

Liberia Case study: How Has Community Engagement Improved Person-Centered Services

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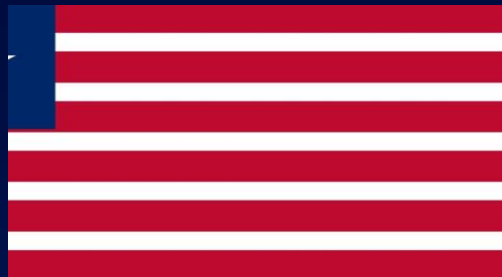


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Overview

- The network of people living with HIV and AIDS in Liberia (LIBNEP+), got involved with CLM in July 2022, up to present
- Community engagement is a crucial approach where community voices are heard and where communities should be involved in decision-making
- The involvement of the communities in decision around Person Centered Care improves health outcomes

Experiences

- Our involvement helped shift decision making towards **the improvement of our health by encouraging and embracing RoC participation and mapping carefully the needs, opinion of RoC** issues that matters to us. The following activities helped us in the shifting of decision making towards the improvement of our health:
 - Engaging stakeholders at all level of decision making through advocacy and meetings
 - Created a platform where national issues can be discussed through information sharing
 - Focus and support group discussions with adolescent parents and care givers on how to manage negative attitudes from the community or individuals through individual experiences shared in these meetings.
 - Build and sustain relationships between communities, partners and government entities
 - Face-to-face engagement which allows us to forge relationship inclusion of diversity of voices by connecting communities with or through decision making process



Experiences

- A person center approach is community-oriented. **It places equal values, priority and preferences on the patient. It also places RoC at the forefront of their health and care.** It ensures people retain control and help them make informed decisions and support partnership between families, health and social services. At the community level it build capacity, ensure compliance, improve legitimacy, inclusion and transparency and make better decisions. These were done in Liberia:
 - IEC/BCC materials printed for support group facilitations and access to HIV services.
 - Leadership capacity building workshop for RoC
- **Focus on individual in the context of lives experience**, family, social and community. Experiences in the form of decision problem encountered in the past. RoC where able to share their experiences in the conference of how family and community responded to their status by breaking silence/testimony.
- **Enhance relationship between RoC and Family** by having positive parenting behavioral change, increased community knowledge improved home environment & RoC and Care providers helps with good relationship that is bonded for long term.



Outcome/Benefit

- Promote successful system change
- Improve planning , strategies and implementation of services
- Increase the chances of buy-in and support to RoC, family and peer
- It informs decision making
- Funding source

Lesson Learned

- Health Facility Staff have a good relationship with recipients of care (RoC) by securing all personal health information, being trustworthy, and making sure that everyone is inclusive in health care services
- Initially, the traditional and religious leaders were not fully involved in the awareness process due to limited knowledge in the past. However, all key stakeholders (traditional and religious leaders) are now involved in the program which helps to improved relationship and minimize some negative values that are placed by society on individuals and the community
- Due to intensive community engagement, LibNep now has 3 outlets (DDD) which has brought PCS to the doors of RoC from advocacy done



Challenges

- Limited resources to fully involve all stakeholders from national level and sub national level for the full participation of activities
- Our first Stigma & Discrimination Conference showed that the government is not fully being involved in the process to repeal laws that hinder human dignity and participation
- Lack of score cards/complain boxes for ROC to make recommendations in the improvement of health services at the health facilities

Recommendations

- Provision of more resources for everyone at all levels – national, sub-national, districts, and communities
- Government should review and repeal all discriminatory and repressive laws, policies, and regulations that fuel stigma and discrimination against HIV and AIDS
- Accelerate the achievement of the 80-60-30 targets by intensifying community-led responses, monitoring and advocacy at all levels.

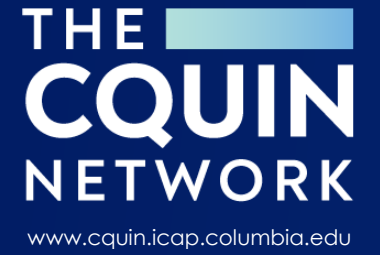
Conclusion

- Person-Centered-Approach is a powerful approach that enhance ownership, empowerment, community engagement, transparency, and make policy initiatives more accountable to the users
- It empowers communities to actively participate in shaping their own health futures and ensures that their voices are heard in decision-making processes
- Therefore, everyone needs to be involved with all aspects of Community Engagement and PCS



Acknowledgement

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Thank you!

