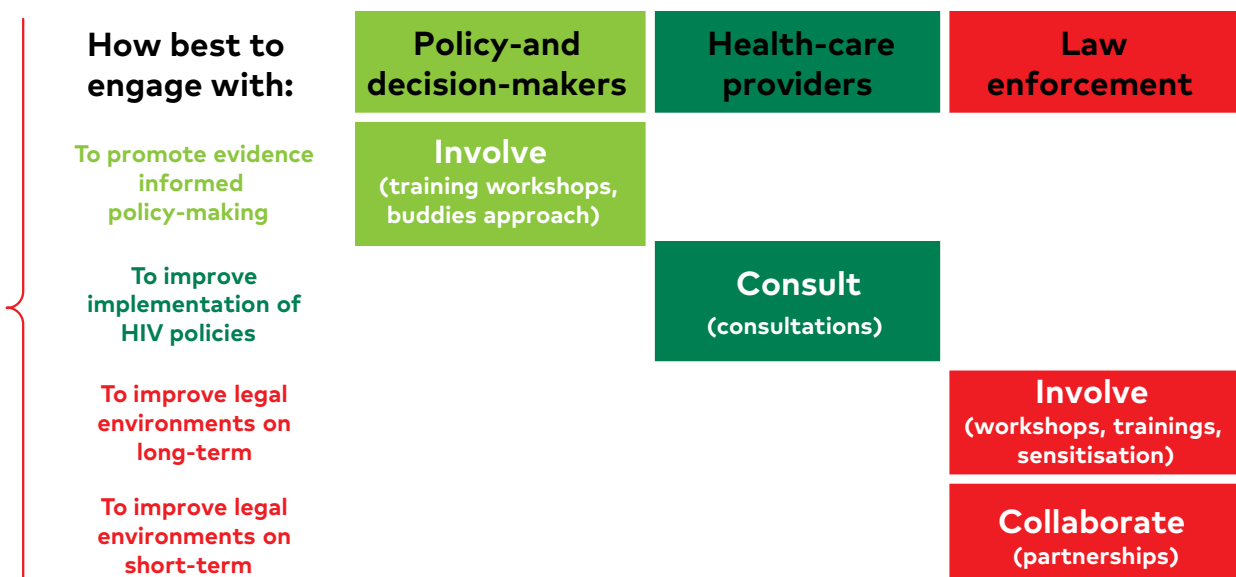
Lessons learnt from a systematic literature review

Purpose

This systematic literature review provides an overview of effective strategies for engaging 'non-community' stakeholders in HIV prevention programming in low- and middle-income countries.

Decision-makers and implementers play a significant role in policy-making and implementation, and therefore it is vital they are engaged in HIV programming for key populations, in addition to the broader community. For example, engaging the police to facilitate, partner with, or lead, HIV prevention programmes has shown to be a promising strategy with more immediate results, whereas it can take years to change laws. The figure below summarises the recommended engagement levels per stakeholder group included in this review.

Key Findings – the most effective engagement strategies:



Successful strategies to engage policy- and decision-makers

- Increasing communication and collaboration between researchers and policy-makers fosters trust throughout the research process. This has been shown to work well through trainings and workshops, or by using intermediaries. For example:
 - In South Africa and Cameroon, intermediaries (called 'buddies') interpreted and summarised research findings for policy-makers, so that they could incorporate this evidence into policy-making processes. The success of this approach was attributed to the fact that the intermediaries were seen to be objective.
 - In China and Vietnam, networking with relevant organisations and stakeholders, along with events such as workshops, conferences and study tours to other countries, was shown to have helped members of relevant ministries to understand the importance of harm reduction for effective HIV prevention.

Successful strategies to engage healthcare providers

- To ensure that HIV policies are relevant and of high quality, it is essential that healthcare professionals are involved in their development. For example, nurses reported that information sharing and improved communications were crucial for them to effectively participate in policy development.

Successful strategies to engage law enforcement staff

- Form partnerships and ensure ongoing dialogue between civil society organisations and the police, for example by forming committees made up of law enforcement representatives, prison and health officials. For example, policy dialogues between social affairs, drug control and health sectors led to the development of effective policies on harm reduction.
- Sensitise and train the police on HIV as well as the rights and health needs of key populations, for example by bringing together the police, HIV service providers and key populations to discuss issues such as how law enforcement limits the HIV response, and how the police could better support key populations. One example from the literature showed that training law enforcement staff on harm reduction and involving them in harm reduction programme management proved to be successful.
- To change police attitudes and behaviour, it is necessary to align programming goals with their professional and personal interests, such as their occupational health and safety. For example, one programme reported that when police stopped confiscating injection equipment, syringe sharing between drug users reduced, as well as the risk of exposure to syringes for police in the course of their work.

Methodology

A total of 10 studies were eligible, out of the 1093 records retrieved during the search. Both peer-reviewed and grey literature was used. PubMed, Web of Science and Scopus were searched for relevant peer-reviewed studies.

The full systematic review is available on request: Van der Wal, A .¹ (2019) 'Effective stakeholder engagement in HIV work in low- and middle-income countries. Lessons learned from literature on engagement strategies for 'non-community' stakeholders'.

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'A world where healthcare workers understand the health peculiarities and needs of the key populations, takes us closer to an ideal society.'